CLEANTECH ENTREPRENEURS: ATTRIBUTES, INTENTIONS AND PERFORMANCE (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

Anders Isaksson

Umeå School of Business, Sweden, anders.isaksson@usbe.umu.se
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Principal Topic

The principal topic in this paper is to investigate the entrepreneurs behind the technical innovations that can be the solution to the world’s environmental problems. Why are they so special? Or: Are they special? Or: Is there a different between traditional entrepreneurs and cleantech entrepreneurs? Is it more than a technological difference?

The relationship between the “general” entrepreneur’s characteristics and different performance measures (e.g. growth) has received substantial research attention over the years indicating a consensus that firm success and growth is more dependent on the entrepreneur himself than on any other factor. In this paper we take this research one step further and focus on the cleantech entrepreneur. Hence, the main purpose with the current research project is to test the linkage between entrepreneurial attitudes and performance in a cleantech setting.

Methods/Key Propositions

In order to examine entrepreneurial attitudes a survey has been conducted targeting a sample of small and medium-sized (SME) cleantech firms in Sweden. Entrepreneurial attributes was measured in the questionnaire with eleven different concepts (dependent variables): reason to start a business, growth intentions, need for achievement, internal locus of control, extroversion, self-reliance, number of partners, communication frequency and breadth, experience, education and altruism. Two key questions/propositions are tested in the study. The first is a general test of the linkage between entrepreneurial attributes and different independent variables, where growth and profitability being the most important. The second (major) question is the question if there is a difference between entrepreneurs in general and cleantech entrepreneurs.

Results and implications

One major conclusion of this research is that the difference between cleantech entrepreneurs (in entrepreneurial attributes) is to some extent larger than the differences between cleantech entrepreneurs and non-cleantech entrepreneurs. However, when separated into subgroups some interesting characteristics and differences are found. This illustrates some important contributions to policy makers trying to stimulate growth in the cleantech sector.

CONTACT: Anders Isaksson; anders.isaksson@usbe.umu.se; (T): +46907867879; (F): +46907866674; Umeå School of Business SE-901 87 Umeå, Sweden.