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Entrepreneurial Intention among Syrian Students

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Abstract

In hard times, when educated persons cannot get job, self-employment is referred as a solution. But entrepreneurship is not the function that might be outcome of simple efforts. It requires a regular and permanent attitude as a part of personality.

Few studies have examined how personality differences among individual's students can influence their entrepreneurial intention especially among students enrolled in Business Administration programs

This paper aims to examine the relationship between personality traits using big five factor model and entrepreneurial intention. A total sample of 152 students from business schools in Syria is selected. The research finding indicates that there is a significant positive impact of openness to experience and extraversion on entrepreneurial intention.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Intention, Personality Traits, Big-Five Factors.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is becoming a very relevant instrument to promote economic growth and development in different regional and national economies. Since 1970, many western countries have shared the same experience that large established firms can no longer create any net increase in employment. This has resulted in high level of unemployment and the small and new firms are important as creator of new jobs (Davidson, 1994)

Entrepreneurship is a concept that has been defined in various ways (Bruyat, 2001) it is viewed as a multi-dimensional construct that is defined variously by different people hence there is no unified definition. According to (Mokaya, 2012), entrepreneurship is the individual motivation and willingness to take risk, create and sustain a growth-oriented and profit-making enterprise. Entrepreneurship is also viewed as a cultural and economic phenomenon (Grozdanii, 2008), a

process of fundamental transformation from an innovative idea to an enterprise, from an enterprise to creation of value (Krueger, 2007)

In researchers' opinion (Baron, 2007), the entrepreneurial process begins with the entrepreneurial intention, the starting-up of the business being mainly influenced by the consistency of the psychological development and by the cognitive ability to anticipate the entrepreneurial tasks.

Entrepreneurial intention predicted by several factors like demographic factors including age, gender, education, work experience.

This study aims to examine the impact of each Syrian business students personality factors on their entrepreneurial intention using BigFive Factor model and the results of this study may help decision makers in Syria to establish to understand the why students may decide to start their own business which can help them in developing the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Big Five Factors Personality Traits.

The five-factor model (FFM) of personality is a widely accepted model (Ariani, 2013). While developing 100 items for the structure of the model, Goldberg (1992) noted that relatively small sets of variables could serve as FFM adjective markers. Accordingly, (Saucier, 1994) developed the 40-item Mini-Marker subset of variables relatively close to the prototypical cores of the FFM of personality. Subsequently, (Thompson, 2008) developed the International English Big-Five Mini-Markers (IEBFMM) model and confirmed the invariance of the FFM structure across several cultures. The structure of the FFM comprises the five dimensions of extraversion, openness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and agreeableness.

According to the emerging consensus, the five major dimensions of personality are neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness e.g., (Costa, 1985) Neuroticism indicates adjustment versus emotional stability. Individuals who score high on neuroticism are characterized by high levels of anxiety, hostility, depression, and self-consciousness. High levels of extraversion indicate sociability, warmth, assertiveness, and activity, whereas individuals low on extraversion may be described as reserved, sober, aloof, task-oriented, and introverted. Openness to experience is defined in terms of curiosity and the tendency for seeking and appreciating new experiences and novel ideas. Individuals who score low on openness are characterized as conventional, unartistic, and narrow in interests. Agreeableness is one's interpersonal orientation, ranging from soft-hearted, good-natured, trusting, and gullible at one extreme to cynical, rude, suspicious, and manipulative at the other. Finally, conscientiousness indicates the individual's degree of organization, persistence, and motivation in goal-directed behavior. Achievement-orientation and dependability or conformity have been found to be primary facets of conscientiousness (Hogan, 1997).

Entrepreneurial Intention

The entrepreneurial decisions of Business students in Syria can be determined by studying their entrepreneurial intentions.

(AJZEN, 1991) Stated in his theory of planned behavior that any behavior requires some planning, the act of creating a new business can be predicted according to the intention adopted by a given individual.

(AJZEN, 1991) Comprises three independent variables, which precede the formation of the intention and that in turn predict behavior. The first variable is the attitude toward the behavior, i.e., to determine the opportune moment for a particular behavior. The second variable corresponds to subjective norms, which means the very perception that an individual has on the surrounding community, perception of individual control, leading the individual to also have a certain behavior

(Bird, 1988) also define the intentionality concept as: "A state of mind, directing attention, experience, and action toward a specific object (goal) or pathway to its achievement" also (Thompson, 2008) defined entrepreneurial intention as "a self-acknowledged conviction by a person that they intend to set up a new business venture and consciously plan to do so at some point in the future."

An entrepreneurial intention is a commitment to starting a new business. It is the degree of commitment directed towards the performance of the entrepreneurial endeavor of putting up a business for self employment (Krueger, 1993).

(Lans, 2010) defined three types of intentions to create a business: classical entrepreneurial intention, alternative entrepreneurial intention, and intrapreneurial intention. These three types of intentions indicate that learning goals and professional requirements differ amongst entrepreneurs.

Personality Traits and Entrepreneurial Intention

Recent studies have indicated a strong relationship between personality traits and entrepreneurial intention. These studies shows that people with high level of entrepreneurial intention are more extroverted, open to experience and conscientious and less neurotic and agreeable e.g. (Zhao, 2010)

Also a study on Malaysian student shows that there is a significant relationship between extraversion and openness to experience e.g. (Muhammad, 2009).

In addition, (Chen, 2012) showed in a study on university graduates that extraversion influences entrepreneurial intention through entrepreneurship; openness directly influences entrepreneurial intention and also exerts an indirect effect through entrepreneurship; and conscientiousness directly influences entrepreneurial intention and also exerts an indirect effect through entrepreneurial attitude.

Based on above studies we can consider that personality factors may be strong related to entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis

H1: Extraversion has a positive impact on entrepreneurial intention.

H2: Neuroticism has positive impact on entrepreneurial intention.

H3: Openness to experience has a positive impact on entrepreneurial intention.

H4: Agreeableness has a positive impact on entrepreneurial intention.

H5: Conscientiousness has a positive impact on entrepreneurial intention.

Research Methodology

Data Collection and Sample

Data for this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data were collected through comprehensive literature review. The primary data were collected from Damascus university students in Syria. A total sample of 150 students was selected from Damascus University. Questionnaire related to the study variables was the main tool of this study.

Measures

The questionnaire includes three sections: Big Five Personality traits (Extraversion, Openness to experience, conscientiousness, neuroticism and agreeableness) entrepreneurial intention and basic demographic information. Apart of basic demographic information, a 5-point Likert scale format was used, and the scores on the scale ranges from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree.

4.1. Big Five Factor Personality Traits: personality traits are measured using 10 items, 2 item for each dimension which is taken from study by (Rammstedt, 2007). The scale reported reliability 0.621.

4.2. Entrepreneurial intention: entrepreneurial intention is measured using 6 items which is taken from study by (Kolvereid, 1996). The scale reported reliability 0.842.

Findings

This study examines the impact of personality traits on entrepreneurial intention.

Table (1) shows the results of regression analysis regarding the impact of personality traits on dependent variable (entrepreneurial intention). As presented in this table, model is significant at the 5% level ($R^2 = .333$). Coefficient of openness to experience and extrovert is significant and positive for entrepreneurial intention ($P < 0.05$). thus H1 and H3 are accepted while H2, H4 and H5 are rejected. This findings indicate that when students have high openness to experience and extraversion traits they will be more likely to have intention to establish their own business

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.509 ^a	.259	.204	.70255

a. Predictors: (Constant), Openness to experience, conscientiousness, agreeableness, Extraversion, neuroticism

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.557	.877		1.776	.080
1 Extraversion	.288	.119	.284	2.426	.018
agreeableness	-.153	.172	-.099	-.889	.377
conscientiousness	.111	.123	.103	.904	.369
neuroticism	-.025	.112	-.027	-.225	.823
Openness to experience	.338	.117	.337	2.881	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Intention

Conclusion

This article aimed to study the relationship between personality traits using Big-Five theory and entrepreneurial intention. This study show that openness to experience and extraversion are significant and they have a positive impact on entrepreneurial intention while agreeableness, neuroticism and conscientiousness didn't show any significant impact on entrepreneurial intention

The findings that openness significantly predicted entrepreneurial intention are consistent with previous literature e.g. (Muhammad, 2009) , (Singh, 2003). According to (Hogan, 1997) open individual tend to be curious and they always seek for new experiences and novel ideas thus, entrepreneurship will be a very good choice for them because these characteristics are important in becoming successful entrepreneurs. Extraversion is also significantly and positively related to entrepreneurship intention. According (Hogan, 1997) individuals who high level of extraversion tends to be indicate sociability, warmth, assertiveness, and activity. The findings of this study are also consistent with previous studies that extraversion is positively related to interest in enterprising occupations e.g., (Costa, 1984)

the reason why neuroticism, agreeableness and conscientiousness are not related to entrepreneurial intention is not obvious. But authors thinks that people who score high level of neuroticism are characterized by high levels of anxiety, hostility, depression, and self-consciousness and those Characteristics are not compatible with entrepreneurial personality which require risk taking and dealing with pressure.

Also individuals, who score high level of Conscientiousness, are associated with diligence, organization, and persistence, which may be appropriate for self-employment. Those same characteristics, however, may push an individual away from self-employment toward a career in a larger organization that would also value such traits. e.g. (Muhammad, 2009). And for agreeableness authors believe that individuals who score high level of agreeableness have traits which are not compatible with personality traits such as soft-hearted and good-natured because entrepreneurs have to be leaders and tough in certain situations.

The findings of this study may have policy implications especially for those providing assistance to entrepreneurs especially in the last couple of years where the Syrian crisis negatively affect

the labor market which create labor gap between supply and demand which make the entrepreneurship one of best solutions for this problem.

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