ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AND THE HEART OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG TECHNICAL STUDENTS (Interactive Paper)

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Principal Topic

Planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) is used in many studies to identify antecedents of entrepreneurial intention. Three antecedents explain the propensity to carry out certain behavior according to a plan: attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control. For entrepreneurial intention, researchers found positive effects for attitude and subjective norm, yet the role of perceived behavioral control is inconclusive with positive and negative and insignificant effects (Kolvereid and Isaksen, 1996; Punnet et al., 2007). According to Ajzen, perceived behavioral control indicates that when individuals have a strong feeling they can easily conduct a behavior, they think they have the knowledge and resources to act accordingly and consequently they will engage in such behavior sooner. Yet, we argue that this view contrasts the nature of entrepreneurship as Stevenson and Gumpert (1985) explain. According to Stevenson and Gumpert, the heart of entrepreneurship is in the propensity to act regardless of the resources controlled. In their view, entrepreneurship is driven by opportunities while the necessity of having resources is initially discarded and contrasts the perceived behavior argument. We extend existing literature of planned behavior with the nature of entrepreneurship.

Method

We used the model of planned behavior and included perceived obstacles with regards to resource availability and revenue generation. The hypotheses are tested using a pre-tested structured questionnaire which is administrated 199 among technical students.

Results and implications

The results show strong and positive effects for attitude and subjective norm while a significant effect of perceived behavioral control is absent. Moreover, we did find significant effects for the two constructs we added following Stevenson and Gumpert’s argument (1985) of the heart of entrepreneurship. A negative effect for perceived obstacle of revenue generation and a positive effect for the perceived obstacle of available resources indicates that students that perceive higher levels of resource absence are still willing to engage in entrepreneurial action, thereby confirming the Stevenson and Gumpert argument. A better understanding of the role of perceived behavioral control and certain obstacles can help policymakers to develop better programs and help nascent entrepreneurs in their pursuit of founding their own business.

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