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Gender perspective on entrepreneurial intentions and innovation cognitive style: cross-country study

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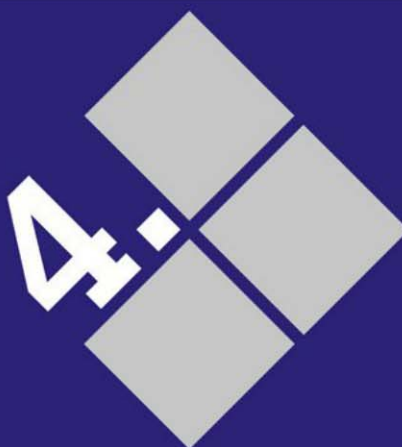
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Gender perspective on entrepreneurial intentions and innovation cognitive style: cross-country study

Abstract

A number of researchers indicate that although environmental and personal characteristics are important for developing entrepreneurial intentions, a better understanding would be gained if innovative cognitive style, as a moderating factor, would be introduced. According to theory, individuals with high innovative cognitive ability could also have higher entrepreneurial intentions. Persons that are more innovative, could have higher self-confidence in starting a business, especially if they are not satisfied with their current jobs, or expect that they will not be satisfied as employees in organizations. In addition, in a number of studies it has been found that there are unresolved issues regarding gender and entrepreneurial intentions and gender and innovative cognitive style. Therefore, the goal of our paper is to explore gender perspective on entrepreneurial intentions and innovative cognitive style on the sample of students from Croatia, Slovenia, India, Hungary and Hong Kong. Logistic regression revealed that entrepreneurial intentions are determined by country of origin, gender, attitudes toward entrepreneurship (personal attraction, social norms, and perceived self-efficacy), and innovative cognitive style (willingness to try, being opinion leader and solving ambiguities and problems).

Keywords: entrepreneurship, gender, innovation, cross-country, intentions

1 Introduction

The theory of entrepreneurship does not yet give a complete answer to the question whether environment and personal characteristics are equally important to entrepreneurial intentions. The personality of entrepreneurs has been a matter of interest in a number of researches. Researchers agree that entrepreneurship involves processes like a tendency to make decisions independently, a determination to innovate and take risks, an inclination to be uncompromising against competitors, and to use windows of opportunities as much as possible (Lumpkin et al., 1996; Di Zhang et al., 2011). Mitchell et al. (2007) define entrepreneurial cognition as a unique combination of knowledge structures that allow entrepreneurs to efficiently use windows of opportunities by making adequate decisions. Entrepreneurial intentions are affected by personal attractiveness of entrepreneurship to individual, social norms among the micro as well as macro environment that shape beliefs and attitudes towards entrepreneurship, and perceived self-efficacy as a future entrepreneur (Lüthje et al., 2004).

Entrepreneurship and innovation foster each other, contribute to the success of an organization, and are both crucial to enduring successes in the global economy (Zhao, 2005). Innovation and entrepreneurship are tightly connected together since the entrepreneur is a critical enabler of making innovations available to the market (Sundbo, 1998; Verloop, 2004). Like entrepreneurship, innovative behaviour is determined by many factors that comprise supporting environment and personal characteristics (Laforet, 2011). Innovative cognitive style could be defined as a deep-rooted way of decision-making, problem solving and creativity (Goldsmith et al., 1991; Georgellis et al., 2000). The Kirton Adaption-Innovation Inventory is widely used for the measurement of problem-solving cognitive style (Kirton, 1976, 2003; Bobic et al., 1999), that also shapes innovative behaviour (Sadler-Smith et al., 1998).

The influence of gender on entrepreneurship intentions is generally investigated by a number of researchers as a consequence of barriers that women face in obtaining enough resources for starting and/or development of a business (Moore et al., 1997; Heilman et al., 2003; Lynn et al., 2005). Recent research suggests that women are also more apt in perceiving themselves as less capable of succeeding as an entrepreneur (Thébaud, 2010), which is in accordance with the results of laboratory studies according to which women entrepreneurs were rated considerably less capable and their innovative ideas were also considered as less commercial, leading to the conclusion that innovativeness of women is perceived with a bias (Thébaud, 2007).

We theorize that innovative cognitive style could have a strong impact on entrepreneurial intentions, as one of the factors besides such factors as personal attraction, social norms, perceived self-efficacy, however taking into gender and country of origin. The goal of the paper is to investigate gender perspectives on entrepreneurial intentions and innovative cognitive style based on a cross-country survey conducted in Croatia, China, Hungary, India, and Slovenia.

2 Methodology

Research questions

The research is based on the following research questions: (1) RQ1: Does the country of origin influence entrepreneurial intentions?; (2) RQ2: Does gender influence entrepreneurial intentions?; (3) RQ3: Do attitudes towards entrepreneurship (personal attraction, social norms, and perceived self-efficacy) influence entrepreneurial intentions?; (4) RQ4: Does

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innovative cognitive style (willingness to try, creativity, leading opinion maker, problem solving) influence entrepreneurial intentions?; (5) RQ5: What are the differences in gender regarding influence of attitudes toward entrepreneurship and innovative cognitive style on entrepreneurial intention?

Sample description

Our primary survey was conducted on a sample of students of business and economic colleges that range from second-year to graduate students, from Croatia, China, Hungary, India and Slovenia. Samples based on students (Ahmed et al., 2010) and cross-countries (Mueller, 2001) have already been used by other researchers in similar studies that investigated entrepreneurial intentions. Table 1 presents the profiles of respondents' characteristics. Some differences exist in the gender structure of the respondents since the Indian sample consists of more male respondents whereas the Hungarian sample is slightly dominated by female respondents. Also, there are some differences existing in the year of study where some biases exist in the third year of study that is biased towards female respondents, and the fourth year of study that is biased towards male respondents.

Table 1: Profile of respondents' characteristics
 (Authors' survey)

Respondents' characteristics	Total (N=435)		Male (N=180)		Female (N=255)		Chi-square
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
I. Country							
Croatia	86	19,8	41	22,8	45	17,6	26,811**
Hungary	92	21,1	23	12,8	69	27,1	
Slovenia	151	34,7	57	31,7	94	36,9	
India	54	12,4	36	20,0	18	7,1	
China	52	12,0	23	12,8	29	11,4	
II. Year of study							
2nd year	13	3,0	4	2,2	9	3,5	20,826**
3rd year	96	22,1	26	14,4	70	27,5	
4th year	93	21,4	55	30,6	38	14,9	
5th year	213	49,0	87	48,3	126	49,4	
Graduate	20	4,6	8	4,4	12	4,7	

Note: (two-tailed) ** $p < 0,01$

Research instrument

The research instrument was developed based on the work of Marcic et al. (1990) and Liñan and Chen (2009). Table 2 presents the research instrument items. The dependent variable is binomial and it measures if a respondent has ever seriously considered becoming an entrepreneur. Among the independent variables, there are gender, the year of study, the country of study and constructs on which the respondents claims the level of agreement on a scale from 1 to 7 (1-don't agree, 7-completely agree). There are two main groups of constructs. First, attitudes toward entrepreneurship together comprise the selected factors (PA, SN, PSE) of entrepreneurial intentions (Liñan and Chen, 2009). Second, cognitive abilities that together comprise innovative cognitive style (WTT, CO, OL&AP) measured by Kirton-Adaption-Innovation Inventory (Marcic et al., 1990).

Statistical methods

Validity analysis was first conducted in order to check instrument validity. The content validity of the instrument is based on the fact that items from existing literature were used (Marcic et al., 1990; Liñan and Chen, 2009). Convergent validity was investigated by means of explanatory factor analysis in order to examine the essential composition of a moderately large number of variables. Reliability analysis was performed by using Cronbach's alpha coefficients in order to test the internal consistency of the items used for computing

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constructs. Logistic regression was employed in order to investigate the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The validity of logistic regression models is investigated by using Nagelkerke R Square, and the statistical significance of independent variables was tested against the threshold value of 5%.

Table 2: Research instrument items
(Marcic et al., 1990; Liñan et al., 2009)

Dependent variable		
Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)		Have you ever seriously considered becoming an entrepreneur? (Yes/no)
Independent variables		
Gender		Male, female
Year of study		2nd year, 3rd year, 4th year, 5th year and Graduate
Country of study		Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia, India, China
Construct	Code	Item
Personal Attraction (PA)	PA1	Being an entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantages to me.
	PA2	Being an entrepreneur would give me great satisfaction.
	PA3	It is desirable for me to become an entrepreneur.
	PA4	It is interesting for me to become an entrepreneur.
	PA5	A career as an entrepreneur is attractive for me.
Social Norms (SN)	SN1	I care about what my closest family members think as I decide whether or not to pursue a career as an entrepreneur.
	SN2	I care about what my closest friends think as I decide whether or not to pursue a career as an entrepreneur.
	SN3	I care about what people important to me think as I decide whether or not to pursue a career as an entrepreneur.
Perceived Self-Efficacy (PSE)	PSE1	If I wanted, I could easily become an entrepreneur.
	PSE2	It is entirely up to me whether or not become an entrepreneur.
	PSE3	As an entrepreneur, I would have sufficient control over my business.
	PSE4	There are very few circumstances outside my control that may prevent me from becoming an entrepreneur.
Willing to Try (WTT)	WTT1	I am reluctant about adopting new ways of doing things until I see them working for people around me. (Reverse scale)
	WTT2	I rarely trust new ideas until I can see whether the vast majority of people around me accept them. (Reverse scale)
	WTT3	I am generally cautious about accepting new ideas. (Reverse scale)
	WTT4	I must see other people using new innovations before I will consider them. (Reverse scale)
	WTT5	I often find myself sceptical of new ideas. (Reverse scale)
	WTT6	I am aware that I am usually one of the last people in my group to accept something new. (Reverse scale)
	WTT7	I tend to feel that the old way of living and doing things is the best way. (Reverse scale)
Creative-Original (CO)	CO1	I consider myself to be creative and original in my thinking and behavior.
	CO2	I am inventive kind of person.
	CO3	I seek out new ways to do things.
	CO4	I enjoy trying out new ideas.
	CO5	I find it stimulating to be original in my thinking and behavior.
	CO6	I am receptive to new ideas.
	CO7	I frequently improvise methods for solving a problem when an answer is not apparent.
Opinion-Leader & Ambiguities-Problems (OL&AP)	OLAP1	I feel that I am an influential member of my peer group.
	OLAP2	My peers often ask me for advice or information.
	OLAP3	I enjoy taking part in the leadership responsibilities of the groups I belong to.
	OLAP4	I am challenged by ambiguities questions.
	OLAP5	I am challenged by ambiguities and unsolved problems.

3 Results

Explanatory factor analysis was performed in order to investigate if the propositions of convergent validity are met. Iterated principal axis factor combined with varimax was conducted by means of statistical package SAS. The results of factor analysis are displayed in Table 3. The approach suggested by Costello and Osborne (2005) was used by applying a loading cut-off value ranging from 0.40 to 0.70, which was confirmed for all of the measurement factors. Factor analysis confirmed the existence of 6 factors. However, it has to be declared that Kirton-Adaption-Innovation Inventory (Marcic et al., 1990) originally consists of four factors (Willing to Try, Creative-Original, Opinion-Leader and Ambiguities-Problems), and for the purpose of this survey two factors Opinion-Leader and Ambiguities-Problems were merged into one factor, because the factor analysis consisting of seven factors did not reveal interpretable results. Reliability analysis was performed based on the usage of Cronbach's alpha coefficients in order to test the reliability of using average values of items grouped into factors in Table 3 as constructs for further analysis. Feldt et al. (2008) recommend the usage of a cut-off value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher. All of the calculated coefficients were higher than cut-off value, which led us to conclude that the item scales are internally consistent.

Table 3: Rotated factor matrix for six factors and Cronbach's alpha (Authors' survey)

Factor	Item	Factor						Cronbach's alpha
		PA	SN	PSE	WTT	CO	OLAP	
Personal Attraction (PA)	PA1	0,7518						0,9375
	PA2	0,8571						
	PA3	0,8697						
	PA4	0,8828						
	PA5	0,8572						
Social Norms (SN)	SN1		0,8360					0,9173
	SN2		0,8400					
	SN3		0,8719					
Perceived Self-Efficacy (PSE)	PSE1			0,7239				0,8067
	PSE2			0,7968				
	PSE3			0,7570				
	PSE4			0,6486				
Willing to Try (WTT)	WTT1				0,8483			0,8941
	WTT2				0,8671			
	WTT3				0,7801			
	WTT4				0,7917			
	WTT5				0,7949			
	WTT6				0,6915			
	WTT7				0,6476			
Creative-Original (CO)	CO1					0,7504		0,8660
	CO2					0,7969		
	CO3					0,8436		
	CO4					0,7299		
	CO5					0,7262		
	CO6					0,5403		
	CO7					0,7287		
Opinion-Leader & Ambiguities – Problems (OL&AP)	OLAP1						0,6327	0,8729
	OLAP2						0,7266	
	OLAP3						0,7915	
	OLAP4						0,7489	
	OLAP5						0,7332	

Table 4 presents the results of three logistic regressions conducted with Entrepreneurial Intention as dependent variable: (1) based on the total sample, (2) based on the sample of

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male respondents only and (3) based on the sample of female respondents only. Logistic regression was used in order to investigate research questions set in the initial phase of the research. All of the three models explain variations in dependent variables to the high extent based on the Nagelkerke R Square.

Gender statistically influenced entrepreneurial intentions ($p < 0,05$) in the total sample model. Entrepreneurial intentions were influenced by the *country of origin* in all of the three models. Croatia ($p < 0,05$), Slovenia ($p < 0,01$), and India ($p < 0,01$) showed a statistically significant impact on entrepreneurial intentions. However, logistic regression based on male sample only revealed a statistically significant impact in only two countries – Slovenia ($p < 0,05$) and India ($p < 0,05$). Logistic regression based on the female sample only revealed a statistically significant impact only in India ($p < 0,01$). As expected, *the year of study* did not influence entrepreneurial intentions neither in the total sample nor in the male and female samples.

Entrepreneurial intentions were influenced by *attitudes toward entrepreneurship* in all of the three models. Personal Attraction (PA) had a statistically significant impact on entrepreneurial intentions in the total sample ($p < 0,01$) and male sample ($p < 0,01$). Social Norms (SN) had a statistically significant impact on entrepreneurial intentions in the total sample ($p < 0,01$) and female sample ($p < 0,01$). Perceived Self-Efficacy (PE) of the respondent as a future entrepreneur had a statistically significant impact on entrepreneurial intentions in the total sample ($p < 0,01$), and both the male sample ($p < 0,01$) and female sample ($p < 0,01$). Such results would indicate that female students do not perceive themselves as entrepreneurs.

Innovative cognitive style also affects entrepreneurial intentions in all of the three models. Willingness to try (WTT) had a statistically significant impact on entrepreneurial intentions in the total sample ($p < 0,01$) and male sample ($p < 0,05$). Creative-Original (CO) had a statistically significant impact on entrepreneurial intentions only in the female sample ($p < 0,05$). Opinion-Leader & Ambiguities-Problems (OLAP) had a statistically significant impact on entrepreneurial intentions in the total sample ($p < 0,01$), as well as in the male ($p < 0,01$), and female sample ($p < 0,01$).

Table 4: Logistic regression results (regression coefficients) with Entrepreneurial Intention as dependent variable (Authors' survey)

Independent variables	Total sample (N=435)	Male (N=180)	Female (N=255)
Respondent's characteristics			
Gender	-0,7374**	-	-
Country*Croatia	-1,5941*	-1,0326	-1,5538
Country*Hungary	-0,2383	0,1092	-0,6967
Country*Slovenia	-1,9160**	-2,9172*	-1,8152
Country*India	-1,9296**	-2,4359*	-2,7371**
Year of study*3rd	0,3006	-1,0913	-0,3361
Year of study*4th	-0,4126	0,4797	-0,5839
Year of study*5th	0,7127	-0,3417	0,1376
Year of study*Graduate	0,5779	-	0,5987
Attitudes towards entrepreneurship			
Personal Attraction (PA)	-0,3502**	-0,6225**	-0,3005
Social Norms (SN)	-0,4516**	-0,3114	-0,7057**
Perceived Self-Efficacy (PSE)	-0,4778**	-0,6342*	-0,4920**
Innovative cognitive style			
Willingness to Try (WTT)	-0,4903**	-1,4149**	0,1063
Creative-Original (CO)	-0,2310	0,1564	-0,4781*
Opinion-Leader & Ambiguities – Problems (OLAP)	-1,3488**	-1,0623**	-1,6425**
Constant	0,0196	-0,1438	0,2312
Nagelkerke R Square	R ² =0,437	R ² =0,509	R ² =0,509

Note: (two-tailed) * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$

4 Conclusions

Our study has indicated that gender and country of origin have a strong impact on entrepreneurial intentions as well as on the attitudes towards entrepreneurship and innovative cognitive style. However, the results also indicate that there are significant differences among female and male students regarding the incentives for their intentions to start a new venture.

This paper has provided verification of the previous findings of gender and country of origin impact on entrepreneurial intentions (Mueller et al., 2001; Thébaud, 2010; Di Zhang et al., 2011; Gupta et al., 2009). Entrepreneurial intentions are particularly strong among Croatian, Slovenian and Indian students. It could be possible to conclude that the impact measured in India is a result of the predominance of male students in the sample, but it is also present in the female sample. Therefore, the impact measured in India could be interpreted as a consequence of the Asian model of entrepreneurship (Dana, 2007).

Variations in the results of the male and female sample are interpreted as a result of gender stereotypes in perceptions of entrepreneurs which strongly influence the intentions to start a new venture (Gupta, 2009). Females are more influenced by the attitudes of persons in their surroundings and worry about being able to succeed in such a role, which confirms the impact of gender stereotypes (Gupta et al., 2009). Regarding innovative cognitive style, male respondents with higher entrepreneurship intentions are also more willing to try new things, while female respondents are urged into starting new ventures by the new ideas of their own. Both genders are more apt to become entrepreneurs if one is acting as an opinion leader of a group and is puzzled by ambiguities and problems.

The results also indicate that females are highly aware of the barriers that are all over the male-dominated areas of innovation, technology and entrepreneurship (Ranga et al., 2010). Before a female makes a decision on becoming an entrepreneur, she is more likely to estimate realistically how successful she will be on the task, as well as how her environment will accept the decision. She will rely on her own creativity and originality because, due to gender stereotypes, other innovators (male or female) would probably be less likely to collaborate with her in an entrepreneurial position. Since contemporary society should aim to provide equal opportunities for all gender and minority groups, strategies on how to succeed in a male-dominated venture society should be made available through media, press, research and educational programs. For example, case studies of female high-tech entrepreneurs should be presented (Cain Miller, 2010).

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