Entrepreneurial Intentions among Saudi University Students:
The Role of Motivations and Start-Up Problems

Abstract

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Using Azjen’s Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), we study the effect of entrepreneurial motivations and perceived start-up problems on the entrepreneurial intentions of Saudi university youth. To explore our research questions, we use data from a unique survey of the entrepreneurial attitudes of students at King Saud University, the oldest and largest university in Saudi Arabia, conducted in the Spring of 2010 (n=952). We find that the strife for independence is a very strong predictor of expressing entrepreneurial intentions and its effect is universal across gender. While most of the potential start-up problems are assessed as serious by both men and women, their individual effect is not so strong as to significantly affect the likelihood of expressing entrepreneurial intentions. In addition, as can be expected from the different socialization experiences of young Saudi men and women, there are significant differences by gender in both the motivations for and perceived problems in starting a new venture. Theoretical and public policy implications are discussed.

Key words: entrepreneurial motivations, theory of planned behavior, university youth, Saudi Arabia
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Using Azjen’s planned behavior theory (TPB), this study aimed to investigate the role of motivations and start-up problems on entrepreneurial intentions among Saudi university students. A total of 250 surveys were collected from students at King Saud University, the oldest and largest university in Saudi Arabia. The results showed that the desire for independence is a strong motivator for entrepreneurship, and its effects are widespread across genders. Most of the start-up problems are considered serious for both men and women, but their individual impacts are not significant. Additionally, due to differences in socialization between men and women, there are significant differences in motivations and start-up problems.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial intentions, Saudi University students, planned behavior theory.