

Cognitive flexibility and entrepreneurship

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of cognitive flexibility on entrepreneurial intentions and the mediating roles of information search effort and search persistence. Conducted over two years with a sample of 421 management students from a mid-sized public university in the southern United States, the research utilizes scales for measuring entrepreneurial intentions, cognitive flexibility, search effort, and search persistence. Reliability analyses confirm the scales' robustness (Cronbach's alpha: Cognitive flexibility = .78, Search effort = .806, Search persistence = .858). Employing AMOS and structural equation modeling, the study supports the hypothesis that cognitive flexibility positively influences entrepreneurial intentions ($\beta = .237, p = .001$). Moreover, it reveals that search effort significantly mediates the relationship between cognitive flexibility and entrepreneurial intentions, turning the direct relationship insignificant while maintaining a significant effect of search effort on entrepreneurial intentions ($\beta = .206, p = .005$). However, the mediation effect of search persistence is not supported. These findings highlight the crucial role of information search effort in the translation of cognitive flexibility into entrepreneurial intentions, providing new insights into the cognitive processes underlying entrepreneurial decision-making.

Keywords: Cognitive flexibility, entrepreneurship, information search