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MIND THE GAP: INSTITUTIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL ANTECEDENTS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAJECTORIES IN THE ACADEMIC CONTEXT (SUMMARY)

Teita Bijedić
IfM Bonn, Germany, bijedic@ifm-bonn.org

Simone Chlosta
IfM Bonn, Germany

Sebastian Nielen
IfM Bonn, Germany

Arndt Werner
University of Siegen, Germany

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≈ SUMMARY ≈

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ANTECEDENTS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAJECTORIES
IN THE ACADEMIC CONTEXT**

Teita Bijedić, IfM Bonn, Germany
Simone Chlosta, IfM Bonn, Germany
Sebastian Nielen, IfM Bonn, Germany
Arndt Werner, University of Siegen, Germany

Principal Topic

Generating inventions and/or founding businesses are important activities for the economic growth and structural change, particularly in knowledge-driven societies. Especially the research output of academic staff in institutions of higher education is a great source of innovation and commercially utilizable knowledge. Therefore these institutions make great efforts to establish and incorporate services and infrastructure to facilitate the commercial exploitation of inventions, e.g. by incentivizing academic entrepreneurship. Despite these actions, knowledge of great commercial potential still seems to remain unexploited (Wevand and Haase 2007).

Therefore, our study incorporates institutional and individual antecedents of entrepreneurial intentions and activities as well as their barriers and drivers from a longitudinal perspective. Taking a process-oriented perspective on venture creation, we look at the start-up process in a holistic manner incorporating stages of mere entrepreneurial intentions, up to entrepreneurial gestation activities (nascent entrepreneurship), business creation and finally early business development.

Method

Our data base is built out of a sample of approx. 7,500 scientists we interviewed in fall 2013 (first wave) from 73 randomly selected German institutions of higher education from a variety of disciplines (STEM-fields, social sciences, economics, humanities and health care, art and design). We conducted a second wave of our survey in fall/winter 2016/2017. The final sample consists of 1,250 valid subjects. By this unique longitudinal approach, we are able to detect specific determinants and possible barriers within the academic context for each stage of the entrepreneurial process.

Results and Implications

Our results which cover a 3-years-period indicate that academics in the fields of math, engineering, natural science or technology as well as academics that already generated an invention are less likely to cancel their entrepreneurship project and rather “make it to the end”. Using university support like for example a start-up camp is also beneficial for the entrepreneurial progress. Academics with a high self-motivation to start their entrepreneurship project also have a higher probability to move it forward. In general, university support for entrepreneurial activities is beneficial for university start-ups and should therefore be improved.

CONTACT: Teita Bijedić; bijedic@ifm-bonn.org; T: 0049 228 7299742; F: 0049 228 7299734; Institut für Mittelstandsforschung, Maximilianstrasse 20, 53111 Bonn, Germany.