GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AND BUSINESS START-UP ACTIVITIES (SUMMARY)

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SUMMARY

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS
AND BUSINESS START-UP ACTIVITIES

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Principal Topic

In spite of growing rates of participation in new venture creation among women, women remain substantially underrepresented among entrepreneurs in Western countries and in Scandinavian countries in particular. Research has found more similarities than differences between the male and female entrepreneurs. However, these findings do not explain the gender differences in the propensity to take part in entrepreneurial activities. The factors explaining the low number of women taking steps to become entrepreneurs have to be found in the phases before these steps are possibly taken, i.e. among the general population.

This study investigates the antecedents to business start-ups among women and men based on the Norwegian GEM data-base on entrepreneurial activity in the general population. Gender differences regarding three milestones of the entrepreneurial process are explored; intention (latent entrepreneurs), planning (nascent entrepreneurs) and new business start-up (infant entrepreneurs). Entrepreneurial behaviour is seen as an intentional process (Krueger and Carsrud, 1993) which is influenced by factors such as the individuals’ self efficacy and attitudes towards risk. Gender differences in these factors and potential consequences for the propensity to engage in entrepreneurial processes are investigated.

Method

The empirical data for this study are Nordic data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM). The data consist of structured telephone interviews with a representative sample of 200 individuals from each country. Possible direct and indirect effects of gender on entrepreneurial intentions, nascent and infant entrepreneurship are analysed using three separate, multivariate probit models.

Results and Implications

Strong gender differences were found related to latent, nascent as well as infant entrepreneurship. Self efficacy showed a strong positive influence on latent entrepreneurship. Gender influences the propensity to have entrepreneurial intentions indirectly through self efficacy. Similar results were found at the nascent and infant level. In addition, gender influenced the probability to become a nascent and an infant entrepreneur indirectly through its effect on attitude towards risk. The results from this study point to gendered socialization processes leading women and men to obtain different levels of self efficacy and risk attitudes, as important factors explaining gender differences with regard to entrepreneurial intentions and actions.

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