ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS IN THE WORKING-AGE POPULATION: THE MODERATING ROLE OF AGE AND MEDIATING EFFECT OF LABOR MARKET MOBILITY AND PREVIOUS ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION (SUMMARY)

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SUMMARY

ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS IN THE WORKING-AGE POPULATION: THE MODERATING ROLE OF AGE AND MEDIATING EFFECT OF LABOR MARKET MOBILITY AND PREVIOUS ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION

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Principal Topic

This study explores how the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions vary with age of the respondent in the context of the working-age adult population in Finland. The theoretical foundation of this analysis is based on Ajzen’s (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The TPB is based on the idea that intentions have three conceptually independent antecedents: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). The relative importance of the three antecedents is likely to vary from one population and from one context to another. Because previous studies have mostly relied on student populations, our knowledge about the relative importance of the three antecedents remains very limited in the context of general population. In summary, we argue that both the relative importance of the antecedents of the TPB vary with age. We investigate (i) whether the level of entrepreneurial intentions varies as a function of age, and (ii) whether the relative importance of the three antecedents of intentions varies as a function of age.

Method

The data used in this study was collected in the provinces of Western Finland in November and December 2006. A postal questionnaire was used to collect data from random sample of 5,600 individuals. We received 1,301 usable responses, resulting in a response rate of 23.2 %. We adapted the main variables of the TPB model from Kolvereid (1996). In our analysis we used OLS regression and SEM.

Results and Implications

We find empirical support that age moderates the relationship of perceived behavioral control on intentions. Perceived behavioral control is in its turn affected by the quality of human capital. By explaining the formation of entrepreneurial intentions across different age groups and the general population as a whole, the paper generates valuable information to guide such entrepreneurship policy initiatives that aim particularly at increasing the level of entrepreneurial activity at different ages. Different age groups use different queues to form intentions.

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