

Resilience and innovative work behaviours of entrepreneurs: the moderating role of gender

Central thesis

According to De Jong & Den Hartog (2010), Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB) contains all the dimensions of entrepreneurship: idea exploration, generation of ideas that are new or partially/totally adapted, looking for support for the ideas and implementation of the ideas.

The IWB depends on personality traits (Woods et al. 2018). Thus, understanding what kind of personality trait is related to innovation outcomes for entrepreneurs becomes a real issue. We assume that resilience of entrepreneurs is crucial in order to reach out innovation. Resilience refers to positive adaptation in the face of stress or trauma (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). Indeed, innovation requires trial and errors before being successful because entrepreneurship is not a linear process without any problems on the road to success. This is a process composed of both success and failures. These failures are source of stress in one hand, but also a source of learning in the other hand. It can be very useful if the entrepreneur knows how to take advantage of her or his experience (Ayala and Manzano, 2014). Hayward et al. (2010) proposed a model in which different kind of resilience are related to the establishment of new ventures. In line, with their arguments, we assume that resilience should be a determinant of IWB for entrepreneurs.

Thus,

Hypothesis 1: The more an entrepreneur is resilient, the more he/she has innovative work behaviour.

Looking at the entrepreneur as a homogeneous actor is more and more contested. Scholars studying gender issues highlight the need for research about women entrepreneurs. In our case, the literature does not really underline gender differences about entrepreneurs' IWB. However,

Luksite et al. (2018) show the stereotypes that exist about innovative work behaviors between men and women. Thus, women who innovate are not perceived as innovators whereas it is the case for men. We assume that women entrepreneurs are less innovative than men because of these stereotypes.

Thus,

H2: Women tend to score less than men on IWB scale

Anderson et al. (2014) underline that while individual differences in personality traits are important predictors of IWB, the moderating effects are not deeply studied in the literature. We think this is the case for gender. Ayala and Manzano (2014) show that there is a positive relationship the resilience of entrepreneurs and the growth of their companies. Does gender matter in this relationship? The authors divided the sample into 2 categories: men and women. In both cases, resilience factors (hardiness, resourcefulness and optimism) have a positive impact on growth. Hardiness and resourcefulness impacts are lower for women than men and optimism impact is higher for women than men.

Consequently, the findings are ambiguous and it is tricky to predict a clear moderating effect of resilience and gender on IWB. Thus, we do not know *ex ante* the effect of the moderating variable.

H3: Gender plays a moderating role on the resilience-IWB relationship.

Methodology

We outsourced the data collection to a company specialized in survey towards French entrepreneurs. We got 325 respondents but, after the withdrawal of outliers, we kept 308 entrepreneurs from the manufacturing and industry sectors. We removed outliers who score with more than 2 standard deviation on the dependent variable. Our sample is composed of

French entrepreneurs that are still in activity. Please find below the presentation of the sample in table 1.

Table 1: Sample characteristics

Variables	Average
Age:	42.82 years old
Men (0) Women (1)	60% 40%
Seniority:	9 years
Education:	University entrance diploma
Company size:	6.29 employees

Findings

We find a direct effect of resilience on IWB. Moreover, we show a moderating effect of gender on the relationships between resilience and innovative work behaviour. Thus, women with low resilience have a higher score than men on IWB variable. On the contrary, men with a high level of resilience have a higher score than women on IWB variable.

Table 2: Means, standard deviations and correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Seniority	1							
2. Nb employees	-0.042	1						
3. Education	0.062	0.142*	1					
4. Salary	-0.167**	0.174*	0.232***	1				
5. Gender	0.090	-0.073	0.114*	-0.258***	1			
6. Age	-0.526***	0.025	-0.159**	0.182**	-0.202**	1		
7. Resilience	-0.032	0.009	-0.044	0.135*	-0.127*	0.097	1	
8. IWB	0.039	0.134*	-0.024	0.157**	-0.117*	0.077	0.415***	1
N	308	308	308	308	308	308	308	308
Mean	8.26	6.29	3.96	4.42	0.60	42.82	0	0
S.D	7.77	26.34	1.19	2.83	0.49	10.59	1	1

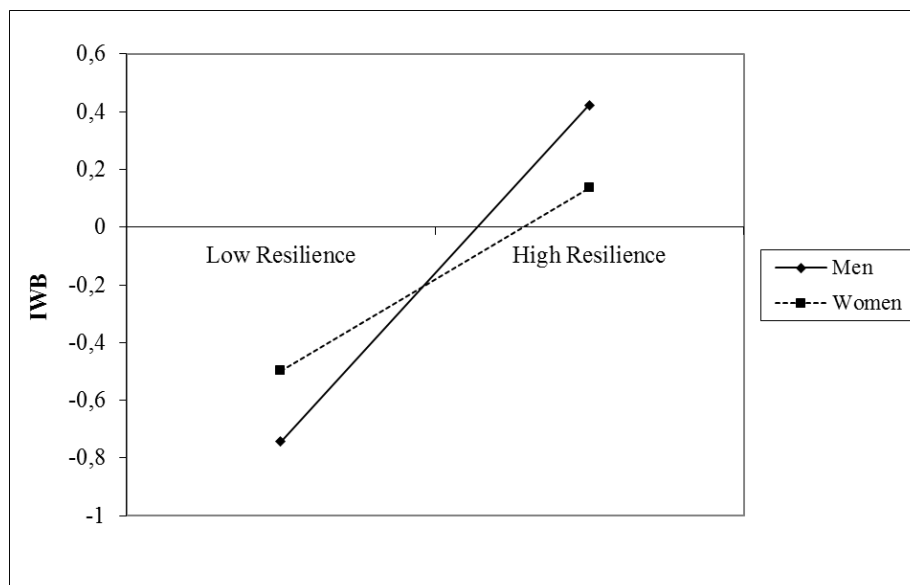
Student significance: ***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *0.01<p<0.05

Table 3: Hierarchical regression analysis

IWB standardized coefficient			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Seniority	-0.061	-0.044	-0.053
Nb employees	0.124*	0.128*	0.139**
Education	-0.040	-0.006	-0.006
Salary	0.118	0.059	0.058
Gender	-0.057	-0.020	-0.012
Age	0.094	0.057	0.058
Resilience		0.471***	0.659***
Gender X Resilience			-0.236**
R ²	0.051	0.264	0.284
Adjusted R ²	0.032	0.246	0.265
Standard error estimate	0.853	0.753	0.743
F	2.682*	15.394***	14.893***
N	308	308	308

Student significance: ***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *0.01<p<0.05

Figure 1: Interaction effect between gender and resilience



Implications for theory and practice

We have three contributions. First, we show the impact of resilience on IWB. It is a new academic result. Furthermore, it reinforces the idea of developing resilience of entrepreneurs through new educational programmes and new trainings.

Secondly, we show no effect of gender on IWB. Thus, we can assume that female entrepreneurs believe in themselves and do not suffer from a lack of self-esteem in terms of innovation abilities. Stereotypes about women and their lack of innovation abilities do not exist for women entrepreneurs (Luksite et al., 2018) that are, intrinsically, innovative.

Thirdly, this research refines the understanding of the moderating role of gender on the relationship between resilience and IWB.

How findings can be implemented?

The main entrepreneurial outcome is about putting resilience at the centre of the entrepreneurial education. Facing failures, difficulties, challenges and bankruptcy is part of life. However, supporting entrepreneurs in their process of resilience is not a part of our academic programmes. Consequently, we recommend to entrepreneurs and students (future entrepreneurs) to become resilient by changing their mind-set, following seminars about resilience, and being socially supported in time of crisis.

References

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