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CEO characteristics, organizational characteristics and information technology adoption in small businesses

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Abstract

The importance of information technology (IT) to businesses is widely acknowledged. Yet, while large businesses have been using computers for some time, small businesses have been slow in adopting IT. The literature on technological innovation suggests that there are two main classes of variables that are important in determining adoption of an innovation: individual characteristics and organizational characteristics. As IT can be viewed as a technological innovation, these two classes of variables are possible determinants of IT adoption. This paper examines the effect of three characteristics of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and three organizational characteristics on adoption of IT. The three CEO characteristics studied are CEO innovativeness, CEO attitude towards adoption of IT, and CEO IT knowledge. The three organizational characteristics studied are business size, competitiveness of environment, and information intensity. Six

hypotheses were formulated and tested using data collected from a sample of 166 small businesses. The results suggest that notwithstanding the business size, CEO characteristics are important factors affecting IT adoption in small businesses. Small businesses are more likely to adopt IT when the CEOs are more innovative, have a positive attitude towards adoption of IT, and possess greater IT knowledge.



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Keywords

CEO characteristics; organizational characteristics; adoption of information technology; small businesses

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