



Cognitive Perspective in Entrepreneurship Research: Past, Present, and Future

Paris, 24th, 25th, September 2018

Entrepreneurship is all about individuals, who take actions towards creating new activities and expanding them, whether in startups or existing organizations. Understanding the perceptions, memory, and thinking (Estes, 1975) of entrepreneurial individuals –i.e. entrepreneurial cognition -become important when trying to understand such behavior and actions (Krueger, 2003). The attention to entrepreneurial cognition has generated an impressive stream of literature since the early calls for such perspective (e.g. Baron, 1998; Mitchell et al., 2002). Ajzen (1991) made a seminal contribution to the study of intention formation by proposing the Theory of Planned Behavior, which entrepreneurship scholars have adopted to investigate intentions related to the start (Kolvereid, 1996) and growth of new ventures (Davidsson, 1991; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2000). The robustness of the intention model in entrepreneurship has been validated by recent empirical studies (Kautonen et al. 2013; Kautonen et al. 2015). Since the intention model based on Ajzen’s TPB seem to bear relevance in the entrepreneurship context, the interesting question is related to “What next?” How entrepreneurship scholars produce new theoretical insights about entrepreneurial cognition and especially related to intentions to start and expand new activities? Our workshop aims to work on this direction by identifying future avenues for cognitive research in entrepreneurship. We next elaborate some topics in the hope of encouraging scholarly submissions to the workshop.

Call for papers

First, since behavioral, control, and normative beliefs explain the three antecedents of intentions (Ajzen, 1991), what kind of changes in these *belief systems* results changes in attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and perceived norm? While attitudes and intentions are theoretical constructs –usually operationalized as degrees of agreement with respective verbal statements –there are a number of established methods to elicit and analyze individuals’ belief systems, but which have rarely been used in the entrepreneurship field, (c.f. Laukkanen & Tornikoski, forthcoming). By investigating the mechanism through which belief systems are related to the antecedent of intentions could offer entrepreneurship scholars the possibility to provide new theoretical insights about the formation and development of entrepreneurial intention.

Second, what about connections between intention and other cognitive concepts? Cognitive research is also interested in how individuals process information and external stimuli, which in entrepreneurship is related to opportunity *perception*, *alertness*, and cognitive *biases* and *heuristics*, to name few. Is intention connected, for example, to entrepreneurial alertness, and which precedes the other? Moreover, Pollack and al (2012) propose to study the effects of depression and stress on entrepreneurial intention. As such, exploring how different cognitive concepts are related to each other, and how such connections modify, improve, and/or extend the current theories about entrepreneurial cognitions, offers potential for scholarly inquiries.

Third, what about *process* aspect of entrepreneurial cognition, and intention formation in particular? All the above discussion reflects variance-based models where we focus on predictors and outcome variables. Another approach is to consider that there are no fixed attributes, like entrepreneurial attitude. Instead, an attitude can be understood as a process, which is constantly co-evolving with other cognitive concepts. When cognitive concepts are considered as ongoing processes, what kind of consequences does it induce for our empirical studies? What kinds of methods allow us to investigate entrepreneurial behavior and action when cognitions are evolving processes?

Fourth, promising avenue for contributing to the intention perspective is to investigate the *intention-action gap*: new activities are created only if intentions are followed by actions (van Gelderen et al., forthcoming). Indeed, how intentions are formed and how intentions are implemented are two distinct phenomena. Identifying factors that stands between intention and action could lead to new theoretical insights about the importance of intentions in explaining subsequent actions.

Last, what *alternative* theoretical perspectives do we have today to replace or complement the TPB in explaining intention and action? The literature seems to indicate, for example, that the Entrepreneurial Event Model (Shapero & Sokol, 1982) has more predictive power in explaining intentions than TPB (e.g. Krueger et al., 2000; Schlaegel et al. 2014). Moreover, is intention still the best predictor of actual behavior, or do other concepts explain actual behavior, or lack of it, better than intention? For example, Wiklund et al. (2017) and Lerner et al. (2018) speak about impulsivity of entrepreneurial action, which moves beyond entrepreneurship as a deliberate cognitive process. This option for future research would call scholars to look critically at intendedly rational logics behind the cognitive perspective as explanation of entrepreneurial behavior and action.

As a summary, Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior has direct relevance for entrepreneurship research and has been successfully applied in this domain. Inspired by these ideas and possibilities, in this workshop, we encourage scholars to submit original proposal related to entrepreneurial cognitions, and especially works that try to push the boundaries of our current theorizing efforts so that we could understand better entrepreneurial behavior and action in different contexts and settings.

In addition, during the workshop we organize a two hours session with Professor Icek Ajzen, who will join our workshop and the doctoral consortium. The session with Professor Ajzen offers an opportunity to discuss the TPB and its associated methodology with examples drawn from latest entrepreneurship research of the participants of the workshop. From all the submitted abstracts, 2-3 will be chosen to this session.

SUBMISSIONS

We invite the researchers to submit an abstract for discussion (except for entrepreneurs who should provide a letter stating why they would like to attend). The first page of an academic submission must contain the title, author(s) and contact information of the corresponding author. The organizers expect an Extended Abstracts of no more than 3-pages 1,5-space, maximum 1500-words. All submissions must be written in English. An abstract should inform explicitly about the following five issues: Research objective/question; Conceptual development; Methodology; Results (if not a conceptual paper); and Contribution. Please exclude tables, figures and references.

All submissions should be sent by email as Word or PDF attachment to Prof. Adnane Maalaoui and Prof. Erno Tornikoski: a.maalaoui@ipag.fr and erno.tornikoski@grenoble-em.com

DOCTORAL CONSORTIUM

The Doctoral Consortium is scheduled on Tuesday, September 25th, 2018.

The Doctoral Consortium provides an opportunity for 10 doctoral students, who work in entrepreneurial cognition, to present their research interests in front of expert scholars in the field, such as Professors Icek Ajzen, Alan Carsrud, Kelly Shaver, Francisco Linan, Norris Krueger and Marco van Gelderen.

We expect doctoral students to submit an extended Abstract of no more than 5-pages, 1.5-space, maximum 2500-words. The abstract should clearly identify the expected contribution of the work and its significance to the current understanding of the role of entrepreneurial cognitions in entrepreneurial processes.

The deadline for the doctoral consortium is July 25th, 2018

KEYS DATES:

- 1 - Submission of extended abstract (new deadline): July 25th, 2018
- 2 - Acceptance Notification: 5th August, 2018
- 3 – Workshop: September 24-25th, 2018
- 4 - Doctoral Workshop: September 25th, 2018

PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES

Editors and/or Associate editors from leading entrepreneurship and small business journals (ISBJ, Revue de l'Entrepreneuriat, JSBM, Technological Forecasting and Social Change, Long Range Planning) will participate in the event and be available to discuss with the submitting authors about the potential of their manuscripts for their respective journals.

INFORMATION CONTACT:

Please feel free to contact Professor Adnane Maalaoui, a.maalaoui@ipag.fr if you have any queries about the workshop.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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