ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE MOTIVATION TO WORK HARD (SUMMARY)

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SUMMARY

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Principal Topic

This paper examines entrepreneurial intentions in the context of heterogeneity on both sides of the individual-opportunity nexus. One aspect of individual heterogeneity that has been neglected in this context is the individual’s motivation to supply work effort. Drawing from the organisational behavior and careers literatures we consider the attitudinal drivers of the individual’s decision to work more or less hard as potential antecedents of the intention to become an entrepreneur. On the other side of the individual-opportunity nexus, heterogeneity of entrepreneurial opportunity is characterized as subsistence, lifestyle, speculative and growth opportunity types. We argue that work effort requirements may be higher in speculative or high-growth ventures than in subsistence or lifestyle ventures, and thus different types of ventures might better suit the work preferences of different individuals. We suggest a series of propositions for empirically testing whether the perceived desirability of particular types of new ventures varies according to the worker type contemplating entrepreneurship and whether different worker types are more or less likely to start particular types of new ventures.

Method

Six attitudinal drivers of work effort (orientations towards work, income, leisure, perquisites, achievement and perfectionism) and eight worker types identified in the careers literature are examined for their probable impact on the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. We then consider the probable supply of the attributes (to which these attitudes apply) in four types of entrepreneurial opportunity, viz: subsistence, lifestyle, speculative and growth opportunities. A match is sought between worker types (demand for the attributes) and the opportunity types (supply of the attributes).

Results and Implications

We find that only enthusiastic workaholics and work enthusiasts are likely to form the intention to become an entrepreneur, other things being equal, and that they will most likely prefer growth opportunities. Their intention derives from a combination of high work, income, perquisite, and/or achievement orientations, and/or low leisure and perfectionism orientations. Worker types who are not motivated to supply high levels of work effort are likely to have low intentionality but if they do choose entrepreneurship it will more likely be subsistence of lifestyle entrepreneurship than speculative or growth entrepreneurship.

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