

**Does the speed of internationalization matter for SMEs international performance?
The role of international entry speed, scope speed, and scale speed.**

ANA BEATRIZ LOPES RODRIGUES

FACULDADE DE ECONOMIA DA UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA - FEUC

FERNANDO MANUEL PEREIRA DE OLIVEIRA CARVALHO

UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA

ÂNGELO MIGUEL RODRIGUES CABRAL

FACULDADE DE ECONOMIA DA UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA - FEUC

ANDRÉ DE ABREU SARAIVA MONTEIRO ALVES

FACULDADE DE ECONOMIA DA UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA - FEUC

Does the speed of internationalization matter for SMEs international performance? The role of international entry speed, scope speed, and scale speed.

Introdução

This research focuses on the relationship between the speed of internationalization (SoI) and company performance. It establishes a multidimensional concept of SoI, considering three firms' milestones: entry into international markets, diverse geographic scope, and international scale. The results suggest a direct positive relationship between scale speed and overall performance. This shows that companies that achieve scale objectives faster will have higher performance levels. The complete mediation between international entry speed and international performance was also confirmed.

Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo

The relationship between speed of internationalization and international performance is often overlooked due to the multidimensional nature of the two variables involved. The literature often uses static moments to define and measure the SoI, but it is crucial to consider the various stages of the process. This research aims to fill these gaps by defining the SoI in a clear and multidimensional manner. We intend to present a clear and accurate picture of the influence that SoI has on business performance.

Fundamentação Teórica

Younger enterprises will benefit from rapid internationalization. Faster internationalization can improve a company's performance by allowing younger enterprises to learn faster and increase strategic resources. It can also give an international identity and reputation, thus boosting a company's survival chances and prospects for significant gains. Investing in new markets and having a clear strategy can reverse negative consequences, as resources are generated for market adaptation. The company's internal capabilities improve with challenges and valuable experience.

Metodologia

The study collected data from 682 Portuguese SMEs operating in the international market in April 2023 via a survey. We developed the metrics utilized in this investigation based on available literature. Metrics used included international entry speed, international scope speed, international scale speed, and international overall firm performance. As control variables, we used age, size, and industry. The collected data were analysed using IBM SPSS and the AMOS version 28 extension using path analysis.

Análise dos Resultados

The study confirms four main hypotheses about the relationship between speed of internationalization and overall firms' performance. It suggests that international scale speed directly and positively impacts a company's performance. The study also identifies indirect relationships. The variables of international scope speed and international scale speed are found to mediate the relationship between international entry speed and overall international performance.

Conclusão

This research explores the SoI and its impact on SMEs' performance. It identifies three key dimensions to capture the full reality of SoI: entry into the international market, geographical scope, and international scale. The study found that companies that achieve international scale in a shorter period exhibit higher overall international firm performance. The research also highlights the

managerial implications of different rates of internationalization, emphasizing the importance of understanding opportunities and risks.

Referências Bibliográficas

Casillas, J. C., & Acedo, F. J. (2013). Speed in the Internationalization Process of the Firm. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(1), 15-29. Hilmersson, M., Johanson, M., Lundberg, H., & Papaioannou, S. (2017). Time, Temporality, and Internationalization: The Relationship among Point in Time of, Time to, and Speed of International Expansion. *Journal of International Marketing*, 25(1), 22-45. Hilmersson, M., Schweizer, R., & Chetty, S. (2022). The Relationship Between Timing, Speed, and Performance in Foreign Market Network Entry. *Management International Review*.