

6-10-2017

ADHD SYMPTOMS, ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION (EO) AND FIRM PERFORMANCE (SUMMARY)

Wei Yu

Syracuse University, USA, wyu04@syr.edu

Johan Wiklund

Syracuse University

Recommended Citation

Yu, Wei and Wiklund, Johan (2017) "ADHD SYMPTOMS, ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION (EO) AND FIRM PERFORMANCE (SUMMARY)," *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*: Vol. 37 : Iss. 3 , Article 16.

Available at: <https://digitalknowledge.babson.edu/fer/vol37/iss3/16>

This Summary is brought to you for free and open access by the Entrepreneurship at Babson at Digital Knowledge at Babson. It has been accepted for inclusion in Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research by an authorized editor of Digital Knowledge at Babson. For more information, please contact digitalknowledge@babson.edu.

≈ SUMMARY ≈

**ADHD SYMPTOMS, ENTREPRENEURIAL
ORIENTATION (EO) AND FIRM PERFORMANCE**

*Wei Yu, Syracuse University, USA
Johan Wiklund, Syracuse University, USA*

Principal Topic

There is increasing interest in the relationship between attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) symptoms and entrepreneurship. Initial research suggests that entrepreneurship is attractive to people with ADHD symptoms (Wiklund et al., 2016). It is unclear, however, whether these symptoms are functional in the entrepreneurial setting. In this paper, we hypothesize that ADHD symptoms among entrepreneurs will be linked to greater Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) of the firms they operate. This, in turn, will result in higher performance of their firms. Thus, we suggest that ADHD symptoms are functional in the entrepreneurial setting. We build this on the notion that entrepreneurship is a unique context characterized by high uncertainty. As such, action cannot be based solely on rational analysis but has to be driven by a different logic. Specifically, ADHD symptoms are linked to quick action without deliberation (Barkley, 1997), sensation seeking (Barkley, 1997) and creativity (Coetzer & Trimble, 2009). These characteristics resonate with entrepreneurship generally, and the dimensions of EO (innovativeness, proactiveness and risk taking) specifically. EO has been positively linked to performance in many studies (Rauch et al, 2009).

Method

To test our hypotheses, we collected online survey data from Young Presidents' Organization (YPO). We specifically targeted their entrepreneurship chapter, which has over 2,000 members. Our final sample included 242 individuals. Established measures and the widely-used incremental approach of Baron and Kenny (1986) were adopted to test for our hypotheses.

Results and Implications

Consistent with prior studies (Kooij et al., 2005), factor analysis showed that the inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity symptoms constitute separate constructs. Mediated regression analysis showed that hyperactivity and impulsivity positively related to firm performance, fully mediated by EO. Inattention had no relationship with EO or performance. Thus, our hypotheses were fully supported by our data for hyperactivity and impulsivity, but not at all supported for inattention. Our findings challenge the view of entrepreneurs as super-humans, showing that people with characteristics that can otherwise be problematic are able to excel in entrepreneurship. The positive association of ADHD symptoms and EO also suggests that speed rather than accuracy as the 'logic of action' may be an important precursor to EO, contributing to the literature on the determinants of EO (Wiklund et al., 2009).

CONTACT: Wei Yu; wyu04@syr.edu; Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University, 721 University Ave, Syracuse, 13244.