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Gender difference in the conative component of entrepreneurial orientation*

*Andrej Bertoneclj, Darko Kovač***

The aim of this paper is to investigate the question of gender difference in the entrepreneurial orientation of managers in the post-transition economy of Slovenia. The concept of intervening variables as parts of the conative components of entrepreneurial orientation is introduced and gender differences are examined between variables. 183 Slovene top and middle managers were analysed in this respect. The results indicate that there are no gender differences in the variable to spot opportunities, to risk, to innovate, and in the intervening variable to plan, and to follow procedures, but a gender difference exists in the intervening variable to analyse, to quantify, and to justify and in the intervening variables of dexterity and craftsmanship, which could be attributed to gender occupational concentration.

Der Zweck dieses Beitrags ist es, die Frage der geschlechterspezifischen Unterschiede zwischen Managern in Bezug auf ihre unternehmerische Orientierung im Kontext der Transformationsituation in Slowenien zu untersuchen. Dazu wird das Konzept der intervenierenden Variablen als Teile der konativen Komponenten unternehmerischer Orientierung eingeführt und die Geschlechterunterschiede anhand von Variablen untersucht. 183 obere und mittlere Manager wurden dazu befragt. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass es keine Geschlechterunterschiede gibt bezüglich der Nutzung von Möglichkeiten, dem Risiko- und dem Innovationsverhalten und in Bezug auf die Planung und Befolgung von Verfahren. Allerdings bestehen geschlechterspezifische Unterschiede bei den intervenierenden Variablen zu analysieren, zu quantifizieren and zu beurteilen sowie bei der Geschicklichkeit und dem handwerklichen Könnens, die in einer berufsbedingten Konzentration der Geschlechter begründet liegen könnten.

Key words: Entrepreneurial orientation, gender difference, middle managers, conation, Slovenia

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1. Introduction

Corporate entrepreneurship activities and orientation can be considered as important predictors of corporate performance and corporate entrepreneurship (intrapreneurship), and is held to promote entrepreneurial behaviour within an organization (Echols/Neck 1998). Coping with contemporary economic challenges depends to a great extent on the calibre of managers (Sanyal/Guvenli 2004) and their skills, knowledge, capabilities, experience, values and behaviour. Thus, entrepreneurial thinking and entrepreneurship orientation (EO) of managers is increasingly needed. Managers who are entrepreneurially oriented should have the same attributes as entrepreneurs: a proactive personality, the ability to spot opportunities, a propensity to take risks, tolerance of ambiguity, innovativeness. The question arises as to how we can measure these antecedents. A further challenge is the eventual gender difference in EO. The emerging concept of conation seems to have the potential to contribute to issue clarification.

Unchangeable biological characteristics which differentiate men and women exist (Goldberg 1993). Usually, the biological differences are seen as the reason for behavioural differences; however, biological sex differences are the fact, whereas gender differences are socially constructed. Therefore, sex is defined in terms of biological or physical characteristics associated with being male or female (Moradi/Yoder 2001), and gender is – as a constructive element of social relationships – socially constructed and culturally shaped (Crompton/Lyonette 2005; Janssen/Murachver 2004).

The female social role in Slovenia, similar to other transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe, was in the past somehow different from developed EU countries due to the influence of the socialist economic and political system. However, Slovenia is standing out in CEE countries which have a more masculine culture. Indeed, GLOBE project results by House et al. (2004) indicate that Slovenia has a feminine culture similar to those of Scandinavian countries.

The leading theory of this article is social constructionism. The contribution of this article is investigating individual characteristics and gender differences in the conative component of EO in Slovenia and thus contributes to the question of gender equality. Further focus is put on gender occupational concentration in management; however, studies on individual gender factors of EO are rare.

2. Theory and hypothesis

EO is interpreted through the lens of gender and intrapreneurial competencies are explained.

2.1. Gender differences and EO orientation

According to biological theory, gender roles are static and contextually independent. Goldberg (1993). Crompton/Lyonette (2005:601) argue that the differences between the sexes are of an intrinsic nature, closely associated with physical, physiological, and/or spiritual differences, and that ‘maleness’ and ‘femaleness’ derive from the impact of different levels of sex hormones, particularly in early development. Therefore, viewing gender as socially constructed differs from traditional approaches, which tend to focus either on differences between the sexes or assume that there are no differences between the sexes (Hare-Mustin/Marecek 1988).

Advocates of social construction theory, which is a sociological theory originating in sociology (Berger/Luckmann 1966), argue that reality is socially constructed (Gergen/Davis 1997; DeLamater/Hyde 1998). Some authors (Gherardi 1994; Højgaard 1997) argue that gender is something we do and something we think. Gender constructions are not stable, they vary over the lifespan, across cultures and among individuals (Spence 1993; Harris 1994; Fausto-Sterling 2000) and that the world we create and the meaning we create in the world are the result of social interaction.

Several theories about gender differences exist. Social role theory (Eagly 1987), human capital theory (Becker 2001; Danziger/Eden 2007), “the revolving door theory” Jacobs (1989), and Hakim’s preference theory (Hakim 2000). Some authors (McRae 2003) have challenged Hakim’s preference theory and it has therefore been the subject of criticism (Crompton/Lyonette 2005), which claims that gender differences would seem to be shaped by structural, as well as, attitudinal factors.

Højgaard (2002) perceives gender as constituted by actions in social space, orchestrated by structural processes and a symbolic order of gender — interwoven in a particular pattern — the cultural discourse on gender. Social structure can constrain and enable social actions by individual actors (Hedstrom/Swedberg, 1996:129). Moreover, distinctive societal culture has an influence on different social phenomena (House et al. 2002). Hofstede (2001) develops a model that identifies four primary dimensions to assist in differentiating cultures. Zagoršek et al. (2004) state that Slovenia has a feminine culture with masculinity dimension 19, which is, according to Geert Hofstede™ Cultural Dimensions (2008), similar to Scandinavian countries. The results are compatible with the GLOBE project results by House et al. (2004), which indicate that Scandinavian countries have a feminine culture as well as Slovenia, meaning that the traditionally feminine values are accepted and respected (care-taking, modesty, relationships, family, harmony, security, etc.). The GLOBE project data set of cultural dimensions is, according to Seleim/Bontis (2009), more recent, extensive, and reliable.

Tang/Cousins (2005) claim that Slovenia (dubbed the ‘Sweden of the south’ by the research team) has, though, a higher proportion of egalitarian families, that is, a higher proportion of men who are involved in daily childcare or who share childcare and some domestic tasks equally. However, with the exception of Slovenia, in CEE countries there is still a strong traditional domestic division of labour which suggests that for working women there is a heavy double burden of paid and unpaid work (Crompton 1997). According to some authors (Esping-Andersen 1999; Leira 2002) the traditional male breadwinner/female housewife model is declining across Europe. It could be attributed to rising of female employment rates, changing family structures and increasing demands for a flexible and inclusive labour market, increased level of public care and universal family services (Larsen 2004) which is typical of the Scandinavian regime type (Bergqvist et al. 1999; Svensson et al. 2004).

The gendered relationships which govern society are reflected on an organizational level and vice versa. Hence, Acker (1990:140) claims that “organisations are one arena in which widely disseminated cultural images of gender are invented and reproduced”. Further more, employment status will itself have an impact on attitudes (Himmelweit/Sigala 2003) because an organization as a dynamic is capable of learning and being creative (Biloslavo 2008; Dimovski et al. 2008). Corporate entrepreneurship activities and orientations can be considered as important predictors of corporate performance, and corporate entrepreneurship (intrapreneurship) is held to promote entrepreneurial behaviour within an organization (Echols/Neck 1998). EO is defined in terms of processes, practices, and decision-making activities on one hand and as one of the personality traits. EO has been studied by many authors (Covin/Slevin 1989; Lumpkin/Dess 1996; Garcia-Morales et al. 2006) who emphasised that a firm must be concurrently risk-taking, innovative, and proactive in order to be labelled “entrepreneurial”, and the most commonly cited initial indicators of managers for the degree of entrepreneurship are risk taking propensity, innovation and opportunity perception as initial indicators for the degree of intrapreneurship (Verheul et al. 2003:10).

2.2. Conative component of EO

Individual antecedents of EO and gender differences will be researched with the conative component. Bandura (1986), in the social cognitive theory, exposes the existence of dynamic interplay among an individual’s cognitive (i.e. thoughts), affective (i.e. emotions), conative (i.e. intentions) factors, behaviour or actions and environment. According to Kolbe (2004), the characteristics of each domain are the following: cognitive (thoughts, intelligence, learned behaviours, knowledge, recall, skills), affective (feelings, emotions, preferences, desires, attitudes, beliefs), and conative (actions, drives, urges, natural abilities, inclinations, patterns of doing). A preferred method of putting thought into action or interacting with the environment is, according to Kolbe (1997), a

conative style which is separated from a person's intelligence or personality type. Moreover, extracting the conative component of EO from cognitive and behavioural ones can help to explain not only the "source of actions in your deep inner nature, but also shows you how to build on those strengths" (Kolbe 1997:4).

Conation per se is an ambiguous term; moreover, it is interwoven with cognition and affection. Several authors elaborate on the conative component (Emmons 1986; Corno 1987; Atman 1987; Snow et al. 1996; Fitzpatrick et al. 2001; Kupermintz 2002; Huitt/Cain 2005; Gerdes/Stromwall 2008). Even though conation was disregarded in the mid-20th century due to the prevalence of the concept of behaviourism and cognition, it is now finding its way back (Huitt/Cain 2005). To summarise several definitions (Kane 1985; Snow et al. 1996), conation is described as volitional steering of action toward some goal. However, as Gerdes/Stromwall (2008: 236) report, conation is not goal-setting motivation or achievement, but the way in which a person with any degree of motivation or goal orientation goes about acting on that motivation and achieving those goals.

Based on Kolbe (Kolbe 2004), we clustered the conative component of EO into four intervening variables or parts:

- the part of the component to analyse, to justify;
- the part of the component to plan, to follow procedures;
- the part of the component to spot opportunities, to risk, to innovate;
- the part of the component for dexterity, craftsmanship.

EO orientation and gender differences will be measured with the conative component, which comprises the most commonly cited entrepreneurial personality traits – and as we believe, of intrapreneurs as well – such as risk taking, innovation, opportunity exploitation and realization, and new market creation. Langowitz/Minniti (2007) claim that these are characteristics of individuals which can not be easily changed by exogenous factors.

The following question arises: is there a gender difference in those four intervening variables or parts of EO?

The model (Figure 1) was built and the hypothesis was set:

H.1 Gender differences between intervening variables to spot opportunities, to risk, and to innovate as parts of the conative component of EO exist.

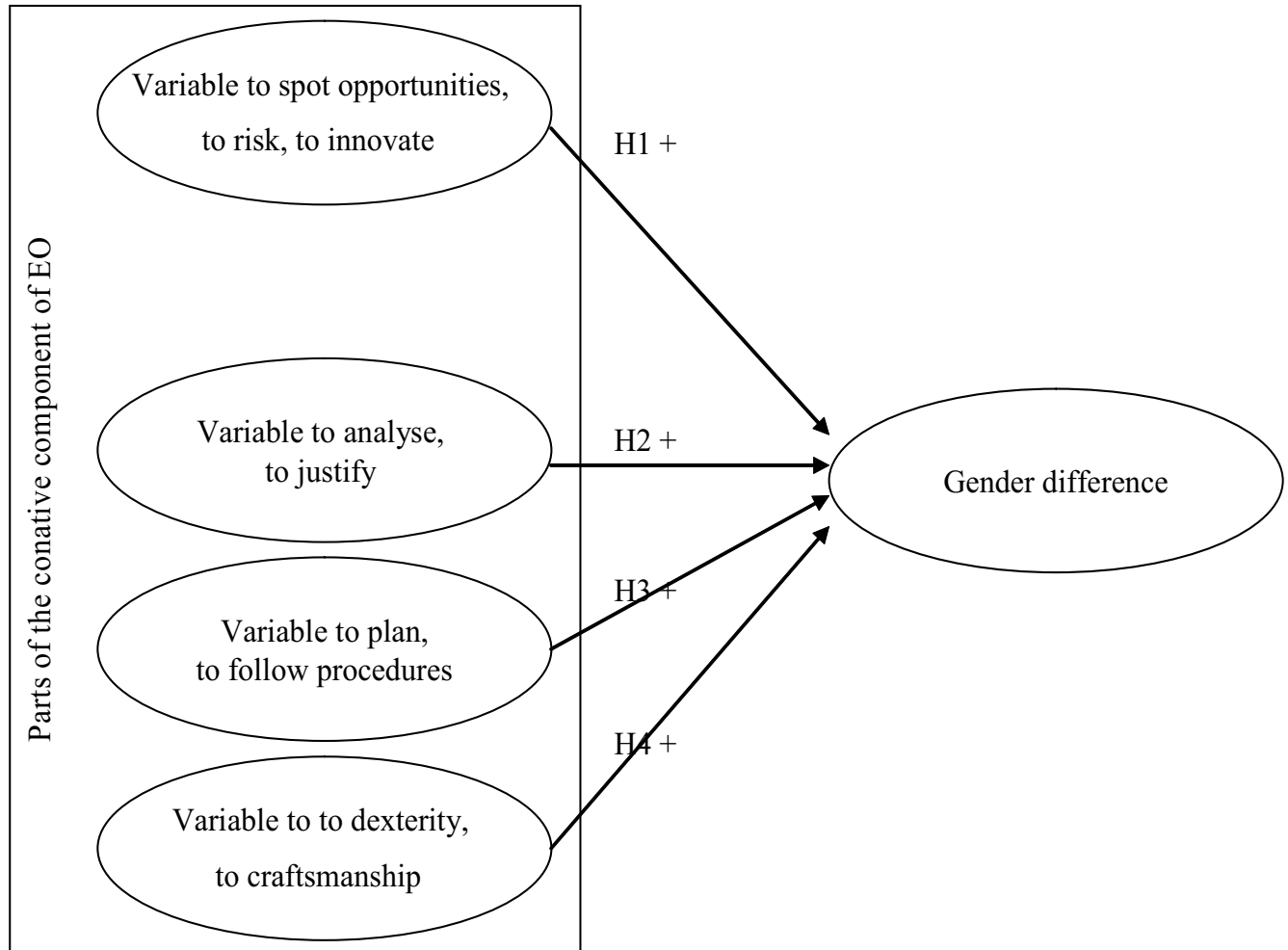
Other conative parts of EO were analysed as well. The following hypotheses were set:

H.2 Gender differences between intervening variables to analyse, to quantify, and to justify as parts of the conative component of EO exist.

H.3 Gender differences between intervening variables to plan, and to follow procedures as parts of the conative component of EO exist.

H.4 Gender differences between intervening variables for dexterity and craftsmanship as parts of the conative component of EO exist.

Figure 1. Hypothesised model. Arrows represent hypothesised paths. H = Hypothesis



3. Methods

The methodology (sample and data collection, variables and measurement, and analysis) that was used to test the hypotheses is presented in this section.

3.1. Sample and data collection

For the purpose of this study, a sample of eleven Slovene companies is used. Slovenia was chosen as a new member of the EU which is enforcing the transition from a planned economic system to a free market through liberalisation, stabilisation, restructuring, and privatisation. The studied sample was chosen in a random manner in different sectors of Slovene industry (cutting,

shaping and finishing of ornamental and building stone; forging, pressing, stamping and roll forming of metal; powder metallurgy; manufacturing of glass and glass products; low electricity diodes technology production; manufacturing of other fabricated metal products; cargo handling and storage; hardware consultancy; business consultancy; hospitality; and tourism). Six of the companies were founded after 1990 and the other five were restructured and privatised after 1990.

One hundred and eighty-three employees participated in the study. The sampling was purposive and only top and middle managers were involved. Eighteen managers were excluded because their result, due to reasons on the individual level, could not be revealed, meaning 155 managers were considered. Most of them (69.9 percent) were men, 26 percent were under 30 years of age, 63 percent between 30 and 50 years of age, and 11 percent over 50 years of age. Not all of them concluded the analysis on an individual's job-related self-expectations, which has to be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. The ratio of women managers is consistent with Eurostat (2008) findings. Eurostat (2008) reveals that in the EU-27 in the year 2006, 32.6 percent of managers (including corporate managers and managers of small enterprises) were women. There were fewer women managers than men managers in all Member States, with the highest shares of women managers recorded in Latvia and Lithuania (both 41 percent), France (39 percent) and Hungary (37 percent). In Slovenia the ratio of women managers was 33.4 percent.

3.2. Variables and measurement

Tools for measuring the conative component of EO are not abundant and the decision was made to use Kolbe tools. Kolbe developed a measure of conative abilities, entitled the Kolbe A™ Index. Although human instincts are considered subconscious and immeasurable, resulting conative actions driven by them are observable and can be objectively assessed (Kolbe et al. 2008). According to Kolbe Corporation (2001:3), the Kolbe instrument does not measure the underlying functions identified by Jung, but rather focuses on the overlays that predispose an individual to apply the function in a particular way.

Each pattern or creative instinct triggers observable behaviour or modes of action through which an individual performs (Kolbe Corporation 2001:3). The questionnaire for the Kolbe A™ Index consists of 36 forced-choice questions. Each question requires a respondent to select how he or she would be most and least likely to behave in a given scenario. The Index takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Index results are always processed by computer. The questionnaire can be assessed on the following web page: <https://www.warewithal.com/kolbeindexes/index.cfm>. According to the Kolbe Corporation, there is no bias in gender, age, race, or national origin in Kolbe

instrument results (Kolbe Corporation 2001). Several researchers have used the Kolbe A™ Index in their studies in selection and team building (Lingard/Berry 2000); for designing engineering classes (Bailey 2002); for studying the learning strategies of high school students (Harper 1997); for active learning (Timmerman et al. 2001); for measuring conative behavioural patterns (Bertoncelj et al. 2007); for measuring management capital (Bertoncelj/Kovač 2008); and for measuring conative competencies (Kovač/Bertoncelj 2008).

Because extracting and measuring the conative part of a personality is challenging in and of itself, special care was taken to investigate the validity and reliability of the Kolbe A™ Index. An argument on the reliability and validity of the Kolbe A™ Index is made by Kolbe (2001). In addition, Kolbe et al (2008) assessed the test-retest reliability of the Kolbe A™ Index and report stability of testing over long time intervals between tests. Kolbe's model has been described as an elegant, highly pragmatic, and ethical method of improving learning and performance Kolbe's categorical conative model has been used by faculty and staff at over 20 universities (Hoffman 2001; Gerdes/Stromwall 2008). Hoffman (2001) views most actions as distinct from the affective or emotional parts of the personality, and they are highly stable and resistant to change. Fitzpatrick et al. (2001) used the Kolbe A™ Index as a measurement tool for personality traits which measure the conative, or instinctual, tendencies of individuals, and found this to be a good candidate because it professed to be stable over time, easily measured and demonstrably linked to the productivity of the system.

According to Kolbe (2004), there are four action or conative modes as percentages of mental energy available for expression, through which we act with different intensities (on a scale of 1 to 10) and can be determined with the Kolbe A™ Index:

- FF - Fact Finder, which is based on the instinctive need to probe and relates to the way we gather information;
- FT - Follow Thru, which is based on the instinctive need to pattern and deals with the way we organize information;
- QS - Quick Start, which is based on the instinctive need to innovate and how we deal with unknowns;
- IM – Implementor, which is based on the instinctive need to demonstrate and relates the way we seek tangible solutions.

The raw scores of the Kolbe A™ Index reflect the frequency with which the subject would tend to initiate, respond to, or resist probing, organizing, improvising and constructing behaviours (Kolbe Corporation 2001: 5). Hence, each abovementioned mode has three Zones of Operation™ on a scale of 1 to 10 (Kolbe Corporation 2001). In the Preventive Zone (1 to 3) one prevents problems, in the Responsive Zone (4 to 6) one acts in an accommodating way, and in the Initiative Zone (7 to 10) one initiates solutions. According to Kolbe (2005) the three operating zones and the four action modes create a 3 x 4 matrix

that shows 12 different conative strengths or talents. Gerdes/Stromwall (2008) report that each of the 12 possible conative actions is viewed as equally valid and may lead to useful, successful, and constructive action. Furthermore, Gerdes/Stromwall (2008) claim that although individuals can learn to solve problems using any of these paths, Kolbe theorized that each person has one preferred path in each action mode. If individuals are allowed or encouraged to problem solve using their four natural tendencies, they are believed to be more successful.

3.3. Results of analysis

Results of the analysis (Table I) reveal that gender differences between the intervening variables as parts of the conative component of competencies exist.

Table 1. Results of four interveining variables of conative components of intrapeneurial competencies for men and women

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
FFa	men	107	5.7009	1.4023	0.1356
	women	48	6.1667	1.2772	0.1844
FTa	men	107	4.9252	1.2492	0.1208
	women	48	5.1875	1.2826	0.1851
QSa	men	107	4.9720	1.7828	0.7240
	women	48	5.0833	1.9876	0.2869
IMa	men	107	4.5981	1.6927	0.1636
	women	48	3.8333	1.5065	0.2174

Considering the intervening variables to spot opportunities, to risk, and to innovate of the conative part of EO (measured with the QS Kolbe Action Mode™), the difference is the lowest amongst all parts. However, standard deviation is highest in both the women's and men's sample. The mean result for women is 5.0 and for men 5.1. The highest difference exists in the mean result in the intervening variables of dexterity, and craftsmanship (women 3.8 and men 4.6). The standard deviation is 1.50 for women and 1.69 for men. Women and men managers' mean result for the intervening variables to analyse, to quantify, and to justify as parts of the conative component of EO is highest (6.2 for women and 5.7 for men). The standard deviation in this part is 1.40 for men and 1.28 for women. The result for the intervening variables to plan and to follow procedures as parts of the conative component of EO exhibit a difference in the mean result (women 5.2 and men 4.9), considering the standard deviation of 1.28 for women and 1.25 for men.

Table 2. Differences in four intervening variables of conative components of intrapreneurial competencies for men and women

FFa men – FFa women	-0.47
FTa men – FTa women	-0.26
QSa men – QSa-women	-0.11
IMa men – IMa women	0.76

A gender difference between the intervening variables to spot opportunities, to risk, and to innovate as parts of the conative component of EO does not exist (Table 2). The difference is 0.11.

The largest difference exists in the intervening variables for dexterity and craftsmanship (0.76), meaning that men managers from the sample have a higher result. The difference in the intervening variables to analyse, to quantify, and to justify follows (-0.47). In this variable, women have the higher result. The difference between the intervening variables to plan and to follow procedures is -0.26. Again women have the higher result.

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was used. It is not statistically significant ($\text{sig} < 0.05$), to confirm the differences between gender differences, hence the t-test for Equality of Means was used (Table III). The results for the intervening variables of the conative component of EO for women's and men's results were compared:

- in the variable to spot opportunities, to risk, and to innovate the result is level ($t = -0.35$, $p = 0.73$). Moreover, the risk to confirm gender differences is too high (Sig (2-tailed) = 0.73);
- in the intervening variable to analyse, to quantify, and to justify the mean value result of women is higher than men's ($t = -1.96$, $p = 0.05$). Gender differences can be confirmed with 5% risk (Sig (2-tailed) = 0.05);
- in the intervening variables to plan and to follow procedures the mean value result of women is higher than men's as well ($t = -1.20$, $p = 0.23$). The risk to confirm gender differences is too high (Sig (2-tailed) = 0.23);
- in the intervening variables for dexterity and craftsmanship the mean value result of men is higher than that of women ($t = 2.69$, $p = 0.01$). The gender difference can be confirmed with 1% risk (Sig (2-tailed) = 0.01).

Table 3. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances and t-test for Equality of Means

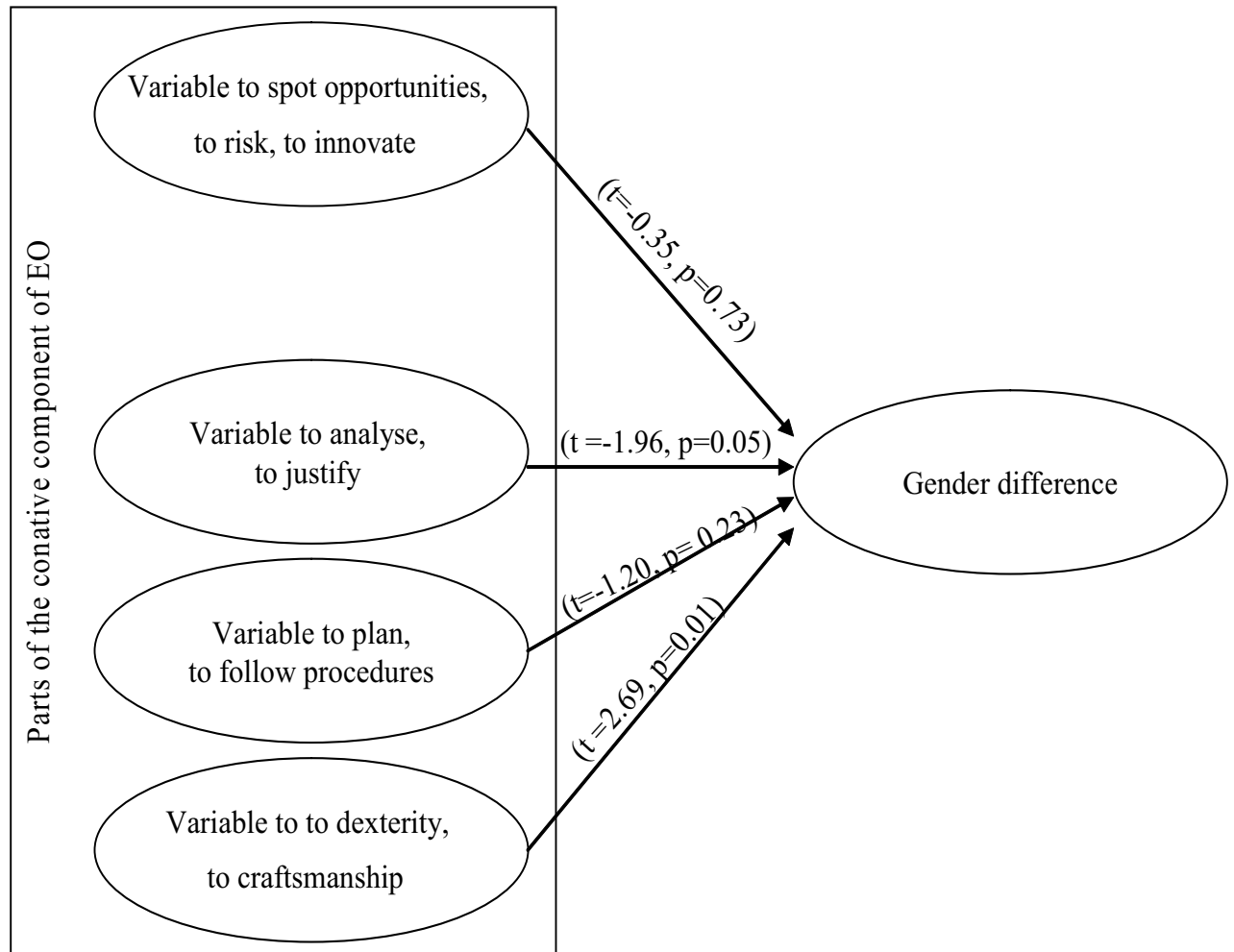
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
FFa	Equal variances assumed	0.289	0.592	-1.96	153.00	0.05	-0.47	0.24	-0.93	0.00
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.04	98.77	0.04	-0.47	0.23	-0.92	-0.01
FTa	Equal variances assumed	0.503	0.479	-1.20	153.00	0.23	-0.26	0.22	-0.69	0.17
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.19	88.41	0.24	-0.26	0.22	-0.70	0.18
QSa	Equal variances assumed	0.619	0.433	-0.35	153.00	0.73	-0.11	0.32	-0.75	0.52
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.33	82.29	0.74	-0.11	0.33	-0.78	0.55
IMa	Equal variances assumed	1.997	0.160	2.69	153.00	0.01	0.76	0.28	0.20	1.33
	Equal variances not assumed			2.81	100.96	0.01	0.76	0.27	0.22	1.30

4. Discussion of the findings

Some authors when teaching entrepreneurship discuss “sciences” (for example business and functional management competencies), which are considered to be teachable, and “arts” (for example creative and innovative thinking), which is highly subjective and is a fundamentally experiential skill, which does not appear to be teachable in the same way (Jack–Anderson 1999; Rae 2004). With the conative component of EO, we have measured the “arts” of intrapreneurship. A gender difference exists neither in the part of the component to spot opportunities, to risk and to innovate nor in the part of the component to plan

and to follow procedures (Figure 2). It could be claimed that women have as many of the aforementioned characteristics as men, and that it depends on socio-economic and cultural factors if they can exhibit them.

Figure 2. Hypothesis model results



Femininity is stereotypically associated with lower levels of risk-taking, particularly physical risk-taking (Ronay 2006), because masculinity stereotypically shares a connection with risk-taking (Bem 1981/1993; Kelling et al. 1976). This stereotype is not consistent with Kolbe's findings (Kolbe 2001), and with the findings of Carland/Carland (1991), who found no significant difference in risk-taking propensity between men and women. Langowitz/Minniti (2007) point out that their study does not support the argument that women entrepreneurs are born rather than made. On the other hand, in Western Australia Watson/Newby (2005) and in the United States Sexton/Bowman-Upton (1990) and Jianakopolis/Bernasek (1998), found differences. However, the different cultural and social background from Slovenia has to be considered. It seems that women are not a homogenous group. They are separated at least by class, age, educational background, sexuality, ethnicity, and nationality (Pušnik/Bulc 2001). Foo et al (2006), in

their research, found that women technology entrepreneurs were more future-oriented and more intuitive than the women technology managers; however, the difference in risk-taking between these two groups of women was only slight.

Gender difference in the intervening variables to plan and to follow procedures, as parts of the conative component of EO, could be not confirmed. The risk of confirming it is too high, though the mean value result of women in the intervening variables to plan and to follow procedures is higher than men's. When studying the "Big Five" personality differences, Sexton/Bowman-Upton (1990) found that women scored higher than men on autonomy and change (persons with high autonomy, amongst others, dislike and avoid routine). Intervening variables of the conative component of EO can be compared with traits exhibited by people with a great need for achievement. Langan-Fox (2005), who conducted a literature review, defines people with a high need for achievement, which is widely thought to predict entrepreneurial behaviour, as those who avoid routine and seek information to find better ways to perform; they excel at moderately challenging tasks, and they take responsibility for their own performance. Those are characteristics measured by the FF and FT Kolbe Action Mode™. Our findings only partly concur with the conclusions of many researchers (Jenkins 1987; Ragins/Sundstrom 1989; Hasenmark 2003) who indicate gender differences in the need for achievement, though it appears that the achievement motive is not aroused in women and men under the same conditions (O'Connor 2001). We found differences in the characteristic to analyse, to quantify, and to justify (which are, on the other hand, ways to seek information), but we could not confirm gender differences in the intervening variables to plan and to follow procedures (avoiding or initiating routine). Autonomy and the need for achievement comprise conative elements, which are similar to intervening variables to plan and to follow procedures as parts of the conative component of competencies.

Though differences in the parts of the component to analyse, to justify, and in the component for dexterity and craftsmanship exist, it can not be attributed to biological gender differences. Women from the sample were more analytical and inclined to analyse, quantify, and justify. The results are not congruent with the research of Carland/Carland (1991), who found women entrepreneurs to be less "thinking" oriented (logical or rational, in contrast to people oriented) than men. It is a fact that gender occupational concentration in top and middle management exists in Slovenia and does not differ much from EU-15 countries, and has to be considered. Comparing Scandinavian countries with Slovenia, Scandinavian researchers on gender equality at work, especially gendering management, found that the lack of women in top management is a consequence of institutional norms rather than individual choices and that leadership practice is modelled on masculine notions of management (Wahl 1997; Holgersson 2003; Eriksson-Zetterquist/Styhre 2008). Gender occupational concentration can therefore be

attributed to socio-economic, cultural, historical and religious factors, and not conative components. Indeed, gender diversity itself is a social construct, not a genetic absolute (Lewis 2001). The myth of femininity, which is strongly present in the discourse of women politicians in Slovenia, is generally considered common and given to Slovene society and culture (Pušnik/Bulc 2001).

A lot of stereotypes influence our life, and as a persistent and pervasive facet can not be overlooked (Baron et al. 2001). One consequence of stereotypes for women is less favourable positions in careers as managers and entrepreneurs. According to Baron et al. (2001), women entrepreneurs have been negatively stereotyped as less severe than women in large companies. Similarly, entrepreneurs have been stereotyped as being masculine (Baron 1999). Powell et al. (2002) argue that although managerial stereotypes place less emphasis on masculine characteristics than earlier studies suggest, a good manager is still perceived to be predominantly masculine by both women and men. It can not be overlooked that in our sample almost 70% of participants were men. It can be attributed to the paradigm of typical male and typical female occupations, which has resulted in women's tendency to enter jobs that are labelled as the 'female-type' and perceived as best-suited for women. It is, as well, a consequence of their type of education, lower occupational aspirations or lower commitment to investing in their careers (Danziger/Eden 2007). The result could be attributed to the sample of middle managers, where gender occupational concentration occurs (finance, quality), and thus it can not be generalised.

The impact of the socio-cultural environment in Slovenia on entrepreneurship is described by Morison (2000) and Dimovski/Žnidaršič (2004), who claim that the most desired entrepreneurial characteristics are relatively rare in Slovenia due to its employment history (i.e., mainly farmers and craftsmen) and existing educational system (i.e., conformist, anti-entrepreneurial behaviour) and because its entrepreneurial culture is rather new and underdeveloped. On the other hand, in the transitional, post-communist society a lot of entrepreneurial activities are taking place in a parallel economy. This is due to the previously prevalent conditions which forced people to find alternative means for profitable economic activities. Further, in the early 1990s, entrepreneurship in Slovenia became tainted with charges of profiteering, speculation, violence, and criminality and it was well perceived (Morison 2000:63). Furthermore, strong cultural conditioning with low tolerance to failure on one hand and low support for individualistic wealth creation through entrepreneurship on the other hand has been inconsistently applied, which leaves a durable stigma on entrepreneurship in Slovenia (Morison 2000). The aforementioned findings intuitively impact on intrapreneurship and EO as well.

Gender difference exists in the intervening variable for dexterity and craftsmanship, in which men exhibit a higher inclination to dexterity, modelling,

and craftsmanship than women. It could be attributed to the industry that the companies from the sample are in and the job requirements. The stereotype that men are better at spatial tasks than women is probably one of the most persistent. However, Sharps et al (1994) found no difference among an ethnically heterogeneous sample of college students; hence, they attributed it to socio-cultural factors. On the other hand, Foo et al (2006) found women technology entrepreneurs more abstract oriented than women technology managers.

According to Butler (1990), gender is not what is present as such but rather the symbolic and semiotic, the cognitive and emotional differences that humans ascribe to one another. However, Schmidt-Rodermund (2004) researching East German students' entrepreneurial skill or interest found no relationship between gender; nevertheless, she found a moderately strong positive effect of early entrepreneurial competence on entrepreneurial interest in the form of nature (as inborn personality) and nurture (authoritarian parenting). The study was cross sectional and was conducted in East Germany during the transition from socialism to capitalism. The effect of a socially constructed gender difference about the early entrepreneurial traits of boys and girls can be drawn from the studies of Wilson et al. (2004), and Kourilsky/Walstad (1998). Speaking of socially constructed gender differences, conation is closer to "nature" (socio-biologist) and cognition and affection to "nurture" (social constructionist) (Rose/Rose 2000).

However, all mean results for the Kolbe ATM Index for both women and men are in the responsive mode or accommodative Zone of OperationTM (Kolbe 2004). From an occupational standpoint, differences are small and the mean result for both genders indicates that their most stable part of EO (i.e. the conative part) is almost level. Similarly, Langowitz/Minniti (2007) point out that their study does not support the argument that women entrepreneurs are borne rather than made.

According to Bertoneclj/Kovač (2007) and Kovač et al. (2009), the transition process in Slovenia has not stopped the increase in employment discrimination of women and equalised gender career opportunities. All observed ratios (unemployment rate, education rate, gender difference in earnings, employment by economic activity, contributing family workers) lead to the conclusion that gender occupational differences remain firmly anchored in Slovenia.

5. Conclusions and future research

More and more gender statistics are available, but those on EO are scarce, hence our research adds to the arsenal of gender studies as research based on the differences between women and men. We found no gender difference in the most cited entrepreneurial elements as part of conative competencies to spot opportunities, to risk, to innovate, nor in the part to plan and to follow

procedures. We attribute the differences in the part of the component to analyse, to justify and the part of the component for dexterity, craftsmanship to the sample composition. We believe that the selection of women in positions of middle management is socially conditioned.

Our research introduced the concept of intervening variables as parts of the conative component of EO and eventual gender differences and added to the limited arsenal of studies on gender differences in EO. Most studies focus on socio-cultural and economic factors; therefore, our research represents a fresh approach and adds to the development of more comprehensive knowledge in gender occupational differences.

The practical implications of the article are in raising public awareness on the plight of occupational concentration in top and middle management in the post-transition economy of Slovenia (and other EU countries). We believe that Slovenia could be a small-scale role model for other developing economies worldwide on their way to market economies. Due to the specific socio-cultural background in Slovenia, the generalisation of the findings is limited. CEE countries with a similar historical background are more masculine.

However, the impact of conative components on gender equalisation can not be overlooked. Being quantitative, the study provides a framework for a promising investigation into that field. However, our research has several limitations. One limitation is that the sample is rather small and that we have measures for only one country to present an actual test of our argument. Another limitation is that the research is cross sectional and not longitudinal. Therefore, the study is more suggestive than conclusive. However, the available measures allow encouraging further analysis with emphasis placed on longitudinal and international studies.

More representative samples may provide a better basis for the generalization of the results. To deepen our knowledge about gender differences in corporate entrepreneurship, it would be especially interesting for future studies to continue longitudinal research in different cultural settings and to focus on how women's self-expectations influence corporate entrepreneurship.

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