GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: ASSESSING PERCEPTIONS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL OUTCOMES AMONG MEN AND WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS (SUMMARY)

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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: ASSESSING PERCEPTIONS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL OUTCOMES AMONG MEN AND WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

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Principal Topic

A wide variety of research has examined performance differences between women and men entrepreneurs. While many studies find significant differences between men and women in regards to economic outcomes, explanations for these differences vary widely. This is problematic, as we believe that the real reason for differences stems from the entrepreneurial outcomes emphasized by women versus men entrepreneurs. Women utilize and emphasize relationships with others differently during the entrepreneurial process in an effort to realize desired outcomes. As a result, the assumption that men and women want the same outcomes (i.e. economic outcomes) from venturing may be misguided. This paper examines and finds that male and female entrepreneurs differ in regards to several relationship oriented, non-economic entrepreneurial outcomes, while showing no differences in regards to traditional economic outcomes.

Method

Survey data were collected from existing entrepreneurs in two contiguous U.S. states ($n = 208$). Independent variables include entrepreneurs’ gender and age. The dependent outcome variables included revenue growth, employee growth, conflict, trust, and reputational capital. Control variables included age, firm size, organizational tenure, and industry. Multiple regression was used.

Results and Implications

Our findings suggest that women do not significantly differ from men in regards to economic outcomes but do significantly differ on non-economic outcomes such as trust and satisfaction with business partners and clients. This research makes several important contributions. First, the results of this study appear to be in line with research on feminine gender roles, where women are found to be more concerned for others, more altruistic, and more helpful (Kidder and Parks, 2001). Thus, by examining non-economic entrepreneurial outcomes, we advance the literature past mere descriptions of alternative outcomes and offer a clearer understanding of outcomes that may need to be considered in future research. Second, we provide empirical support for the idea that men and women don’t necessarily want or value the same outcomes in entrepreneurship. Thus, our model and results reinforce the importance of examining alternative entrepreneurial outcomes. Finally, we extend work on entrepreneurial relationships and provide guidance on how entrepreneurial relationships and leadership may be examined in the future.

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