GENDER AND ENTREPRENEURIAL PERFORMANCE: TESTING A HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK (SUMMARY)

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Recommended Citation
Watson, John and Zolin, Roxanne (2014) "GENDER AND ENTREPRENEURIAL PERFORMANCE: TESTING A HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK (SUMMARY)," Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research: Vol. 34 : Iss. 8 , Article 5.
Available at: https://digitalknowledge.babson.edu/fer/vol34/iss8/5
WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

• SUMMARY •

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Principal Topic

Murphy et al. (1996) note that, in assessing business performance, it is important to consider the goals of the owner because goal theory suggests that “goals serve a directive function; they direct attention and effort toward goal-relevant activities and away from goal-irrelevant activities” (Locke and Latham 2002, p.706). Research also suggests that entrepreneurial goals are impacted by a person's human, financial and social capital and, in some cases, these attributes can vary by gender. The aim of this study, therefore, was to test a holistic framework for assessing entrepreneurial performance that incorporates the impact of gender on internal resource availability (human, financial and social capital) and how, in turn, this impacts: the entrepreneur's goals; the investment (both time and money) in their new venture; and the venture's performance outcomes.

Method

To model new venture performance outcomes we use CAUSEE (Comprehensive Australian Study of Entrepreneurial Emergence) data on 559 young firms (collected through telephone surveys) that were identified through a random survey of the Australian population and then tracked over a three-year period (Waves 1-3). Using structural equation modelling, we then examine the relationships between: gender; internal resources available (i.e. human, financial and social capital); entrepreneurial goals (in terms of business growth); business inputs (financial and time); and performance outcomes (actual business growth).

Results and Implications

Our preliminary results indicate that a majority of the paths examined are significant and in the expected direction. For example: previous start-up experience (one of the human resource capital variables) is significantly related to growth expectations; growth expectations is significantly related to the time invested in establishing the new venture; and time invested in establishing the new venture is significantly related to growth outcomes. Interestingly, with respect to the expected relationship between gender and internal resources there was one notable exception: females appear just as likely as their male counterparts to have engaged in a face-to-face business network for the purpose of establishing their new venture.

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