Handbook of Entrepreneurial Cognition

Rocio Aliaga-Isla, University of Liege
have done, to the subject of female entrepreneurship, because devoting more research efforts is giving more value to the life-bringing source, the entrepreneurial woman, in multiple senses.

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References


About the reviewer

João Leitão is an Assistant Professor at the University of Beira Interior (UBI), lecturing on entrepreneurship and economics for undergraduate and graduate economics, engineering, communication sciences, marketing and management students since 1 October 1999. He is the Director of the Master in Economics and Scientific Coordinator of the MBA. He is the CEO for the Alumni’s Office of the UBI. He is an Associate Researcher of the CEG-IST, University of Lisbon and external Research Fellow at Small Business Research Centre, Kingston Business School, Kingston University London, UK. He was the Head of University Management and Administration of the UBI (2009-2012), Social Services of the UBI (2009-2012) and Portalegre Polytechnic Institute (2000). His research interests include: entrepreneurship; innovation; and organizational economics. Assistant Professor João Leitão can be contacted at: jleitao@ubi.pt

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Entrepreneurship is a great field of research, since in the last years, it covers great importance at all levels. Entrepreneurship is an elephant, as highlighted by Gartner (2001). Interesting contributions come from any part explored on this elephant called entrepreneurship. Then, this book explores the side related to entrepreneurial cognition.

This book by Mitchell, Mitchell and Randolph-Seng provides a contribution through its agenda. The main focus on this book is the psychological way of entrepreneurs’ thoughts. This involves the knowledge that entrepreneurs acquired and how they use it to perform specific procedures like assess and identify an entrepreneurial opportunity and venture creation (Mitchell et al., 2002, 2004). The text is made up of 14 chapters, being clear of the breadth of audience for which the text is intended.
The book begins portraying a series of experiences of Robert Baron, who considered as
a behaviourist that the cognitive human side was unobservable and not good field for
research in Chapter 1. The author told the audience about their own adventures in relation
with the topic he wanted to research and how he had to move to another unexpected topic
in his first and second epiphanies. After a series of interesting experiences, the author
recognized the role of cognition in entrepreneurship. Moreover, the author pointed out
three different methods from which knowledge is obtained: (a) asking entrepreneurs to tell
us, (b) conducting direct, systematic research on this issues and (c) importing knowledge
from other fields. Baron recommended the option (b) and (c) to acquire knowledge. Also,
six interesting hypotheses to be tested in future research are found in this chapter.

Achievement motivations and intentions have been linked by Alan Carsrud and Malin
Brännback and presented in Chapter 2. This chapter reviews a series of topics, such as
entrepreneurial intentions and motivation research in the psychological tradition. Also, it
is seen through the chapter that the authors tried to link motivations and aspirations,
goals and motivations, motivations and intentions and motivation and the entrepreneur.
Moreover, the need for achievement motivation has been reviewed. The motivation in
circumstances as necessity and/or opportunity has been examined. The failure and the
success also have been pointed out as drive motivations in entrepreneurs. Authors
highlighted that another way to look at motivation is considering its nature of being
intrinsic, extrinsic or both. Readers also can find that authors have linked the issue of
entrepreneurial goals and motivations by reviewing previous literature. Moreover, the
theory of planned behaviour and the theory of trying have been linked to entrepreneurial
goals by reviewing previous literature. This review has let the authors present a series of
research questions for future research.

In Chapter 3 Barbara Bird explores why behaviour is understudied and proposes a
development of behaviour taxonomy. The author develops an overview of the literature
on entrepreneurial behaviour, trying to show that entrepreneur's behaviour is
understudied. Barbara pointed out what entrepreneurs do, which means their
observable actions, and has highlighted that researchers face three main problems:
lack of agreement on what behaviours are important, failure to understand or utilize the
concept of behavioural repertoire and ignoring the context of behaviour. The importance
and benefits in developing taxonomy is highlighted. Also, she explained how it could be
developed and what will be the advantages for future research in the field of
entrepreneur's behaviour. Moreover, readers can find suggestions for ways forward.

Chapter 4 presents entrepreneurial self-regulation: Consciousness and Cognition by
Brandon Randolph-Seng, Wallace A. Williams, Jr and Mario Hayek. The authors
pointed out that entrepreneurial intentions involve both conscious and non-conscious
cognitive processes, however, it has been neglected in the entrepreneurship literature.
Considering that, the authors contribute by introducing researchers to the area of
non-conscious cognition. Then, this literature is integrated to the entrepreneurial
intentions and intuition literature. The entrepreneurial self-regulation as the
explanatory mechanism between conscious and non-conscious cognitive process is
introduced in the entrepreneurial domain. To do this, the authors have reviewed
literature on consciousness and cognition to highlight the definition of non-conscious
cognitive process. Also, readers might benefit from literature review on entrepreneurial
intentions emphasizing the three dominant theories/approaches used in this area: the
theory of planned behaviour, the model of entrepreneurial event and the model of
entrepreneurial intentions. The literature reviewed previously allowed the authors
to understand how the conscious and non-conscious cognitive process interacts in
forming entrepreneurial intentions and intuitions. Finally, this chapter presents some ideas for future research on this topic.

Chapter 5 examines the role of affect in entrepreneurship, by Maw-Der Foo, Charles Y. Murnieks and Elsa T. Chan. This chapter offers interesting literature on affect that could help future researchers on this topic. Authors have reviewed literature to define affect; also previous literature on emotion has been performed. There is an interesting summary of studies that have focused on affect and entrepreneurial cognition. This chapter also provides a review on the methods to study affect in entrepreneurship. The authors have highlighted affect as an important factor that entrepreneurs face in the process of venture creation. However, this is not a novelty, since Baron (2008) has also researched the role of affect in the entrepreneurial process. Furthermore, readers can benefit, trying to apply the methods pointed out by the authors to study affect in entrepreneurship. In Chapter 6, Denis A. Grégoire explores the affective and cognitive dynamics of entrepreneurship across time and planes of influence. Specifically, different classes of affective and cognitive forces are pointed out: the enduring or episodic nature of affective/cognitive forces and the anchoring of different affective/cognitive forces at different planes of influences. The author used "plane of influence" to mark differences between a research's particular level of analysis, the level at which data is collected and the level at which relevant affective and/or cognitive forces may be anchored. These distinctions are important for studying opportunity imagination/identification. Finally, the author highlights some methodological implications.

Moreover, Mateja Drnovsek, Alenka Slavec and Melissa S. Cardon have explored the impact of national culture on emotional and cognitive processes of entrepreneurs in Chapter 7. In this study, the concept of entrepreneurial passion is extended by linking it to the theoretical lens on situated emotions. Furthermore, authors proposed a culturally situated model of entrepreneurial emotions, and then it was tested using data from Slovenia and USA. It is interesting to analyse how the context influences passion and emotion of entrepreneurs. I think this study will contribute to understand the psychological side of entrepreneurs. In Chapter 8, David A. Baucus, Melissa S. Baucus and Ronald K. Mitchell present lessons from the neural foundation of entrepreneurial cognition, identifying the case of emotion and motivation. The article is interesting, because of the use of neurophysiology and concepts from neuroscience to map physiological process in transmitting visual data to the conscious thought and behaviour. This chapter also can benefit other researchers in the disciplines of neuroscience, since the use of terms and explanation is more related to this field of knowledge. In Chapter 9, Jeffrey S. McMullen, Matthew S. Wood and Leslie E. Palich present entrepreneurial cognition and social cognitive neuroscience. This study explores whether neuroscience has similar potential to transform entrepreneurial cognition. Authors focus on the knowledge structures that people use to make assessments, judgments or decisions that involve opportunity evaluation or business creation. Moreover, readers could benefit from a section dedicated to the research methods of social cognitive neuroscience to explain the entrepreneurial phenomenon forming and implementing opportunity beliefs.

In Chapter 10, Daniel P. Forbes proposes a new way of thinking about the resources that help people acquire entrepreneurship-related knowledge. The author suggests that researchers should pay more attention to the content of knowledge people exchange and how it affects their decision to start new ventures. The central topic of the chapter is the knowledge related to the learning process of individuals but in the context of entrepreneurial cognition. Chapter 11 is dedicated to how language shapes thought: new vistas for entrepreneurship research by Jean S. Clarke and Joep P. Cornelissen.
This chapter focuses on the importance of language and its effect on the formation of entrepreneurs’ ideas and their attempts to recognize a new venture from relevant stakeholders and providers. The author focuses on the social dimension of language and communication related to new ventures. Also, some future lines of research are highlighted. Chapter 12 presents “thinking big from start: entrepreneurial growth cognitions,” by Andrew C. Corbett. The author develops a concept of entrepreneurial growth cognitions. In a certain way, the author tries to link the entrepreneurial cognition with venture growth to build an agenda for research on entrepreneurial growth cognitions. Readers can benefit from a literature review on new venture growth, and then cognition is linked to growth. Moreover, there is a section of challenging questions regarding the new field of research related to cognitions and growth.

Chapter 13 is untitled “Simulating socially situated cognition in exchange creation”. It is developed by Ronald K. Mitchell, J. Robert Mitchell, Miles A. Zachary and Michael R. Ryan. Authors modelled the socially situated cognition notion, given importance to the entrepreneur’s inner and outer environments. The dynamism of these environments is important for entrepreneurs’ cognition, since the inner environment reflects the cognitive and affective aspects of the entrepreneur, and the outer environment reflects the conditions in which the individual operates. Moreover, authors use a simulation with data from experiments to model theoretical assumptions. And finally, Chapter 14 is entitled “The whole deal: models, metaphors and mechanisms in entrepreneurial cognition”, and it is developed by Saras D. Saravasthy. The author uses the theory of effectuation as a constructive model, characteristic of a science of the artificial. Saravasthy discusses the model-building veracity; the author points out that the models have to find ways to work around the fact that ignoring particularity has consequences, and such particulars are situations dependent over time. The chapter presents several ways to develop models.

After reading the book, I realized that most chapters presented a theoretical model regarding the entrepreneurial cognition, which is important and interesting. However, I feel there is a lack of empirical studies that could use these theoretical models. Therefore, I would like to say that there are a lot of theoretical models that future researchers in the field could test with empirical data. This is because, for me, theory goes along with empirical reality. If not, theory does not have sense.

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References