

The Impact of Active Personality on Entrepreneurial Behavior among Iranian Students: Evaluating the Mediating and Moderating Role of Entrepreneurial Intention and Gender

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of proactive personality on entrepreneurial behavior, considering the mediating role of entrepreneurial intention and the moderating role of gender among students in Iran's higher education system. The research aims to enhance understanding of personality traits in fostering entrepreneurship and provide practical insights for improving entrepreneurship education. The statistical population comprised associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral students in Iran's higher education system. Using simple random sampling in an online setting, 506 students were selected. Data were collected through a standardized questionnaire, whose validity was assessed via expert opinions and construct validity analysis, while reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Data analysis, conducted using SPSS 26 and SmartPLS 4, revealed that proactive personality significantly and positively influences entrepreneurial behavior. Students with a proactive personality are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Additionally, proactive personality affects entrepreneurial intention, which, in turn, enhances entrepreneurial behavior, indicating a mediating role of entrepreneurial intention. The study also explored gender as a moderating factor but found no statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between proactive personality and entrepreneurial intention or behavior. This suggests that the influence of proactive personality on entrepreneurship is independent of gender. These findings have practical implications for policymakers and educators in designing entrepreneurship programs. Strengthening proactive personality traits in students can encourage entrepreneurial engagement. Moreover, since gender does not play a moderating role, entrepreneurship education should be designed equally for all students.

Keywords: Proactive Personality, Entrepreneurial Behavior, Entrepreneurial Intention, Gender Analysis, Higher Education



Introduction

Entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in economic development, fostering innovation, job creation, and competitiveness. Given the growing emphasis on entrepreneurial activities, understanding the psychological and behavioral factors that drive entrepreneurial behavior is essential. Among these factors, personality traits significantly influence an individual's propensity to engage in entrepreneurship. Proactive personality, characterized by self-initiative and perseverance in overcoming obstacles, has been identified as a key determinant of entrepreneurial behavior. However, the underlying mechanisms through which proactive personality impacts entrepreneurial behavior remain underexplored, particularly regarding the mediating role of entrepreneurial intention and the moderating role of gender. This study seeks to fill this research gap by examining how proactive personality fosters entrepreneurial behavior through entrepreneurial intention while also assessing whether gender moderates these relationships.

Methodology

The research employed a quantitative approach, utilizing a cross-sectional survey design to collect data from students in Iran's higher education system. The statistical population included students at various academic levels, ranging from associate to doctoral degrees. A simple random sampling method was adopted through an online platform, yielding a final sample of 506 participants. The primary data collection instrument was a standardized questionnaire, whose validity was assessed through expert review and construct validity analysis. Reliability was ensured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability measures. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26 and Smart PLS version 4, enabling advanced statistical analyses to evaluate direct, indirect, and moderating relationships between the study variables.

Findings

The results indicated that proactive personality exerts a significant positive influence on entrepreneurial behavior. In other words, individuals with a higher degree of proactivity demonstrate a greater inclination toward entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, the study confirmed that entrepreneurial intention serves as a mediating variable, reinforcing the relationship between proactive personality and entrepreneurial behavior. This suggests that students with proactive personalities are not only more likely to develop entrepreneurial intentions but are also more likely to translate these intentions into tangible entrepreneurial actions. Regarding the moderating role of gender, the findings revealed no statistically significant effect. This implies that the impact of proactive personality on entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behavior is consistent across both male and female students. The absence of gender-based differences challenges conventional assumptions about gender disparities in entrepreneurship and suggests that proactive personality influences entrepreneurial engagement regardless of gender.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature on entrepreneurship by highlighting the crucial role of proactive personality in shaping entrepreneurial behavior through the mediating mechanism of entrepreneurial intention. The findings underscore the importance of fostering proactive traits among students to enhance their entrepreneurial potential. Additionally, the non-significant moderating effect of gender suggests that entrepreneurship education programs should be designed inclusively, ensuring equal opportunities for both genders. These insights hold valuable implications for educators and policymakers seeking to develop more effective entrepreneurship training initiatives within higher education institutions.

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