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Manuscript Abstract**

Educational and environmental antecedents of opportunity recognition capacity and entrepreneurial intention of PhD students: disentangling the differential effects of study domain, gender and foreignness.

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Full reference

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Abstract

The number of doctorate holders has been growing steadily across developed economies (OECD, 2019), reflecting a trend supported by public policy. This support is rooted in the notion that PhD holders can make a meaningful contribution to the knowledge economy, including through participation in entrepreneurship (Walsh et al., 2015). The specialised knowledge and skillset of doctorate holders may indeed bring significant value to the labour market, and PhD education may also foster the development of relevant entrepreneurial competences, such as perseverance and problem-solving (Mortier et al., 2023). Nonetheless, many may find the transition from academia quite challenging (Palumbo & Cavallone, 2023), due for instance to potential mismatches between the skills taught in academia and those needed for both entrepreneurship and employment in industry (Heuritsch et al., 2020). This raises the question of how universities may address these shortcomings and effectively broaden the skillset and career horizon of doctoral students, including towards entrepreneurship (Sarrico, 2022).

Whilst scholars have recently begun to take an interest in the specific issue of PhD entrepreneurship (e.g. Klostetter et al., 2021; Muscio & Ramaciotti, 2019), much remains to uncover regarding both the educational and environmental antecedents of entrepreneurial capacity and intention among PhD students. Given their unique skillset and the research-oriented nature of their academic environment (Mars et al., 2014), it is likely that the antecedents of entrepreneurship among PhD students differ from those among bachelor's and master's level students. Building upon the entrepreneurship literature (e.g. Muscio & Vallanti, 2024; Teixeira & Forte, 2017), differences based on gender, study domain and foreignness are also to be expected across the doctoral community. Thus, this paper aims to assess whether entrepreneurship education and perceived university support for entrepreneurship are associated with opportunity recognition capacity and entrepreneurial intention, investigating also differences across different groups of PhD students.