DO ANGRY BIRDS FLY BETTER FOLLOWING A MIGHTY EAGLE? EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIPS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION WITH INNOVATIVE PERFORMANCE (SUMMARY)

Maija Renko
University of Illinois at Chicago, maija@uic.edu

Malin Brännback
Åbo Akademi

Alan L. Carsrud
Ryerson University,

Niklas Kiviluoto
Åbo Akademi

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Timo Ketonen
*Åbo Akademi*
Principal Topic

Leadership is critical to the success of organizations. Entrepreneurial leadership (EL) is a specific leadership style, defined as influencing and directing the performance of group members towards the achievement of those organizational goals that involve recognizing and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities. Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is a firm-level construct that reflects the strategic decision making style with regard to innovation, pro-activeness, and risk-taking. EO has been established as an antecedent of innovative performance. However, for the benefits of EO to fully materialize, actors on every level should demonstrate entrepreneurial leadership. Together, EO and EL should impact innovative performance. This study tests our recently developed ENTRELEAD scale for the measurement of EL. We discuss and empirically demonstrate the differences between EL and EO, and consider their combined impact on innovative performance.

Method

Sample one comes from individuals in five different Finnish companies that are all known for their high growth and entrepreneurial spirit (n=61). Sample two data come from the faculty and staff at a large public university in Finland (n=42). Sample three data come from employees of firms that have been awarded as some of the most entrepreneurial firms in Chicago (n=138). EO was assessed using the scale by Covin & Slevin (1989). Innovative performance was measured based on a scale from Hult et al. (2003). Entrepreneurial leadership was measured using our recently developed ENTRLEAD scale (Renko et al. 2010).

Results and Implications

Our 8-item ENTRLEAD scale is reliable (Cronbach’s alpha .86-.92) and shows discriminant validity when assessed with the EO scale. Bosses in the academic sample received significantly lower ratings on EL than bosses in the other samples. Also, EL is more prominent among founders than among non-founder managers. Both EO and EL are positively related to innovative performance. However, when both predictors are entered in a regression only EL remains significant, suggesting that the effect of EO on innovative performance may be mediated by EL.

CONTACT: Maija Renko; maija@uic.edu; (T) +1 312-413 -8237; (F) +1 312-996-3559; University of Illinois at Chicago, M/C 243, 601 S Morgan St., Chicago IL 60607, USA.