

Entrepreneurial alertness and self-perceived employability: a virtuous marriage for career development

Entrepreneurial
alertness and
employability

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Abstract

Purpose – Building on the importance of students becoming entrepreneurs of their own career, this research aimed to achieve two main objectives: to empirically test the sequential relationship between the three dimensions of entrepreneurial alertness as proposed by Tang *et al.* (2012) and to link such dimensions to self-perceived employability.

Design/methodology/approach – A web survey data were obtained among a sample of 404 universities students. The test of the theoretical framework was performed by running a structural equation modeling (SEM).

Findings – The results show that the three entrepreneurial alertness components are sequentially related. Moreover, the results demonstrated that among the examined dimensions, only evaluation and judgment had a direct effect on self-perceived employability, with the remaining dimensions having an indirect influence.

Originality/value – There has been rarely any previous empirical attempt at investigating a framework that consider the relationship between entrepreneurial attitudes, such as alertness, on employability. The investigation of the entrepreneurial attitudes as antecedents of employability is particularly vital to graduates who will soon enter the labor market as “entrepreneurs of their own career”.

Keywords Entrepreneurial alertness, Perceived employability, Career development, Career entrepreneurship, SEM

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The employee–employer relationship no longer assures a lifetime occupation (Baruch *et al.*, 2020; Bernstrøm *et al.*, 2019; De Vos and Cambré, 2017). Rather, it requires individuals to self-manage their own careers, bearing the brunt of the responsibility for their own employability by relying on key factors, such as proactivity, adaptability and entrepreneurial thinking and acting (Römgens *et al.*, 2019; Donald *et al.*, 2018; Obschonka *et al.*, 2017). Consistently, successful careers and higher levels of employability will likely characterize individuals with a vibrant entrepreneurial mindset (Akkermans and Kubasch, 2017) and, more specifically, with a strong entrepreneurial alertness (Gawke *et al.*, 2017).

Defined as an individual’s ability to perceive new opportunities that are overlooked by others (Kirzner, 1973), entrepreneurial alertness has, to date, been predominantly studied within the entrepreneurship field, in the context of new venture emergence (Baron and Ensley, 2006); new venture performance (Adomako *et al.*, 2018); and as contributing to strategic decision making in established organizations (Roundy *et al.*, 2018). Only recently



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