Entrepreneurial Experience, Sex, and Sport Experience: A Study of Texas Entrepreneurs

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Saturday, June 1, 2019
Poster
Room: Napoleon AB corridor

The research of Poschke (2013) and Lofstrom, Bates, and Parker (2014) respectively sought to explore answers to the questions of “who becomes an entrepreneur” (p. 693) and “why are some people more likely to become small-business owners than others” (p. 232). Considering these questions and how they relate to men and women, this research examines the status of sex as it relates to entrepreneurial experience. According to Robb and Watson (2012), less women (than men) own businesses, less women start new ventures, and women tend to take fewer risks. Societal contexts, career transition and goals, as well as low representation denotes challenges for women as they pursue entrepreneurial ventures (Kumar & Bhuvaneswari, 2016). In considering these challenges, understanding entrepreneurial cognition is essential in valuing the business process and success rates among entrepreneurs. To address this in part, it was noted that characteristic variables play an important role in the process and mindset of entrepreneurship (Zhao and Seibert; 2006), in which, entrepreneurs tend to possess high internal locus of control, self-efficacy, need for achievement, a proactive nature, and resilience for uncertainty (Nga & Shamuganathan, 2010). Similar to entrepreneurs, athletes exhibit analogous characteristics demonstrating low anxiety rates, high levels of mental toughness, a strong drive to succeed, and a strong sense of self-belief which yields significant effect in sport (Aidman & Schofield, 2004) and predictability of sport performance (Piedmont, Hill, & Blanco, 1999). The similarities shared between the psychological characteristics and personality traits of entrepreneurs and athletes is noteworthy considering these psychological qualities influence one’s “enduring and distinctive pattern of feeling, thinking, and behaving” (Cervone & Pervin, 2010, p. 7). The traits of entrepreneurs, coinciding with the traits of athletes, begs the question of whether entrepreneurial career paths encourage viability and success for athletes and more specifically, women athletes. Therefore, the purpose of this study is two-fold and investigates entrepreneurial experience as it relates to sex (male and female) and sport experience. Participants in this research study include entrepreneurs registered with the 2017 Texas Business Database. Business owner email addresses will be sorted to generate a listserv through which a recruitment letter and link to the online anonymous survey will be distributed. The survey instrument includes modified questions from the US Census Bureau Survey of Entrepreneurs, sport experience questions (highest level of experience, years as an athlete, competition sport), and entrepreneurial experience (managerial experience, entrepreneurial experience, industry experience, high-growth experience) questions as defined by Jo and Lee (1996). Results of this study will contribute to the body of literature by (a) aiming to realize possible connections between sex, sport experience, and entrepreneurship; (b) demonstrating the significance of findings as they relate to society and inequity for women within entrepreneurial ventures; and (c) promoting entrepreneurship as potential viable career pathways for women athletes.