

Public Abstract

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Title:Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprise Owners Perceptions of Success in the Textile and Apparel Industries: Multiple Case Studies

Small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are a critical part of many industries in today's U.S. economy, and are particularly important to the U.S. textile and apparel industry. While the importance of SMEs to the textile and apparel industry is great, little is known about SME owners' perceptions of their success. To help minimize the gap in our understanding of SME success, the research addressed how textile and apparel SME owners perceive their success. The theoretical frameworks of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and self-efficacy were used to explore the study questions: (1) how do U.S. textile and apparel SME owners perceive their success?, (2) how does the concept of self-efficacy play a role in SME owners' perceptions of success?, and (3) does Maslow's theory of human motivation provide a reasonable framework for understanding U.S. textile and apparel SMEs' success?

The findings showed that SME owners describe their perceptions of success through the five themes; establishing a solid business foundation, fostering strong customer relationships, creating ties to the local community, flexibility through SME ownership, and happiness in their personal lives. The themes seemed to build upon one another, making Maslow's hierarchy a possible framework to be used in understanding SME owners' perceptions of success. The findings also showed that self-efficacy can play a role in how SME owners perceive their success.