

6-11-2016

## EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AND INNOVATIVE JOB BEHAVIOR: A STUDY ON YOUNG BUSINESS GRADUATES (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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### Recommended Citation

Maes, Johan; Leroy, Hannes; Debrulle, Jonas; and Deprez, Jana (2016) "EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AND INNOVATIVE JOB BEHAVIOR: A STUDY ON YOUNG BUSINESS GRADUATES (INTERACTIVE PAPER)," *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*: Vol. 36 : Iss. 3 , Article 21.

Available at: <https://digitalknowledge.babson.edu/fer/vol36/iss3/21>

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≈ INTERACTIVE PAPER ≈

**EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AND INNOVATIVE JOB BEHAVIOR: A STUDY ON YOUNG BUSINESS GRADUATES**

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**Principal Topic**

Few graduates transition immediately to entrepreneurship upon graduation; rather they need a stepping stone to launch their venture and become self-employed. Paid employment can serve as such a training ground because it is a source of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, social capital, and inspiration. This study addresses the question of how EI of young business graduates relates to entrepreneurial actions within an environment of paid employment. More specifically, this *longitudinal study* sets out to investigate the relationship between the evolution entrepreneurial intention (EI) (from EI in the final months of university studies (2008) to early-career EI three years later (2011)) and innovative job behavior (IJB) three years after graduation. We aim to advance current understandings of the EI - behavior link by showing that the evolution of young people's intentions to create new ventures connects to their level of IJB, moderated by organizational factors and personal characteristics.

**Method**

Our main proposition is that EI growth is positively related to IJB. This relationship is moderated by organizational climate for innovation and individual proactivity. Creativity as a job requirement and gender serve as controls. To test our hypotheses, we use hierarchical regression with moderation effects, run on a cohort of 104 Belgian individuals.

**Results and Implications**

Our results show that EI growth is positively related to IJB, over and above the effects of the control variables. Organizational support for innovation and EI growth interact negatively to predict IJB, whereas proactivity and EI growth interact positively in predicting IJB. Overall, this study offers new insights into the link between EI growth (the evolution of the intention to independently create a firm) and IJB (which is more indicative of intrapreneurship). The latter strand of research has demonstrated the role of individual, job-related and organizational factors for such behavior. That literature, however, has barely emphasized EI. As our study shows, EI can equally stimulate intrapreneurship since individuals may find a(n) (temporary) outlet for their entrepreneurial drive through paid employment.

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