

Gender Asymmetry of Entrepreneurial Intentions of Students in Russia and China

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Abstract. Entrepreneurship is now considered to be an urgent solution for handling large pools of young graduates around the world. These crucial situations where universities are creating an excess number of graduates as compared to jobs availability increase the pressure on graduates as well as policy makers and educators. Entrepreneurship in this case does not only handle the burden of the unemployed among the youth but also positively improves the economic development of the country's economy. In becoming entrepreneurs, graduates do not only create jobs for themselves but for other as well and play a vital role in the development of the economy. This paper explains gender-based entrepreneurship intentions amongst students of Russia and China (3 universities in China, 3 in Russia). A questionnaire was developed to find the impact of different behavior factors on male and female students of Russia and China. In terms of methodology, the quantitative technique was used to collect the data. The entrepreneurial spirit is explained after analyzing the data from three universities in each country. The six universities numbering 468 student respondents were analyzed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. To find out the association amongst different variables, multiple regression and correlation technique were used. The results also show an association of gender with entrepreneurship in students in both countries. However, in case of Russia male respondents showed higher intention than female respondents. To maintain the same role of male and female members in the society, development suggestions for educators and policy makers are presented.

Key words: entrepreneurship; youth entrepreneurship intention; gender; theory of planned behavior.

JEL D71, D81, D91

1. Introduction

The significance of entrepreneurship and its role in economy made it an important topic to be focused on. In the last decade, entrepreneurship has been viewed as a means of transforming the economic condition, productivity improvement and employment creation for many countries. The arguments which make entrepreneurship important in recent years were based on scholars' notion of it as a source of innovation, employment generation, social welfare and increasing

productivity [1]. Entrepreneurship creates access to new markets, services and opportunities [Haftendorn & Salzano, 2].

The importance of entrepreneurship is explained by recent studies and earlier researchers, who also presented the role of entrepreneurship in their work. Later on, in 1985, Peter Drucker described entrepreneurship as an engine of the economy, new jobs creation and source of well-being [3]. It helps the economy to generate a high level of competition through innovation in products, operational process and

services [4]. Entrepreneurs transform ideas and inventions into economics. Thus, entrepreneurs play an important role in transforming ideas and inventions into economic actions [5].

The above-mentioned role of entrepreneurship in social and economic development of a country keeps the topic open to explore different reasons to become an entrepreneur. The discussion does not end here as there are different factors which play a backbone role in enhancing and predicting entrepreneurial behavior. One of the factors is gender which also influences certain behavior of the human being. As males and females are the same actors in a society participating in its social and economic development. But there is evidence in the literature that males are more entrepreneurial than females. This difference in choosing entrepreneurship as a career also varies from country to country.

In some countries, culture, family pressure, finance, education, availability of resources restrict female or male individuals from performing certain activities. In the present study the following hypothesis were developed based on evidence from literature to find out the entrepreneurial intention of students in Russia and China.

H1: Demographic factor gender is positively associated with entrepreneurship intention among Russian and Chinese students.

H2: Demographic factor gender is positively associated with entrepreneurship intention among Russian and Chinese students.

H3: Demographic factor gender is positively associated with entrepreneurship intention among Russian and Chinese students.

H4: Demographic factor gender is positively associated with entrepreneurship intention among Russian and Chinese students.

The article is divided into four different sections. The introductory part presents the main objective of the study, followed by the previous work on the topic in the literature. In the second section, methodology is explained for the presented study. Finally, the discussion and conclusion part contains the obtained results from the analyzed data and suggestion for educators and policy makers.

2. Literature Review

In the majority of entrepreneurship research, researchers also focus on gender as another important variable. Earnings per individual in countries nowadays have shown men are earning more than women.

Some countries in Europe are now ensuring that men and women earn an equal salary income. There can be different reasons but in the case of entrepreneurship, there are female entrepreneurs who according to researchers might be either directly or indirectly involved. In a comparison of different factors it appears that statistically the number of male entrepreneurs is higher than that of female ones [6, 7]. But due to a change in the environment the number of female entrepreneurs is rising [8].

The fewer number of female entrepreneurs does not show the exact reason for their un-involvement, yet still ambiguous, thus necessitating further research [9]. There were diverse results on gender issues. Some studies like Müller in 2008 and Soetanto, Pribadi, and Widyadana did not reveal any effect of gender on intentions, while Veciana, Aponte, and Urbano in 2005 and Scheiner in 2009 noticed a relationship between gender and entrepreneurial intention [10].

Speaking of intention and theory of planned behavior, there are some studies which found the effect of gender as an antecedent of intention, a direction considered as the predictors of behavior. In 2009, Goethner, Obschonka, Silbereisen,

and Cantner noticed perceived behavior to be higher in males. Other researchers found another antecedent in higher level, Singh and De Noble in 2003 and Walter and Walter in 2008 found attitude difference [11].

A recent study in the last decade has found males and females become entrepreneurs based on their motivations. [12] Gives importance to cover the gender in their studies. Other studies have found that males are twice as often involved in entrepreneurship as females [13]. In some other places, attitude towards entrepreneurship in male students were found to be higher than in female [14]. There is no clear reason explaining the gender differences in entrepreneurship [15].

The reason for the difference in the number of male entrepreneurs may be that women as compared to men have a lesser degree of social interactivity [16]. Russia and China used in this study targeted university students, especially business and economics, we included gender in the model to find the effect on students' entrepreneurial intention.

According to Ajzen 1991, Theory of Planned Behavior is a very appropriate model of explaining any behavior which necessitates planning like that of

entrepreneurship. In the model Theory of Planned Behavior (Figure 1), intention is resolute through 3 attitudinal backgrounds [17].

Attitude towards the behavior shows the point at which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a behavior. It is determined by the person's assessment of the projection results of the behavior. This factor looks at the beliefs about the possible outcomes of the behavior (i. e., behavioral beliefs). For example, a person who believes that it is beneficial to perform a given behavior will have a positive attitude toward that behavior, otherwise, will hold a negative attitude.

Subjective norm talks about the social pressures perceived by individuals as to whether to perform the behavior. It recounts to the beliefs that other people are either encouraged or discouraged to carry out a behavior. A person is possibly going to perform a behavior if his or her motivator conform or agree to go in for it. On the other hand, a person will suffer a subjective norm that forces him or her to avoid performing the behavior.

Perceived behavioral control is the opinion of easiness or difficulty in performing a behavior. It recounts to the beliefs about the availability of supports and

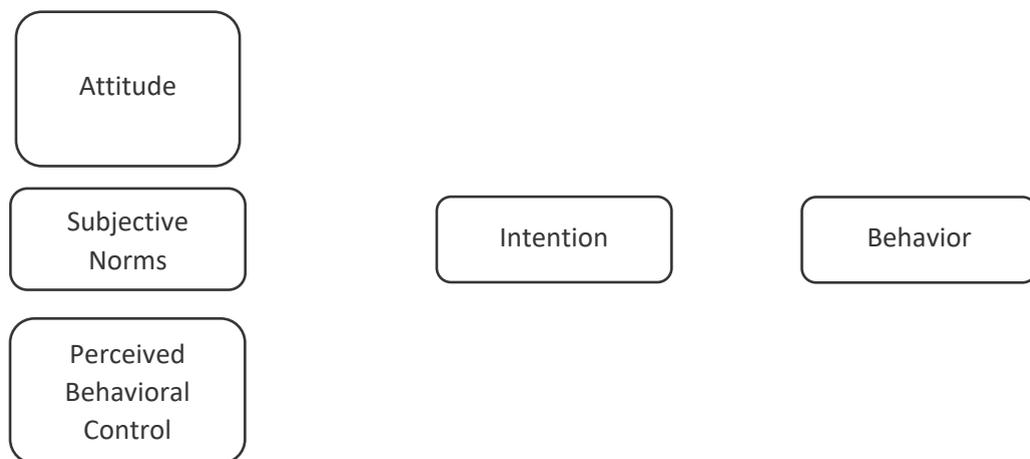


Fig. 1. Theory of Planned Behavior

Рис. 1. Теория запланированного поведения

resources as well as barriers to performing an entrepreneurial behavior (control beliefs).

3. Methodology

The target population was Russian and Chinese business students. The sampling was selected on the basis that they are considered to be potential entrepreneurs while studying business in their bachelor's and master's degree programs.

The research questionnaire was obtained from a review of literature. The questionnaire comprises different variables as explained in the research model. It has two main parts the first part consists of demographics and personal information, while the second part consist of questions on the different variables used in the study. The questions related to the constructs on the theory of planned behavior were obtained from EIQ Liñán & Chen[18].

This enabled the questionnaires to cover all the research variables. The dependent variable of this research consists of 6 items with entrepreneurial intention mentioned as the main construct. The questionnaires were designed in five-point likert scale ranging from disagreement to agreement, presenting: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree respectively.

The questionnaires were developed in English, translated into Russian, making it suitable for respondents who cannot

speak English [Hambleton, 19]. The translation was done by a professor of English at the linguistics department of Ural Federal University, Russia. In addition, the questionnaire was reviewed by a postgraduate student, together with eminent professors of Economics and Management studies before the pilot test study.

During the pilot study, both English and Russian versions of the questionnaire was distributed among 20 university students in Russia and 25 students in China. The Russian students received hardcopies of the Russian version distributed by the researcher himself, while the Chinese students received the English version of the questionnaire developed in Qualtrics software survey. A Chinese professor in Shanghai University, China received and distributed the online link to the students. The students' responses were recorded using the same medium until the 25 responses were reached.

After collecting the data from the pilot study, a reliability and internal consistency test was conducted through SPSS (version 20) and the results show a Cronbach Alpha value for all the variables ranging from 0.71 to 0.85 as shown in the table 1 below. This means that questionnaire was valid and reliable for the study.

In order to analyze the data conveniently and effectively, Statistical software for social sciences (IBM, version 20) was used. Several statistical techniques were

Table 1. Reliability of Statistics

Таблица 1. Статистические данные о надежности

Construct Name	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value	
		Russian Students	Chinese Students
Entrepreneurship intention	6	0.797	0.793
Attitude towards entrepreneurship	6	0.847	0.831
Perceived behavioral control	5	0.805	0.788
Subjective norm	4	0.791	0.798

used to analyze the relationship between entrepreneurial intention, attitude towards entrepreneurship, subjective norm, educational and demographics. The statistical techniques to analyze the data including reliability test, descriptive test, multicollinearity tests, independent paired t-test, normality test, Pearson correlation and linear regression were used.

After collecting the data from both countries, the data was filtered to remove the half-filled or missing value questionnaires from the data. During this process, 3 half-filled questionnaires were found in the data from China which were removed to analyze and interpret the data without any missing values. The same method was also applied to the data from Russian students, in which 5 questionnaires were found with missing values which were

removed. In both countries' samples, 1 questionnaire was found in Chinese data and 2 were found in Russian data filled by PhD students which were also removed before running it using (Statistical software for social sciences, version 20).

4. Results

The demographic profile of the respondents of this study includes gender, age, occupation, level of education and family members who are entrepreneurs in both Russia and China. The specifics of the respondents' demographic profile is presented in table 2 underneath.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical test analysis is a measure of central tendency which shortened the data set. Based on the tenacity

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of Russian and Chinese students

Таблица 2. Демографические характеристики российских и китайских студентов

Items	Russian (n = 247)		Chinese (n = 221)	
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
• Male	98	39.7	74	33.3
• Female	149	60.3	148	66.7
Age				
• 15–20	65	26.3	61	27.5
• 20–25	173	70	159	71.6
• Above 25	9	3.6	2	0.9
Occupation				
• Full time student	189	76.5	218	98.2
• Employed and student	58	23.5	3	1.4
• Business owner and student	–	–	1	0.5
Level of education				
• Bachelor	200	81	202	91.5
• Master	47	19	20	8.5
Do you have a family member who is an entrepreneur?				
• Yes	73	29.6	76	34.2
• No	174	70.4	145	65.8

of this empirical research, mean is used in measuring this central tendency so as to exemplify the data set, since it constitutes the basis of the ultimate quantitative analysis of data. An aggregate amount of 221 and 247 students fruitfully completed answering this questionnaire in both China and Russia respectively as shown in Table 3 and 4. The outcome of the Statistical software for social sciences statistical analysis test on the measure of central tendency, particularly the mean test, demonstrate that the students' opinion widely range from one construct to another.

Beside the above, three above-mentioned constructs, the fourth and fifth construct for the Chinese students are perceived behavior control with a mean value of (2.7956) and educational environment with a mean scored of (2.9921). Still in the Russian sample domain, the last two constructs are educational environment with a mean value of (2.4585) and subjective norm registering a mean value of (2.2399).

The subjective norm recorded the uppermost mean in the midst of all the constructs, consist of a mean value of (3.1655) in China, while in Russia the attitude towards entrepreneurship construct recorded the topmost mean value of (2.9380) among all the constructs. This implies that Chinese students' intension towards entrepreneurship will be higher and they are

more likely to become entrepreneurs in the future if their intention is influenced by the family, friends, spouses etc., who support their decision to become entrepreneurs. On the other hand, Russian students developed high preference for entrepreneurial jobs, and they will likely become entrepreneurs in the near future.

The attitude towards entrepreneurship with a mean scored of (3.0369) and entrepreneurial intension recording a mean value of (2.8191) emerged as the closest to the topmost constructs for both Chinese and Russian students respectively. Here, this indicates that the Chinese students' perception of becoming entrepreneurs in the future is moderately high whereas the Russian students' intensions of becoming future entrepreneurs are average. The succeeding constructs after the first two is the educational environment for the Chinese student registering a mean value of (2.7988) whereas perceived behavior control with a mean value of (2.4838) for the sample of Russian students. This means that quite a number of Chinese students believed that an entrepreneurial educational environment contributes to their entrepreneurial intensions but the Russian sample indicate a relatively number of students who believed that they have the ability to control their beliefs in order to venture into entrepreneur business.

Table 3. **Descriptive statistics for Chinese students**

Таблица 3. **Описательная статистика для китайских студентов**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Entrepreneurship Intention	221	1.00	5.00	2.7988	.88224	.778
Perceived Behavioral Control	221	1.00	5.00	2.7956	.78694	.619
Attitude Towards Entrepreneurship	221	1.00	5.00	3.0369	.80310	.645
Subjective Norm	221	1.00	5.00	3.1655	.86923	.756
Valid N (listwise)	221					

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for Russian students

Таблица 4. Описательная статистика для российских студентов

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Entrepreneurship Intention	247	1.00	5.00	2.8191	.79263	.628
Perceived Behavioral Control	247	1.00	5.00	2.4838	.63239	.400
Attitude Towards Entrepreneurship	247	1.40	5.00	2.9380	.86862	.754
Subjective Norm	247	1.00	5.00	2.2399	.99893	.998
Valid N (listwise)	247					

To check the impact of demographic variables on dependent variable entrepreneurship intention and the construct of (Theory of Planned Behavior) independent t-test were run; the results as shown below. In an independent t-test we compare two means of two groups to find out the impact of independent variables on dependent variables. In this study a group of students from Russia and China was the target sample. For that, we need to run independent t-test to find out the impact of independent variables on dependent variable. To find out the impact of demographic on dependent variable entrepreneurial intention the test was run for both the sample one by one.

4.2. Gender

As earlier explained in the hypothesis developing section, there are different studies which explain different results of connectivity between gender and entrepreneurial intention. In the case of this comparative study of Russian and Chinese students the difference intentions based on the age of the respondents are given in Table 5 and 6.

For Russian students, the impact was found a little in subjective norms. It means that subjective norms can be different in male and female. The significant difference was found in subjective norm (mean = 2.46, SD = 0.94, $p < 0.05$) for male decision in Russian students can be affected by the

Table 5. Independent sample t-test for Russian students' sample with gender

Таблица 5. Т-тест для независимых выборок для русских студентов (образец с гендерными данными)

Variables	Male (n = 97)		Female (n = 149)		Sig.	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	T	Sig
Entrepreneurial intention	2.8244	.82632	2.7221	.77272	-0.10	0.94
Perceived behavioral control	2.3844	.61501	2.5492	.63716	-202	0.066
Attitude towards entrepreneurship	2.9286	.90963	2.9442	.84328	-206	0.891
Subjective norm	2.4643	.94841	2.0923	1.00688	2.99	0.006

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

people who are in close circle (e. g. Family, friend, peers, relatives etc). While in the case of overall entrepreneurship intention there was no significant effect found in the sample of Russian students.

However, in the case of Chinese students we see the gender impact on all constructs except university environment. In this way the highest mean value for all construct except educational environment were found in male students. The main dependent variable of entrepreneurship intention was also found in significant relationship with gender of the respondents.

5. Discussion

The first attempt of this study was to confirm the applicability of theory of planned behavior in investigating the intention of students in two countries with transition economies. The result from both countries shows different values of the coefficient of determination (R^2) revealed that 65.3% for Chinese students and 41.3% for the Russian students. This result matches the outcomes of previous studies which range from 22.5% to 62%. The study of Lekovela et al., in 2011 indicate 62% of variance in developing countries comparison with 59% in developed countries. Also, the study of Kristiansen and Indarti, in 2004 shows a result of 22.5%

for Norwegian students and 25.9% for Indonesian [20, 21].

This confirm that theory of planned behavior is applicable in two transition economy countries like China and Russia. In comparing the constructs of theory of planned behavior in both countries, the SPSS test revealed a high significant result for all the constructs adopted for this empirical study.

Based on theory of planned behavior three hypotheses were developed in this study. To test these three hypotheses of Theory of Planned Behavior Pearson's Bivariate Correlation was performed. The three constructs of Theory of Planned Behavior consisted of the attitude towards entrepreneurship, Perceived behavioral control and subjective norm. In the first hypothesis testing attitude towards entrepreneurship scored $\alpha = 0.01$; $p < 0.05$, for both samples of the students.

Therefore, it is clear from the results that attitude towards entrepreneurship will influence intention of Russian and Chinese students towards entrepreneurship. This result of the first construct of Theory of Planned Behavior is consistent with the previous studies in the same area [22, 23]. In their studies, they found out that attitude influence intention towards entrepreneurship.

Table 6. Independent sample t-test for Chinese students' sample with gender

Таблица 6. Т-тест для независимых выборок для китайских студентов (образец с гендерными данными)

Variables	Male (n = 97)		Female (n = 149)		Sig.	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	T	Sig
Entrepreneurial intention	2.6734	.74914	2.2128	.76730	4.52	0.000
Perceived behavioral control	3.0479	.76097	2.6712	.77199	3.43	0.001
Attitude towards entrepreneurship	3.3863	1.06266	2.9007	.80423	3.61	0.001
Subjective norm	3.4966	.75113	3.0000	.87918	4.27	0.001

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

While performing a certain entrepreneurial activity students do favorable or unfavorable evaluation. In this case for Russian students, the attitude was the lowest in regression analysis to affect their intention towards entrepreneurship with the Standardized regression coefficient β value of 0.133, while for Chinese students it shows the value of β 0.238 at number second in the three construct of Theory of Planned Behavior. This describes that attitude towards entrepreneurship is one of the variables which affect Russian and Chinese intention towards entrepreneurship. When the attitude towards entrepreneurship among Russian and Chinese students is favorable, they will start their own venture in the future.

Similarly, the second hypothesis results based on the construct of Theory of Planned Behavior which was perceived behavioral control was observed after Pearson correlation here also the same value $\alpha=0.01$; $p<0.05$, was observed for both the sample of students. Standardized regression coefficient β value of 0.297, for Russian students in number second in the construct, while for Chinese students it shows value of β 0.633 at the highest preference in the three constructs of Theory of Planned Behavior.

Based on theory of planned behavior three hypotheses were developed in this study. To test these three hypotheses of Theory of Planned Behavior Pearson's Bivariate Correlation was performed. The three constructs of Theory of Planned Behavior consist of the attitude towards entrepreneurship, Perceived behavioral control and subjective norm. In the first hypothesis testing attitude towards entrepreneurship scored $\alpha = 0.01$; $p < 0.05$, for both samples of the students.

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Furthermore, for the third construct of Theory of Planned Behavior the

hypothesis was tested to check the impact of subjective norm and the results of Pearson correlation showed that values of $\alpha = 0.01$; $p < 0.05$, for both samples of the students. Standardized regression coefficient β value of 0.357, for Russian students in number second in the construct, while for Chinese students it shows value of β 0.181 at lowest preference in the three constructs of Theory of Planned Behavior) The results of the third construct supported the previous findings in the literature of [25, 23]. This shows that subjective norms will increase 0.357 value for Russian students and 0.181 with a unit value of subjective norms. The social pressure which an individual perceived, while performing a certain entrepreneurial behavior is called subjective norm.

The independent t-test when was run on the gender there also the impact was found in both countries' samples. For Russian students the entrepreneurial intention in males were little higher than in females. In Russian students sample the impact of gender subjective norm a construct of theory of planned behavior were found significant. In Chinese students sample the gender impact were found significant on all variables except university entrepreneurial environment. This means that in both countries control variable gender has impact on future career decision.

6. Conclusion

Entrepreneurship plays an important role in job creation, innovation, economic and social development of a country. Based on the conducted study both countries need to promote entrepreneurship in their societies. Educational institutions may play an important role in providing the same playground to male and female students. In our research results, Russian students showed lower intention to choose entrepreneurship as a career in comparison to Chinese students. Similarly, in gender-based comparison Chinese females showed higher intentions towards entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship programs, promotion of entrepreneurship in society, adding entrepreneurship to the curricula of education institution may increase the motivation level of the youth in both countries, especially in female students.

The sample size of this study was enough to statistically test the model of theory of planned behavior with certain variables but is not big enough to generalize it on the entire population of two countries. Due to limited resources the research sample size was limited to only 300 students from each country. The total number of female respondents in both countries sample was bigger as compared to male respondents. The sample size is gender biased, therefore future studies should include more male students in order to make the respondents neutral in both genders.

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FOR CITATION

Abid Ullah. Gender Asymmetry of Entrepreneurial Intentions of Students in Russia and China. *Journal of Applied Economic Research*, 2021, Vol. 20, No. 1, 133–147. DOI: 10.15826/vestnik.2021.20.1.006.

ARTICLE INFO

Received October 15, 2020; Revised December 24, 2020; Accepted January 15, 2021.

Гендерная асимметрия предпринимательских интенций студентов России и Китая

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Аннотация. В современном мире предпринимательство рассматривается как важнейший инструмент решения проблемы трудоустройства молодых специалистов. Ситуация, в которой количество выпускников высших учебных заведений превышает количество потенциальных рабочих мест для них, – это не только стрессовый фактор для самих выпускников, но и серьезная нагрузка для политики, экономики страны в целом. Предпринимательская деятельность не только может облегчить возможную ситуацию с безработицей среди молодежи, но и способствовать экономическому развитию государства. Выбирая предпринимательскую деятельность, вчерашний выпускник не только начинает обеспечивать себя источником дохода, но и создает рабочие места для других людей, что благотворно влияет на экономику. В статье анализируется влияние гендерного фактора на предпринимательские интенции в молодежной среде стран с переходной экономикой – России и Китая. Выводы, приведенные в статье, основываются на данных опросников, распространенных между студентами, изучающими экономику и предпринимательство в 6 университетах (3 университета в Китае, 3 в России). В качестве инструмента статистического анализа данных в рамках данной статьи были использованы возможности программы Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. На платформе этой программы была проанализирована информация, полученная от 468 респондентов. Для поиска взаимосвязей переменных был проведен множественный регрессионный анализ и применялись корреляционные методы. Результаты исследования показали, что у студентов обеих стран обнаруживается взаимосвязь гендерного фактора и предпринимательских интенций. Однако в высших учебных заведениях России респонденты мужчины показали более высокий уровень предпринимательских интенций, чем женщины (в сравнении с результатами китайских респондентов). На основании проведенного анализа в статье сформулированы предложения для работников образовательной сферы, а также политиков.

Ключевые слова: предпринимательство; предпринимательские интенции в молодежной среде; гендер; теория запланированного поведения.

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ДЛЯ ЦИТИРОВАНИЯ

Абид Улла. Гендерная асимметрия предпринимательских интенций студентов России и Китая // *Journal of Applied Economic Research*. 2021. Т. 20, № 1. С. 133–147. DOI: 10.15826/vestnik.2021.20.1.006.

ИНФОРМАЦИЯ О СТАТЬЕ

Дата поступления 15 октября 2020 г.; дата поступления после рецензирования 24 декабря 2020 г.; дата принятия к печати 15 января 2021 г.

