A LONGITUDINAL EXAMINATION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS, ACTIONS, AND GENDER: DO INTENTIONS PREDICT STARTUP IN FEMALES AND MALES? (SUMMARY)

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Principal Topic

Female entrepreneurs play an important role in economic growth and poverty reduction (Allen et al., 2007). Empirical evidence, however, shows that women are less likely to become entrepreneurs (Bosma & Levie, 2009). This can be partly attributable to the fact that entrepreneurship has been traditionally framed as a masculine career (Ahl, 2006). Consequently, women in general have a low intention to become an entrepreneur (Shane, 2008). That said, some women do have a strong entrepreneurial intention (EI), particularly in a feminine industry (Gupta et al., 2009; Kelley et al., 2015). To what extent these women, compared to men, will act on their intentions? Answering this question is essential to understand the low startup rates among women. Drawing on social role theory (Eagly, 1987) and Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, we thus test: a) the degree to which EI predict startup behavior; b) whether the predictive power of EI on actual startup behavior differs between women and men.

Method

Tracking management students who took a compulsory entrepreneurship course at a Southeastern university in the U.S., we collected surveys at four points of time, i.e. before and after the entrepreneurship course (T1 & T2), within 6 months of graduation (T3), and 3 years after the graduation (T4). We assess their degree of engagement in startup activities at T4. Of the 758 respondents who provided complete surveys at T1, 180 participated in telephone interviews at T4.

Results and Implications

Ordered logit analysis was employed to test the two hypotheses, which received strong support. These results demonstrate the moderating role of gender on the intention-behavior relationship rooted in TPB, thereby extending TPB. This finding is different from Kautonen et al. (2015), whose data were collected primarily in Finland. The difference between our results and Kautonen et al.'s signals that gender role theory may figure more prominently in the U.S. than in Finland. Future entrepreneurship studies on the intention-behavior should account for the cultural difference in gender stereotypes.

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