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THE EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF-EFFICACY ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN ALGERIA: A CASE STUDY IN SKIKDA

The main purpose of this paper is to examine the effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) as one of the dimensions of entrepreneurial spirit on the performance of Small Enterprises (PSEs) in Skikda, Algeria. Based on a self-administered survey questionnaire, data were collected from a random sample of 136 small enterprises (owners) in Skikda. The study adopted both descriptive and regression analyses to estimate the effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23). The findings demonstrate that self-efficacy significantly affects the performance of Small Enterprises in Skikda. Where 27.7% of the changes in the level of small business performance are caused by the change in entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which is considered a mediocre effect, which can be explained by the presence of other factors affecting the performance of these enterprises. However, the presence of this positive effect calls for focusing on raising the self-efficacy of Algerian entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, Performance, Small Business, Skikda Algeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of entrepreneurship currently occupies great and increasing importance at the same time, whether for developed or developing economies, because of its positive effects on economic, social, and even environmental levels, it is considered an important source of wealth, creativity, and job opportunities (Christian, 1993). As Octave G linier already pointed out in 1978, just a few years after the first oil shock which marked the end of the glorious thirties:

The countries, the professions, the companies which innovate and develop are above all those which practice entrepreneurship. The statistics of economic growth, international trade, licenses, patents, and innovations for the last thirty years firmly establish this point: it is expensive to do without an entrepreneur. This view clearly shows that it is necessary to go beyond the strict framework of business creation, to take a full measure of the importance of the entrepreneurial phenomenon in our economies and our societies as well as in our environment (Messikh, 2018).

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Considering that the majority of contemporary researchers specializing in business administration, such as “Gilder”, consider that the entrepreneur is the owner and organizer of the small and medium enterprise (SME), this type of institution has been closely associated with entrepreneurship, which led to studying the phenomenon of entrepreneurship through small and medium enterprises. Where these institutions play a very important pivotal role in achieving the economic and social development of societies, however, the increase in the intensity of competition in the field of business has put this type of institution in a weak position based on the limited resources (Ayoub, 2017). The success of these institutions depends on responding to the challenges of the business environment, which depends largely on the strategy of these institutions in the orientation and adoption of entrepreneurial behaviors and skills such as entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

Following the success of many economies as a result of focusing on the SMEs, the ideas of researchers in favor of entrepreneurship began to find wide acceptance on the basis that they are the first elements that create value and benefit at all levels, which prompted Algeria to move towards the establishment and promotion of this type of enterprise, based on the breaking the socialist approach at the end of the Eighties, and replacing it with another approach based on a free economy based on a new model of economic development, as it was proven to decision-makers that entrepreneurs and SMEs have become the necessary element for economic integration and diversification, as they constitute the main source of wealth, employment, innovation and promotion of exports outside hydrocarbons (Messikh, 2017). But the weak entrepreneurial potential of the Algerian individual emerging from socialist thought made the entrepreneurship path move at a very weak pace, which the government tried to solve by establishing various accompanying bodies for SMEs that aimed to revive the spirit of entrepreneurship and help small and medium enterprises to achieve success.

The structure and independence of small businesses make the entrepreneur the focus of its work, and the success or failure of small enterprises depends mainly on the capabilities and individual personality of the entrepreneur. In this regard, many studies that revolve around the mortality, sustainability, and growth of small enterprises indicate that the bankruptcy and failure of these enterprises are largely due to the lack of entrepreneurial spirit and personality including entrepreneurial self-efficacy of the owner and mismanagement.

As such, ESE has emerged as a significant psychological concept in entrepreneurship research, influencing entrepreneurial motivation, intention, behavior, and performance, as well as being a critical target outcome of entrepreneurship training and education. Moreover, due to the growing influence of entrepreneurial thinking and acting on career development and vocational behavior (Newman, Obschonka, Schwarz, Cohen, and Nielsen, 2019). Self-efficacy, being the belief of people to achieve the desired outcome has been reported as a strong predictor of entrepreneurial performance (Zubair and Khan, 2021).

The relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and small business performance receives considerable scholarly attention in the literature, but few studies have been conducted among Algerian SMEs, and in the general context of entrepreneurial intention, without a link to SME's performance. Hence, this investigation's purpose is to add to the research in the newer context of Algeria. Thus, this study was an attempt to bridge this gap in the literature. This study can be used to supplement existing theories on entrepreneurial self-efficacy and small-business performance. This research also has significant

implications for academics and practitioners to understand better entrepreneurial self-efficacy and small business performance.

Several studies at the institutional level and in the field of entrepreneurial behavior have shown a positive effect of the entrepreneurial self-efficacy component as one of the internal entrepreneurial capabilities on the performance and competitiveness of small and medium enterprises (Srimulyani, Hermanto, 2022; Zubair et al., 2021; Shen et al., 2021; and Klongthong et al., 2020), This is what the research seeks through the essential question of the impact that entrepreneurial self-efficacy can have on the performance of small enterprises in Algeria (Skikda).

2. ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF-EFFICACY AND PERFORMANCE OF SMALL BUSINESSES: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE)

There have been several studies that have stressed the relevance of entrepreneur self-efficacy in obtaining and fulfilling business goals. In his theory of social learning, Bandura (1977) was the first to introduce the idea of self-efficacy. It was defined as the strength of an individual's belief in themselves and their capacity to successfully fulfill roles that are relevant to entrepreneurship (Bandura, 1977). Boyd and Vozikis proposed in 1994 the idea that self-efficacy plays an important role in the development of intentions and business (Boyd, Vozikis, 1994). In the same year, Krueger and Brazeal proposed the idea that self-efficacy makes it possible to consider entrepreneurial potential (Krueger, Brazeal, 1994).

Self-efficacy is a specific cognitive variable in assessing initiative behavior (Levander, Raccuia, 2001). It is also an essential element for starting entrepreneurial activities (Baron, Markman, and Hirsa, 2001). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is recommended as a crucial trait held by entrepreneurs in the sphere of entrepreneurship since it aids them in translating unpredictable business circumstances into opportunities. On the other hand, People without this characteristic saw the identical scenario as a barrier (Maitlo, Pacho, Bhutto, Xuhui, 2020).

Self-efficacy is defined by Social Cognitive Theory as an individual's assessment of their ability to carry out certain courses of action that necessitate achieving a specific result. It is the assessment of one's ability to turn projected outcomes into actions or the assessment of one's ability to plan and execute a certain course of action (Bandura, 1993). It relates to people's subjective perceptions that they have a distinctive capacity to execute a task, and it, therefore, reflects the individual's belief in his ability to achieve specific conduct (Messikh, 2021).

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy from the previous definitions can be defined as an entrepreneur's belief that he or she has the ability, motivation, and resources required to complete a task.

2.2. Performance of small businesses

The issue of small and medium enterprises has taken great interest by researchers, specialists, and governments alike, compared to the previous one, as attention was focused only on the major enterprise as the unique generator of wealth and work, but soon the view was reversed after the emergence of the increasing importance of the sector of small and medium enterprises, which it is often associated with the name of the entrepreneur. Small

and medium-sized businesses have long been recognized as a source of economic development and progress (Oladimeji, Sofoluwe, Odunaya, 2021).

Through directive law No. 01/18 of 12/12/2001 related to the promotion of small and medium enterprises, these enterprises (SMEs) were defined according to quantitative criteria (number of workers, sales volume, capital volume) as:

Small enterprise It is every institution that employs between 10 and 49 people and its turnover does not exceed two hundred million Algerian dinars, or its total annual proceeds do not exceed one hundred million Algerian dinars. While the medium institution according to this law is every institution that employs from 50 to 250 people and its annual turnover is what between two hundred million and two billion DA, or the total annual proceeds are between 100 and 500 million DA (Algerian Official journal, 2001).

Many academics stress the need of measuring performance in small businesses to determine their success or failure. Income, employment, Competitive advantage, and profitability have been the most common ways to measure business performance in terms of growth, and many studies have noted that profitability is difficult to measure due to a variety of technical accounting concerns (Zubair, Khan, 2021).

The competitive advantage derived from internal organizational competencies and skills may be safer in terms of generating profits for firms (Akeke, Adetayo, Akeke, Oyebanji, 2021). Here, entrepreneurial self-efficacy is one of the most prominent of these competencies that should be strengthened by the Algerian entrepreneur to enhance the chances of success of his organization.

2.3. The aim of the study and research questions

The study aims to know the degree of effect that the self-entrepreneurial capacity dimensions (individual beliefs, Cognitive resources, and the actions) plays on the performance of small enterprises (business performance in terms of growth: income, number of employees, competitive advantage) in Skikda, Algeria.

Through the previous (main objective) and to know the effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on the performance of small enterprises in Skikda, the following main question can be asked: To what extent does entrepreneurial self-efficacy affect the small business performance in SKIKDA?

The following specific questions have also been addressed based on the main question to explore the impact of (ESE) dimensions on small business performance:

- To what extent do the individual beliefs affect the performance of small businesses in Skikda?
- To what extent do the Cognitive resources affect the performance of small businesses in Skikda?
- To what extent do the actions (needed to perform specific tasks) affect the performance of small businesses in Skikda?
- Are there statistically significant differences in the answers of the sample members regarding the impact of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on the performance of a small business, attributed to demographic variables?

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to answer the main problematic and achieve the goal of the study, a random sample of small enterprises in the city of Skikda was studied during the last three months of 2021.

3.1. Population and sample of study

The population of this study represents all small enterprises in Skikda with an amount equal to 320 small enterprises, according to the statistics of the statistics department of the Directorate of Small and Medium Enterprises of Skikda for the year 2020.

The requests were randomly selected to ensure that each unit in the community was an equal opportunity to be selected as a sample for this study.

A sample size of 174 SEs was derived using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, and a questionnaire was distributed to them. 136 analyzable forms were retrieved, which means a response rate of 78.16%. Descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, and regression analysis were used for statistical analysis with the aid of SPSS version 23.

3.2. Reliability and internal consistency of the study instrument

Reliability analysis was done using the alpha Cronbach method to test the stability of the measuring instrument as follows.

Table 1. Reliability statistics (alpha Cronbach coefficient)

Axes	Number of terms	Alpha Cronbach coefficient
individual beliefs	04	0.870
actions (needed to perform specific tasks)	04	0.896
cognitive resources	04	0.878
performance of small business	09	0.778
all axes	21	0.888

Source: Own calculations based on spss output.

It is clear from the above table that the value of the alpha Cronbach coefficient for the various axes exceeded 0.6 (60%), which ranges between 0.778 and 0.896, which is a high and acceptable value, while the total value of the Alpha Cronbach coefficient is 0.888, which is also a high and acceptable value. This indicates that the questionnaire has a high degree of stability, and this reassures the researcher of its application to all members of the study sample.

The method of the Pearson correlation coefficient was used in to verify the validity (internal consistency) of the construction between the averages of the axes and the total mean of the tool, as shown in the following table.

It is clear from the above table that the value of Pearson's correlation coefficients is acceptable for the axes and the tool as a whole and the correlation coefficients are significant at the 1% level of significance, where the significance reached $p \leq 0.01$ (**).

Table 2. Internal consistency (Pearson correlation coefficient)

Axes	Correlation coefficient	Significance level
individual beliefs	0.613**	0.000
actions (needed to perform specific tasks)	0.505**	0.000
cognitive resources	0.708**	0.000
performance of small business	0.719**	0.000

Source: Own calculations based on spss output.

3.3. Normal distribution test

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to find out whether the study model was subject to a normal or abnormal distribution, to determine the nature of the tests used in the hypothesis test. The results were as follows.

Table 3. Normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) test

Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
Axes	Value Z	Sig*
all the axes of study	0.193	0,000

Source: Own calculations based on spss output.

It is clear from the above table that the value of the significance level for each section of the test results (axes) is less than 0.05 (*). This note indicates that the data do not follow a normal distribution. This is what requires relying on nonparametric tests to answer the established hypotheses.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To test the hypothesis of the study, the simple regression analysis was used, the outcome of the analysis are presented in the following tables:

Hypothesis 1

H1: There is a statistically significant effect at the 0.05 level of significance for the individual beliefs on the performance of small businesses in Skikda.

Table 4. The result of a simple regression analysis to test the effect of individual beliefs on the performance of small businesses

Axis	B value	T value	F value	R	R ²	Sig
individual beliefs	0.307	4.625	21.386	0.371	0.138	0.000

Source: Own calculations based on spss output.

Table 4 shows the effect of the individual beliefs on the performance of small businesses in Skikda. The correlation coefficient reached (0.371) at the level of significance of 0.000 which is less than 0.05, and the determination coefficient (0.138) means that (13.8%) of changes in the level of small businesses performance in Skikda resulting from the change in the level of individual beliefs, The value of the impact degree was (0.307), this reflects

that the increase in the individual beliefs leads to an increase in the level of small enterprises performance, which shows the significance of this relationship is the value of F (21.386) and the value of T (4.625), This confirms the validity of the first sub-hypothesis (H1), which says: There is a statistically significant effect at the 0.05 level of significance for the individual beliefs on the performance of small businesses in Skikda.

Hypothesis 2

H2: There is a statistically significant effect at the 0.05 level of significance of the Cognitive resources on the performance of small businesses in Skikda.

Table 5. The result of the simple regression analysis to test the effect of Cognitive resources on the performance of small businesses

Axis	B value	T value	F value	R	R2	Sig
Cognitive resources	0.330	5.042	25.420	0.399	0.159	0.000

Source: Own calculations based on spss output.

Table 5 shows the impact of the Cognitive resources on the performance of small businesses in Skikda. The correlation coefficient reached (0.399) at the level of significance of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 and the determination coefficient (0.159), means that (15.9%) of changes in the level of small business performance resulting from the change in the level of cognitive resources. The value of the effect degree was (0.330), and this reflects that the increase in cognitive resources leads to an increase in the level of small business performance, and what shows the significance of this relationship is the value of F (25.420) and the value of T (5.042), This confirms the validity of the second sub-hypothesis (H2), which says: There is a statistically significant effect at the 0.05 level of significance of the Cognitive resources on the performance of small businesses in Skikda.

Hypothesis 3

H3: There is a statistically significant effect at the 0.05 level of significance of the actions on the performance of small businesses in Skikda.

Table 6. The result of a simple regression analysis to test the effect of the actions (needed to perform specific tasks) on the performance of small businesses

Axis	B value	T value	F value	R	R2	Sig
actions	0.424	6.521	42.530	0.491	0.241	0.000

Source: Own calculations based on spss output.

Table 6 shows the effect of the actions (needed to perform specific tasks) on the performance of small businesses. The correlation coefficient reached (0.491) at a significance level of 0.000 which is less than 0.05, and the determination coefficient (0.241), means that (24.1%) of changes in the level of small business performance resulting from the change in the level of actions. The value of the degree of effect was (0.424), this reflects that the increase in the actions needed to perform specific tasks leads to an increase in the level of small enterprises performance, which shows the significance of this relationship is the value of F (42.530) and the value of T (6.521), This confirms the validity of the third sub-hypothesis (H3), which says: There is a statistically significant effect at the 0.05 level of significance of the actions on the performance of small businesses in Skikda.

Hypothesis 4

H4: There are statistically significant differences at the level of 0.05 in the answers of the sample members regarding the effect of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on the performance of small businesses due to demographic variables.

In order to test this hypothesis, the Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis tests were used (because the data did not follow a normal distribution).

We used the Mann-Whitney test for the variable of gender. Concerning the variables of age, Educational level, and field of study, we used the Kruskal-Wallis test. Here, the hypothesis is accepted if the significance level is less than or equal to 0.05.

Table 7. Mann-Whitney test for the significance of the differences in the answers of the sample members regarding the effect of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on the performance of small business due to gender

Variable	N	Average rank	Mann-Whitney U	Significance level	
gender	male	111	68.37	1373.000	0.000
	female	25	69.08		

Source: Own calculations based on spss output.

It is clear from Table 7 that the level of significance for the mean of the respondents' ranks for the variable of gender was estimated at 0.000, thus it is statistically significant at the level of significance of 0.05, which means that there are statistically significant

Table 8. Kruskal Wallis test for the significance of the differences in the answers of the sample members regarding the effect of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on the performance of small business due to age, Educational level, and field of study

Variable	Categories	X ²	df	Sig.
Age	less than 26	5.849	5	0.321
	26-30			
	31-35			
	36-40			
	41-45			
	over 45			
Educational level	Elementary or less	6.440	4	0.169
	preparatory			
	secondary			
	professional			
	university			
Field of study	Economic and management sciences	2.171	4	0.704
	natural sciences			
	technology			
	legal sciences			
	human and social sciences			

Source: Own calculations based on spss output.

differences (at the level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the effect of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on the performance of small businesses due to gender. Therefore, this hypothesis is accepted concerning the variable of gender.

It is clear from Table 8 that there are no statistically significant differences (at the level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the answers of the sample members regarding the effect of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on the performance of the small business in Skikda due to the variables of age, as well as educational level, and the field of study. Therefore, this hypothesis is rejected about to the variables of age, Educational level, and the field of study.

Hypothesis 5 (Main hypothesis)

H5: There is a statistically significant effect at the 0.05 level of significance for the Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on the performance of the small business in Skikda.

Table 9. The result of a multiple regression analysis to test the effect of the Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on the performance of small business in Skikda

Axis	R	R2	F value	sig
Main Hypothesis	0.526	0.277	16.828	0.000

Source: Own calculations based on the output of the program SPSS.

The table above shows that there is an effect of the Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on the performance of the small business in Skikda (this result synchronizes with the results of Srimulyani, Hermanto, 2022; Zubair et al., 2021; Shen et al., 2021), as the correlation coefficient reached (0.526) at a level of significance of 0,000 less than 0.05, while the determination coefficient reached (0.277), means its value (27.7%) of changes in the performance of the small business in Skikda resulting from the change in the level of the Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy. The significance of this effect confirms the value of F (16.828), which is a function at a level less than 0.05, and this confirms the validity of the main hypothesis, which says: there is a statistically significant impact at the 0.05 level of significance for the Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on the performance of the small business in Skikda.

Through the collected values, the regression equation can be written in terms of the elements of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and improving performance levels in small enterprises in Skikda as follows:

$$Y = 1.757 + 0.077 X1 + 0.315 X2 + 0.131 X3$$

Where the variables of the equation are defined as follows:

- Y: performance of small business in Skikda;
- X1: individual beliefs;
- X2: actions (needed to perform specific tasks);
- X3: Cognitive resources.

5. CONCLUSION

The study examined the effect that entrepreneurial self-efficacy can add to the performance of small enterprises in the state of Skikda, Algeria, by studying the sub-effect

of dimensions (agreed in previous studies) of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on the overall performance of the studied sample.

It can be seen in the first hypothesis that there is a statistically significant effect for the individual beliefs on the performance of small businesses in Skikda, whereas (13.8%) of changes in the level of small businesses performance in Skikda resulting from the change in the level of individual beliefs.

In the second hypothesis, it can be seen that there is a statistically significant effect of the Cognitive resources on the performance of small businesses in Skikda, whereas (15.9%) of changes in the level of small business performance resulting from the change in the level of cognitive resources.

The third hypothesis informs the readers also that there is a statistically significant effect of the actions on the performance of small businesses in Skikda, whereas (24.1%) of changes in the level of small business performance result from the change in the level of actions.

As a conclusion, it can be seen that there is a statistically significant effect at the 0.05 level of significance for the Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on the performance of the small business in skikda (this result synchronizes with the results of Srimulyani, Hermanto, 2022; Zubair et al., 2021; Shen et al., 2021; Klongthong et al. 2020), whereas (27.7%) of changes in the performance of the small business in Skikda resulting from the change in the level of the Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, Which calls for the need to work to enhance this efficiency for the owners of these businesses, especially in light of competition and the increase in the number of this type of business in Algeria.

In this regard, the study recommends the necessity of increasing the ESE of individuals; as it is one of the most important factors affecting the entrepreneurial orientation on the one hand, and its effectiveness in raising the performance of small enterprises. Therefore, the Algerian government must focus the entrepreneurial support policies and strategies on raising this capacity through entrepreneurial awareness programs, as well as through entrepreneurial training, in addition to actual financial support for projects in a way that inspires confidence among individuals to embark on the entrepreneurial adventure.

Our research fills this gap, particularly in the Algerian context, by claiming that entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) affects the performance of the small business in Algeria. Furthermore, our research contributes to the advancement of knowledge in various streams of literature on the phenomena studied, including entrepreneurial self-efficacy and business performance, and suggests that small businesses can perform well through a strong entrepreneurial self-efficacy strategy. It also enhances ESE exposure and awareness, which helps to dispel any misunderstandings.

Despite the author's efforts, this paper has some limitations. The sample size is the first constraint. To have a deeper grasp of the studied topic, future studies should employ a larger sample size. Second, the applicability and generality of our research findings to different types of business are unknown. A future study might give more exact explanations on the link between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and small business performance by using a model that includes certain moderators and mediator factors. Third, the study only looked at entrepreneurial self-efficacy as an independent variable; future studies could look into other aspects of entrepreneurial characteristics like (EO) dimensions, and overall performance of small and medium enterprises.

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