



**The effect of job satisfaction and age on the Individual
Entrepreneurial Orientation of employees in Ireland**

Natalia de Souza Martins

Dissertation Submitted for MSc in Management

National College of Ireland

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2022

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial orientation has been studied for over 30 years, and several pieces of research in the literature link this concept to competitive advantage and business performance. Since entrepreneurial orientation was only studied at the firm level, scholars felt the need to study this concept at the individual level, and as a result, the individual entrepreneurial orientation was developed. The main purpose of this research is to explore how to promote individual entrepreneurial orientation in employees who work in Ireland. The relationship between IEO, job satisfaction, age and subjective norms will be analysed for this. Although there are several studies on Job satisfaction, age and subjective norms, the research on the relationship of these concepts with IEO is very scarce and related to workers in Ireland is non-existent. The quantitative methodology by a deductive approach was used in this study. A total of 249 valid questionnaires were collected using the convenience sampling method. Data was gathered using instruments developed in past studies to measure IEO, job satisfaction and subjective norms of the participants. In addition, SPSS v27 and Microsoft Excel were used to conduct Spearman's correlation and regression analysis. The results show a positive impact of job satisfaction on the IEO. Thus, meeting the needs and expectations of the employee increases the levels of job satisfaction in the company, which consequently has a positive impact on the IEO of the employees. On the other hand, subjective norms had no effect on the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO, which can be explained by cultural differences and the low level of social norms of younger employees. Furthermore, age is negatively related to IEO. Thus, older employees are not the most suitable to promote entrepreneurial behaviour in firms in Ireland.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Orientation, Individual Entrepreneurial Organisation, Job Satisfaction, Age, Subjective norms.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank **Ciro**, the love of my life, whom I will marry next week! Thank you for believing in me even when I didn't believe in myself! We have a fantastic future ahead of us!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EO – Entrepreneurial Orientation

IEO – Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation

SAT – Job Satisfaction

AGE - Age

SUB – Subjective Norms

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the research study and Rationale

The dynamics of the modern world due to globalisation and technology as well as increasing competition have led many companies to look for new ways to be more aggressive and gain more market share (Hernández-Perlines *et al.*, 2019). In the interest of adapting to market demands companies are developing entrepreneurial orientation, which is based on the following three dimensions: innovativeness, risk-taking and proactiveness. An entrepreneurial firm is defined as one that "*engages in product-market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures, and is the first to come up with 'proactive' innovations, beating competitors by a stroke*" (Miller, 1983, p. 771). Consequently, entrepreneurial orientation has become a must for many firms seeking competitiveness.

Miller (1983), the pioneer in studying entrepreneurial orientation at the firm level, stated that individuals needed to have EO characteristics before an organisation could possess them. Over the years, researchers felt the need to study EO at the individual level until Bolton and Lane (2012) realised that the EO dimensions could also be used to measure an individual's EO, resulting in the creation of the IEO scale and the spread of the concept. Several studies state that IEO is a personal resource and a valuable asset for companies (Kattenbach and Fietze, 2017) as it positively impacts not only individual work but also teamwork and work engagement (Hughes *et al.*, 2017; Gawke *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, IEO is an essential factor that positively affects firm performance (Fellnhofer, 2018). Furthermore, individual entrepreneurial orientation within firms is known as intrapreneurship and is defined as the ability of employees to bring innovative ideas and organisational ventures (Gawke *et al.*, 2017), resulting in the creation of new products and processes, which leads the organisation to gain competitive advantage (Ahmed *et al.*, 2013).

Accordingly, considering all the advantages that IEO brings to firms, it is worthwhile to study the following research question, "How to promote individual entrepreneurial orientation in employees who work in Ireland?" because the answers that will be

obtained in this study can help managers, leaders and companies to know how to motivate the entrepreneurial behaviour of their employees and as a result bring competitive advantage and firm performance.

According to FelInhofer (2019), studies on IEO are still scarce in the literature. Most research on entrepreneurship at the individual level investigate this concept in students. There is not much research on IEO in the organisational context and the researcher has no Knowledge concerning studies that investigate ways to promote IEO of the employee working in Ireland. To address this gap, we intend to investigate whether job satisfaction, age and subjective norms impact employees' entrepreneurial behaviour. Job satisfaction can be defined as when the benefits offered by the job meets the employee's expectations (Đorđević *et al.*, 2021). On the other hand, subjective norms are the expectations of those closest to an individual that they should behave in a certain way (Doanh, 2019). Some key literature served as the basis for this study. For example, Hatak (2014) claims that older employees are less likely to act entrepreneurially. Itzkovich *et al.* (2021) found that job satisfaction increases employees' intrapreneurial behaviour. The decision to study subjective norms as a moderator of the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO was made because scholars such as Jaén and Liñán (2013) and Karimi *et al.* (2015) indicate that a person's entrepreneurial behaviour will depend on their perception of the social pressures. Moreover, Lam *et al.* (2003) claim that a high degree of subjective norms results in job satisfaction.

1.2 Overview of the research problem

With rapid market changes and increasingly challenging competition, traditional management techniques cannot cope with these aggressive transitions. Thus, the business strategy that can be implemented in order to meet the current demands and bring business successes would be entrepreneurial spirit and innovation (Tajeddini and Mueller, 2018). Many employees do not engage in entrepreneurial activities because of three reasons. Firstly, their job satisfaction levels are low (Itzkovich *et al.*, 2021). Secondly, they have low IEO levels (Andersén, 2017), usually associated with age (Hatak *et al.*, 2015; Ting, 2015; Hador and Klein, 2019). Third, they feel their managers or co-workers do not support their entrepreneurial behaviour (Mustafa *et*

al., 2018), which means a negative perception of the subjective norms of the work environment (Jaén and Liñán, 2013; Karimi *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, this research aims to analyse the effects of job satisfaction, age and subjective norms on the IEO of employees working in Ireland.

1.3 Research aims and objectives

The literature has many studies on EO and its impact on business performance (Hernández-Perlines, 2016), but the study of the effects of job satisfaction, age and subjective norms on entrepreneurial orientation is still limited. Only a few papers investigate the relationship between entrepreneurial behaviours, age, and job satisfaction, but there is no association with subjective norms (Hatak *et al.*, 2015; Hador and Klein 2019). Therefore, the results of this study will provide managers with insights into the impacts of IEO on performance as well as demonstrate ways to promote the entrepreneurial behaviour of the employees who work in Ireland.

Most of the research on IEO utilise the quantitative method, the methodology that was also used in this study. Bolton and Lane (2012) developed the IEO scale, which was utilised to measure the participants' entrepreneurial orientation. The questionnaire produced by Saridakis *et al.* (2018) was applied to measure job satisfaction, and the scale used by Do and Luu, (2020) was taken to measure subjective norms. The data collected by the questionnaires were entered into SPSS v27 and Excel to conduct Spearman's correlation to analyse the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO and age and IEO. Also, regression analysis was run to investigate whether subjective norms moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO and whether job satisfaction moderates the relationship between age and IEO. Descriptive statistics were carried out to explain the results. Then the researcher presented a critical analysis of the results. Finally, a conclusion was drawn by gathering all the knowledge obtained during the research project with recommendations for future research in the entrepreneurship and organisational fields.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Due to globalisation and technology, new products, services, and processes are constantly appearing on the market. Companies must adapt to this dynamism by being innovative, proactive, and aggressive to be competitive and gain more market share. To this end, many companies are developing entrepreneurial orientation (EO). A firm is considered entrepreneurially oriented when it uses practices and makes decisions based on innovations resulting in new products, services and business models that did not previously exist in the market (Covin and Wales, 2018). Entrepreneurial Orientation is well known in the literature and has been studied for over 30 years. EO was first developed to measure entrepreneurial orientation at a firm level (Wasilczuk and Richert-Kaźmierska, 2020). Covin and Slevin (1989) designed an instrument capable of measuring a firm's entrepreneurial orientation called the 10-degree EO measurement scale, which contains questions related to the three dimensions: risk-taking, innovation and proactivity. Although EO was developed in the entrepreneurship field, it is also possible to observe it in many areas in the literature, such as studies relating EO to human resources and supply chain management. Feeling the need to study EO in individuals, Bolton and Lane (2012) created the IEO scale to measure risk-taking, innovativeness and proactiveness in people and not in firms.

The study of IEO has been growing over the years. However, most research on IEO explores the entrepreneurial orientation of students (Kraus *et al.*, 2019; Rudawska, 2021). Research linking this concept to the organisational context is still scarce, let alone employees in Ireland. Thus, this study aims to cover this gap by providing insights on how to promote the entrepreneurial orientation of workers in Ireland. Considering that studies prove that EO and IEO bring performance and competitive advantage to firms (Tajeddini and Mueller, 2018 and Hernández-Perlines, 2019; Fellnhofer, 2018), this research is essential as many companies and managers want their employees to perform entrepreneurial acts, however, they do not know how to do it. Thus, we will explore ways to promote this behaviour through job satisfaction, employee age and subjective norms. Job satisfaction can be defined as when the

benefits offered by the job meet the employee's expectations (Đorđević *et al.*, 2021). On the other hand, subjective norms are the expectations of those closest to an individual that they should behave in a certain way (Doanh, 2019). To address this gap, we intend to investigate whether job satisfaction impacts IEO, how the employees' age affects IEO and whether subjective norms work as a moderator in this study.

Therefore, this chapter outlines the recent literature on these concepts and will begin by examining the significance of EO, IEO, age and subjective norms. It will follow with an investigation into the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO as well as age and IEO. Then, the moderating effect of subjective norms on the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO will be explored. Finally, job satisfaction will be explored as a moderator of the relationship between age and IEO.

2.2 Entrepreneurial Orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation is indispensable for firms to gain market share because it guides them on a path of innovation of their operations that results in business growth (Abu-Rumman *et al.*, 2021). Covin and Wales (2018) clarify that two distinct dimensions define EO: the unitary construct and the multidimensional construct. The unitary construct is present in studies conducted by Covin & Slevin (1989) and Miller (1983) and is based on the ability of companies to be entrepreneurial through risk-taking, innovation and proactivity. On the other hand, in the multidimensional construct described by Lumpkin and Dess (1996), EO has a broader concept being defined by risk-taking, innovativeness, proactiveness, autonomy, and competitive aggressiveness.

Miller (1983) pioneered the study in EO and the three dimensions to conceptualize it (innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking). Innovativeness is the company's ability to create new products and services. Proactiveness results from the company's ability to be aggressive and follow the competitiveness. Risk-taking is when the company has managers capable of making decisions that have a chance to be expensive and result in failure (Dhaouadi, 2021). Afterwards Lumpkin and Dess developed two new dimensions for EO, which are aggressiveness and autonomy. Aggressiveness means the potential of a firm to search for new market shares at all

costs and develop strategies to face threats in the business world (Lizote, *et al.*, 2020). On the other hand, autonomy means that the firm is free to make its own business decisions (Njoroge *et al.*, 2020). The three dimensions (innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking) are more present in the EO literature, while autonomy and aggressiveness are seen less frequently.

Most studies on this concept are carried out to verify whether entrepreneurial-oriented firms present higher performance. Research in various areas, industries and type of companies have demonstrated the positive relationship between EO and firm performance (Tajeddini and Mueller, 2018 and Hernández-Perlines, 2019). Entrepreneurially oriented firms present performance not only because of risk-taking and proactivity but also because they have dynamic capabilities, which are important to improve performance (Abu-Rumman *et al.*, 2021). However, some studies indicate a negative relationship (Taheri *et al.*, 2019), because entrepreneurial behaviour makes managers and employees focus on revenue and profits to understand the market and consumers better, resulting in a culture of fear and apprehension in the organisation. Thus, employees feel discouraged to apply the risk-taking necessary for entrepreneurial orientation. Finally, the research conducted by Lizote *et al.* (2020) showed that the relationship between EO and performance is not valid for all dimensions (innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking) because some organisations are conservative concerning risk-taking.

Moreover, the literature demonstrated that entrepreneurial orientation affects the firm's market orientation, enabling it to deliver a differentiated and better value service than the competition, resulting in better performance. Qomari *et al.* (2021) claims that EO positively affects organizational commitment. Companies with high EO levels present higher financial returns (Rauch *et al.*, 2009) when used as a strategy in a highly dynamic environment (Tajeddini and Mueller 2018). Also, managers who apply entrepreneurial decisions and practices in their day-to-day activities to strengthen the company's vision and increase competitive advantage are entrepreneurial oriented decision-makers (Garcia, *et al.*, 2021). For Lizote *et al.*, (2020), EO is a quality of managers who apply strategies that challenge the uncertainty of the environment. However, they quote Miller (1983), who says that entrepreneurial orientation cannot be seen as an individual quality but rather as a firm's characteristic.

The diversity of studies on EO can be explained because this concept does not present difficulties and can be applied in various areas (Wasilczuk and Richert-Kaźmierska, 2020). Therefore, considering that much has already been seen regarding EO at the firm level and business performance, this study aims to focus on individual entrepreneurial orientation.

2.3 Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation

Although EO is a concept more associated with the description of companies willing to venture into the unknown through entrepreneurship, Miller (1983) states that before the company had entrepreneurial behaviour, people needed these characteristics. Bolton and Lane (2012) argue that people possess Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO) and these characteristics can be considered a personal resource (Kattenbach and Fietze 2018). Thus, companies have the power to encourage and incentivise risk-taking, innovation, proactivity, and autonomy of their employees through a conducive work environment and incentives. Hughes *et al.* (2017) and Mustafa *et al.* (2018) state that qualities associated with innovation positively impact not only individual work but also teamwork and Gawke *et al.* (2017) affirm that entrepreneurially oriented employees improve work engagement. Likewise, Fellnhöfer (2018) found in his research a positive relationship between IEO and firm performance and emphasised the importance of the entrepreneurially oriented individual for the formation of the entrepreneurially oriented company. Wang *et al.* (2021), besides studying the traditional concept of IEO, also give another vision to IEO, which is the employee's perception of the company's EO. The authors also show in their study that IEO helps employees understand why an entrepreneurial-oriented firm makes certain decisions and its entrepreneurship style.

The entrepreneurial behaviour of employees within a company is called intrapreneurship and has become increasingly discussed in the literature. Gawke *et al.* (2017) defines intrapreneurship as the ability of employees to bring organisational venture and strategic renewal to the organisation where they work. Heize and Weber (2016) describes intrapreneurship as a way for lower or middle-level employees who usually do not participate in decision-making to act entrepreneurially since they do not have authority or power within the company. Further, innovative and proactive

employees are ahead of their time and always come up with new ideas. As a result, new products and processes are created, leading the company to a competitive advantage (Ahmed *et al.*, 2013).

Furthermore, entrepreneurial tendencies are behaviours related to seeking new opportunities, innovation and change. Therefore, it is possible to tell how entrepreneurial a person is not only by how often they venture into the behaviours mentioned above but also by the thoughts and feelings related to entrepreneurship (Ahmetoglu *et al.*, 2021). Risk-taking, innovation and proactivity characteristics can be important features for a person to use not only in their daily life but also in the company where they work. Some people prefer to take risks in their daily life, such as investing in cryptocurrency. Some are innovative and often create new ways of doing their job; others are proactive and are the first to come up with solutions to a problem, for example. Thus, applying these dimensions to a person in order to measure their individual's EO seems logical and possible. Bolton and Lane (2012) realised that the three dimensions used to measure the EO of a firm (risk-taking, innovativeness and proactiveness) could also be used to measure the EO of an individual. Consequently, they developed an IEO measurement instrument, a survey composed of 10 questions, which was the same scale used to measure the individual entrepreneurial behaviours of the participants in this study.

The research on entrepreneurial orientation at the individual level has grown over the years. However, criticism can be found in the literature on adapting the traditional EO scale at the firm level to develop the EO scale at the individual level. For example, Covin and Wales (2018) claim that using the EO scale at the individual level would be an example of concept stretching, which in this case means taking a scale developed for the firm level and using it for the individual level. The authors states that not all EO dimensions at the firm level can be adapted to the individual level. On the other hand, the respondents of the original EO scale developed by Covin and Slevin usually have higher positions in the organisation, for instance, senior managers and CEOs (Covin and Wales, 2018). These professionals were considered mere company representatives and there was no interest in exploring the entrepreneurial behaviours of these individuals. Thus, Kraus *et al.* (2019) raised some criticisms of this method: Firstly, analysing EO only at the corporate level does not consider the existence of EO behaviours in other areas of the organisation. Second, as already stated, only

managers with a high position, especially CEOs, are used, disregarding employees in other positions who may also possess EO and are essential assets to bring performance.

Santos *et al.* (2020), added two more dimensions to the IEO Scale: passion and perseverance. Passion is a positive emotion linked to the entrepreneur's pleasure when performing their tasks and activities. Perseverance refers to the quality of the individual to set goals and objectives and persist in achieving them even when encountering adversities along the way (Gerschewski *et al.*, 2016). However, the present study will not use these two new dimensions because there is not much research in the literature using this new IEO scale. Santos *et al.* (2020) also points out that each IEO dimension positively impacts the entrepreneur's ability to identify new opportunities. For example, risk-taking enables the entrepreneur to seek and make risky financial decisions, causing the firm to earn a high financial return. Likewise, proactivity causes an individual to take the self-initiative to seek out and recognize financially profitable options ahead of time. Finally, qualities associated with innovation enable an individual to create new and more agile processes and new ways to solve company problems, saving money and time.

Further, Kraus *et al.* (2019) talk about worker risk taking in their study. When opening a start-up, for example, an entrepreneur takes several risks, not only financial but also associated with their reputation. The same applies to an entrepreneur employee. Usually, an employee aiming to achieve a goal uses creativity and proactivity, resulting in risky decisions. Nonetheless, to take a risky decision, employees may often go against the firm's culture, bureaucracy and managers who do not support this behaviour, resulting in a high risk for the employee (Mustafa *et al.*, 2018). On the other hand, when Managers' EO levels are high, they may impose their risk-taking, innovation and proactivity characteristics to their employees, thus generating an environment of ambiguity. Ambiguity is identified as worrying, tense and intimidating (Andersén, 2017). Employees that do not have the same high EO levels or skills to deal with this ambiguity prefer not to take risks, and as a result, an uncomfortable situation is created for the employee. Therefore, managers with high EO cannot demand the same EO level from their workers. In this case, only when employees feel comfortable that their decision will not harm the company's performance will they get involved in ambiguous or challenging situations (Qomari *et al.*, 2021).

Ahmed *et al.* (2020) found in his research a positive relationship between Corporate Entrepreneurship (which in many other studies is called intrapreneurship) and business performance. However, for this relationship to happen, management must support, motivate, and reward the employee's entrepreneurial activities. Managerial support is known in the literature as one of the most critical factors in enabling entrepreneurial and innovative behaviour (Andersén, 2017). According to Kuratko *et al.* (2014), management support happens by giving autonomy and discretion to the employee so that they can make their own decisions, create their own processes, and learn from their mistakes. Furthermore, a supportive work environment without the fear of being penalised will enhance the employee's innovation, creativity and proactivity qualities.

Although there are studies stating a negative impact of EO on organisational performance (Taheri *et al.*, 2019), as well as EO might bring role ambiguity to the firm (Andersén, 2017), the literature gives us the necessary evidence that entrepreneurially oriented employees positively impact the performance of an organisation (Fellnhöfer, 2019) and are considered essential assets to a

firm (Ahmed *et al.*, 2013). As shown above, they improve teamwork, bring engagement at work, promote organisational venture, strategic renewal, financial return and others.

2.4 Job Satisfaction

Saridakis *et al.* (2020) state that the study of job satisfaction (JS) began in 1930 with research into employees' contentment with their jobs and linking the attitudes of satisfied and dissatisfied employees to their performance. The author cites the concept of JS developed by (Locke, 1976) that for many years has been extensively used in the literature "*a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences.*" (Locke, 1976, p. 1300). Job satisfaction is a subjective feeling composed of several elements and factors that depend on each person. Thus, even if two employees have the same position in the same company, one may be satisfied and the other not (Nieżurawski and Nieżurawska-Zajac, 2022). Weiss (2002) claims that job satisfaction will result from all the positive and negative emotions experienced by the employee. Furthermore, job satisfaction relates to the personal experience of each employee. Therefore, employees are satisfied with their job only if

the company meets their needs and interests (Bakhtiari and Jalilian, 2018). Tomažević *et al.* (2014) conceptualise job satisfaction as an employee's positive feelings when their expectations are met and link this concept with organisational commitment.

According to Yildirim and Pazarcik (2014), the study of job satisfaction is a basis for developing various theories that explain employee attitudes and behaviours. The elements of job satisfaction can be evaluated in relative terms through equity theory (Kollmann, *et al.*, 2020), which is when the employee verifies if there is a fair exchange between personal outcomes such as salary, growth opportunity, recognition and personal inputs such as time and effort spent on the activities developed, knowledge and skills that the employee possesses (Antoncic and Antoncic, 2011). Different studies measure JS through different variables. These variables can be divided into intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic variables involve personal factors such as the desire to be recognised and grow within the organisation. On the other side, extrinsic factors are related to external factors that the employee cannot control, such as the quality of management, culture and values of the company, awards, and others (Saridakis *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to measure job satisfaction through a nine-question instrument containing intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Tran, (2020) relates JS with Organisational culture. This organisational behaviour means the way that employees think, act, and behave in the firm that is influenced by the norms and values of the organisation. Thus, the employee will only be satisfied if their personal characteristics are similar to the company's (AlHajji, 2021). If the organisation is interested in meeting its employees' expectations, this can become a substantial competitive advantage for the company (Antoncic and Antoncic, 2011). Đorđević *et al.* (2021) bring research on job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour in their study, claiming that this organisational behaviour happens when an employee with high levels of job satisfaction voluntarily performs functions beyond their obligations. This behaviour is not required; however, it contributes to the effectiveness of the organisation.

Moreover, Nikolaev *et al.* (2020) brought new insights to the literature on dispositional positive and negative affect. This author emphasises that people with high positive affect tend to be more optimistic because they manage to interpret the events inside the organisation positively. This way, they are more likely to fit in their jobs and

generate work commitment. Moreover, happy people prefer to keep their life as it is and tend not to change, decreasing job turnover. On the other hand, people with high negative affect have characteristics related to irritation, guilt and hostility (Sawhney, 2022). For example, they tend to see themselves and their environment negatively, including the work environment. Therefore, people with high negative affect are more likely to look for new job opportunities and start their own businesses.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of a company's management can be analysed through job satisfaction. According to Munir and Iqbal (2018) and Manoppo, *et al.* (2021) leadership is the factor that most impacts job satisfaction, and these two concepts are responsible for the effectiveness of an organisation. Thus, organisations must evaluate their leadership style and adapt it to positively impact their employees' satisfaction. The authors also mention autocratic and democratic leadership and their consequences on job satisfaction: autocratic leadership decreases job satisfaction, and democratic leadership increases job satisfaction (Munir and Iqbal 2018). Nonetheless, often top managers are happy with the company's results, but lower employees are not satisfied with their work (Nieżurawski and Nieżurawska-Zajac, 2022). Ahmed *et al.* (2013) state that employee satisfaction is directly linked with organisational outcomes and job performance and, therefore, should be of interest to managers of all organisations.

Also, job satisfaction has implications not only in organisations but also in the lives of individuals. For example, an employee unsatisfied with his job will reduce his performance in business and daily life. Bakhtiari and Jalilian (2018) point out that job satisfaction can be created by developing employees' skills through different tasks, so the employee is not doing the same work every day. Further, workers' involvement in challenging and risky duties increases employee satisfaction. Chung and Kim (2017) demonstrate in their research that workers who have high levels of job satisfaction are the ones who show more innovative behaviour, i.e., they are usually bringing new ideas for processes, working conditions and also accept new ideas more easily. Furthermore, although necessary to bring improvements to work, organisational changes can create a climate of uncertainty and insecurity among employees, decreasing levels of job satisfaction. However, Boulagouas *et al.* (2021) claim that employee satisfaction will increase if organisational changes are implemented with enthusiasm, motivation and fair treatment.

2.5 The relationship between IEO and job satisfaction

One of the aims of this study is to fill the gap that exists in the study between IEO and job satisfaction. Although the researcher is unaware of studies linking these two concepts, the literature has analysis in the area of entrepreneurial behaviour, organisational behaviour and job satisfaction that serve as guides for elaborating the hypotheses of this study. Firstly, some research link the concept of intrapreneurship with job satisfaction. Itzkovich *et al.* (2021) found that job satisfaction increases employees' intrapreneurial behaviour and is positively correlates with intrapreneurship (Antoncic and Antoncic, 2011; Ahmed *et al.*, 2013; Kuratko *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, Yildirim and Pazarcik (2014) found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and some dimensions of intrapreneurship, namely proactivity and organisational renewal.

Wang *et al.* (2021) found a positive relationship between IEO and job involvement in their study. The author explains that EO-related activities increase employees' skills and work-related feelings. Likewise, Ahmetoglu *et al.* (2021) verified the link between entrepreneurial tendencies and work engagement. Furthermore, entrepreneurial employees who work in companies with the same characteristics (risk-taking, innovativeness and proactiveness) feel that they fit in and thus have more job satisfaction and organisational commitment (O'Reilly *et al.*, 1991). However, if the entrepreneurial employee does not feel engaged at work and if they have the intention to start their own business, the positive correlation between entrepreneurial tendencies and work engagement loses ground to the link between intentions to start a business and intentions to quit (Ahmetoglu *et al.*, 2021). High dispositional negative affect generates job dissatisfaction and increases the likelihood of employees seeking self-employment (Nikolaev *et al.*, 2020). Low job satisfaction causes employees to start thinking about other careers, resulting in a negative relationship between job satisfaction and entrepreneurial intention (Li *et al.*, 2021; Hatak *et al.*, 2015).

Moreover, Job satisfaction is linked to innovative organisational citizenship behaviour (Chung and Kim, 2017; Đorđević *et al.*, 2021). Also, democratic leadership style, is highly associated with job satisfaction (Munir and Iqbal 2018). In organisational change, the levels of job satisfaction will increase if this is done with enthusiasm, motivation and treatment (Boulagouas *et al.*, 2021). Tran (2020) and AlHajji (2021)

found a partial relationship between satisfaction and organizational culture in their research. It can be seen from the above that entrepreneurial behaviour, organisational factors (transformational leadership, organisational change, organisational culture) and workplace behaviours (organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, innovative behaviour and intrapreneurship) are related to elements of job satisfaction. Therefore, it is assumed that there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and individual entrepreneurial orientation.

2.6 The relationship between age and IEO

Age is generally conceptualised chronologically and understood in the same way all over the world. However, the meaning of age can differ depending on the context. For example, age can be perceived in different ways by different cultures. There are also psychological factors whereby individuals of the same age may feel younger or older. Gender, career, generation, and other factors also influence age (Römer-Paakkanen and Takanen-Körperich, 2022).

The literature shows a disagreement concerning the relationship of age with entrepreneurial behaviour and organisational behaviour. Adachi and Hisada (2016) found an inverse U-shaped relationship between age and entrepreneurship, which means the relationship starts between ages 18 and 24; gets more substantial between ages 35 and 44 but gets weaker between 45 and 54 years old. Moreover, these authors also found a negative relationship between age and intrapreneurship (Adachi and Hisada 2016). Camelo-Ordaz *et al.* (2011) found a negative relationship between intrapreneur age, entrepreneurial values, and firm innovation performance. The authors explain that the upper echelon theory explains the ability of younger managers to perform better in risk-taking and innovativeness tasks. This theory is used in several studies on age and performance and explains that as individuals age, they lose cognitive skills and become more rigid to change, resulting in fewer innovative ideas and less inclination to take risky decisions (Quttainah, 2015).

Also, there is no agreement in the literature about entrepreneurs' age and performance. Studies have all types of results: negative, positive and inverted U-shaped relationships (Hador and Klein 2019). According to Johnson *et al.* (2017), age presents better results at work because older employees can better regulate their

emotions, resulting in more engagement at work and less burnout. Wach and Glodowska (2021) proved that thanks to accumulated knowledge, skills and experience acquired over the years, there is a positive relationship between the entrepreneur's age and the speed of the internalisation process of a company. However, older employees show less productivity in jobs requiring learning, speed and problem solving (Skirbekk, 2004), which can be explained by decremental theory. This theory states that employee loses specific capabilities as they age (Matagi *et al.*, 2022).

Lin and Wang (2018) found that the older the entrepreneur, the slower they will be in venturing into a new business in case of business failure. The authors brought the discussion about age norms in their study. Age norms can be conceptualised as people's perception of someone's ability to run a business based on their age. Thus, an individual with a negative perception of age norms may think that they are incapable of venturing into entrepreneurship because of their age. Furthermore, younger people are more likely to become entrepreneurs than older people because they generally have more education, learning capacity, health and easier financial access (Holmquist and Sundin, 2021). Hatak *et al.* (2015) found a negative relationship between age and entrepreneurial intention. The authors argue that younger people are more likely to invest time and money in an activity, not only for themselves but also for their employers, that does not guarantee future profits. Older CEOs are more conservative about making risky and aggressive decisions than younger CEOs (Ting, 2015). Hador and Klein (2019) and Urbano *et. al* (2013) found a negative relationship between age and intrapreneurial activities. Therefore, we suggest that the relationship between age and IEO will be negative, that is, the older a person is, the less entrepreneurial characteristics that person will have.

2.7 Subjective norms as a moderator of the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO

An individual's behaviour is influenced by the social pressures of those around them. For example, before a person takes a decision, they will try to make it in a way that relates to the people's thoughts and beliefs in their social group. Social pressure is created by family, friends and the workplace, and is often referred to as subjective

norms in the literature (Majeed *et al.*, 2021). Subjective norms are composed of normative beliefs and motivation to follow these beliefs. In other words, a person's entrepreneurial behaviour will depend on their perception of the social pressures (Jaén and Liñán, 2013). Thus, Organisational architecture, leadership and human resources can discourage or incite employees to exhibit entrepreneurial behaviours (Do and Luu, 2020).

Psychological and behavioural factors can affect an individual's entrepreneurial behaviour (Taormina and Kin-Mei Lao, 2007). Therefore, the subjective perceptions of an individual of their environment are more important than the environmental factors themselves and should be measured (Karimi *et al.*, 2017) and considered for research in entrepreneurial behaviour. Edmondson (1999) brought the concept of psychological safety at work, explaining that it happens when the work environment induces employees to feel comfortable to take risky decisions as they feel that the company supports them and there will be no negative implications like punishments or embarrassments related to their entrepreneurial behaviour. Thus, employees and the company have a sense of mutual trust.

It is possible to find studies that portray positive, negative, and statistically irrelevant results between subjective norms and entrepreneurial behaviour. Majeed *et al.* (2021) found a positive relationship between subjective norms and entrepreneurial intention but a negative relationship between subjective norms and entrepreneurial behaviour. Aga and Singh (2022) found a positive relationship between subjective norms and entrepreneurial intention. The authors also discovered that subjective norms moderated the relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention. Also, subjective norms positively impact employees' strategic renewal behaviour and employees' entrepreneurial behaviour (Do and Luu, 2020). However, Liñán and Chen (2009) claim that subjective norms have no meaningful effect on entrepreneurial intentions.

Besides, a high degree of subjective norms results in a higher degree of job satisfaction (Lam *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, we assume that when employees perceive that their work environment (co-workers and managers) is favourable to entrepreneurship, they will feel more comfortable exercising their entrepreneurial behaviours (risk-taking, innovativeness and proactiveness). Thus, we argue that

employees feel more comfortable exhibiting risk-taking, innovative and proactive behaviour in a firm with higher levels of subjective norms. With this in mind, we assume that subjective norms can positively moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO.

2.8 Job satisfaction as a moderator of the relationship between age and IEO

During the ageing process, an individual experiences several behavioural, emotional and intellectual changes that affect their work outcomes (Matagi *et al.*, 2022). Younger workers feel they have much time ahead of them and always want to achieve more. On the other hand, older workers feel they have less time and less ambition, so they develop the ability to regulate their emotions, thus generating positive attitudes and emotions in their job (Hatak, 2015). For example, older employees become more rigid to changes, less likely to make risky decisions (Bayon and Lamotte, 2020), and bring new opportunities to the organisation (Hatak, 2015), which may result in lower characteristics associated with individual entrepreneurial orientation. However, even though they are less likely to bring innovation to the organisation, older employees can better control and regulate their emotions, are more likely to identify with their job (Kim and Kang 2017), and exhibit job satisfaction than younger employees.

This high degree of job identification and job satisfaction can be explained by socioemotional selectivity theory (Cavanagh *et al.*, 2020). When people get older, there is a change in their goals and motivations at work. That is, while younger people are more concerned with accumulating not only money but also knowledge, older people are more concerned with enjoying life with the money accumulated throughout life and are not so concerned with acquiring more knowledge (Carstensen, 1992; Henry *et al.*, 2017). However, the use, sharing and creation of knowledge are essential for EO, being EO highly related to knowledge management (Latif *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, based on the literature above, we assume that the relationship between age and IEO is moderated by job satisfaction, i.e., the more substantial the job satisfaction, the stronger the negative relationship between age and IEO.

2.9 Conclusion

As seen from the reading above, even if there are controversies, several studies report the positive impact that EO and IEO bring to an organisation. There are also studies on entrepreneurial behaviour, organisational behaviour, job satisfaction, age, and subjective norms, but the relationship of these concepts with the employee's IEO is still limited. However, the literature provides us with the necessary evidence to assume that job satisfaction positively impacts IEO, which means that employees who have positive attitudes towards their jobs have more qualities associated with IEO (risk-taking, innovativeness and proactiveness). In addition, this study also suggests that subjective norms can positively moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO because when employees feel that their managers and co-workers support their entrepreneurial behaviour, they will feel comfortable engaging in entrepreneurial activities without the risk of being penalised.

Although there is ambiguity in studies concerning entrepreneurial behaviour and age, the researcher found better empirical evidence concerning the negative relationship between age and entrepreneurial behaviour. For example, with age, people become more rigid to change and more averse to risk-taking; however, IEO is very much related to risk-taking and the constant search for new ideas, which leads to frequent changes in ideas, strategies, and processes. Moreover, by deepening the reading of job satisfaction, the researcher realised that this concept could be a moderator in the relationship between age and IEO. Since older people do not have many ambitions at work because they prioritise other areas of life than not their professional life, they end up having higher levels of job satisfaction. In addition, obtaining new knowledge is not essential for them. However, constantly acquiring new knowledge is essential to having an IEO.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

This study aims to explore ways for companies and managers to promote the IEO of their employees in Ireland. After an extensive review of the literature, the researcher realised that the entrepreneurial behaviour of employees in Ireland could be promoted through higher levels of job satisfaction, hiring younger employees, and creating a work environment conducive to entrepreneurial behaviour, resulting in a favourable perception of subjective norms by the employee.

Although the study of IEO in the organisational context is still scarce, and there is controversy in the literature, some scholars claim there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and intrapreneurship (Itzkovich *et al.*, 2021; Auer Antoncic and Antoncic, 2011; Ahmed *et al.*, 2013; Kuratko *et al.*, 2005; Yildirim and Pazarcik 2014). Even though the researcher is unaware of studies that analyse the relationship between IEO and job satisfaction, some studies show the link between IEO and job involvement (Wang *et al.*, 2021) as well as entrepreneurial tendencies and work engagement (Ahmetoglu *et al.*, 2021). Regarding the relationship between age and IEO, the researcher also did not find studies with exactly these variables. However, Klein (2019) found a negative relationship between age and intrapreneurial activities, Camelo-Ordaz *et al.* (2011) discovered a negative relationship between age and entrepreneurial values. Hatak *et al.* (2015) show a negative correlation between age and entrepreneurial activities and Li *et al.* (2021) found a negative relationship between age and entrepreneurial intentions.

However, even though Jaén and Liñán (2013) claim that a person's entrepreneurial behaviour will depend on their perception of social pressures, the studies above did not consider subjective norms as a moderator. Hatak (2014), states that job identification moderates the relationship between age and entrepreneurial intention, but there are no studies that use job satisfaction as a moderator of the relationship between age and IEO. Besides, during the literature review process, the researcher noticed that no research explores the exact concept of individual entrepreneurial orientation and relates it to job satisfaction and age of workers in Ireland, meaning gaps in the literature surrounding these variables.

“How to promote individual entrepreneurial orientation in employees in Ireland?”

“Can job satisfaction promote individual entrepreneurial orientation?”

“Do younger employees more likely to have an individual entrepreneurial orientation?”

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and IEO.

Hypothesis 2: There is a negative relationship between age and IEO.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and job satisfaction is moderated by subjective norms.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between age and entrepreneurial orientation is moderated by job satisfaction.

3.1 Research model

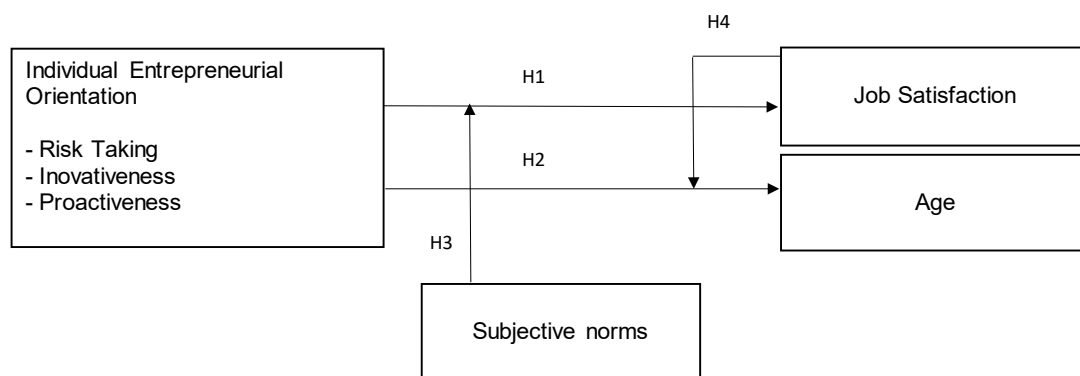


Figure 1. *The research model*

This study aims to investigate the correlation between age, job satisfaction and individual entrepreneurial behaviours. The goal is to explore whether employees who are happy in their jobs are likelier to exhibit individual behaviours linked to risk-taking, innovation and proactivity. Also, whether older people are less likely to have IEO. This study also intends to use subjective norms (as a moderator) to verify if employees that feel that their organisation approves their entrepreneurial behaviour, the positive relationship between job satisfaction and IEO will increase. Finally, this research also aims to analyse whether job satisfaction as a moderator improves the negative relationship between age and IEO. Therefore, to investigate this further and answer the research questions, the following objectives were developed:

The objectives of the study are:

- a. Analyse whether job satisfaction can impact the IEO of employees.
- c. Examine the effect of the employees' age on IEO.
- e. Investigate the moderator effect of subjective norms on the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO.
- f. Define the moderator effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between age and IEO.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to demonstrate the reasons for the researcher to have adopted the positivist philosophy, explain the framework adopted in this research and give information about the instrument of data collection, data analysis, population and sample. Finally, limitations and ethical considerations will be discussed.

As already demonstrated in this study's chapter two (literature review), even though research related to entrepreneurial behaviour and job satisfaction items are rich in the current literature, the literature review process enabled the researcher to identify a gap in the literature concerning the relationship between individual entrepreneurial orientation, job satisfaction, age and subjective norms. Concerning the research methods, most studies related to entrepreneurship are conducted using quantitative methods (Hatak *et al.*, 2015; Kraus *et al.*, 2019, Bolton and Lane, 2012 and much more). Moreover, the quantitative approach is essential for interpreting numerical because this method allows the researcher to organise, categorise and summarise the data. Furthermore, this study is descriptive because the information was obtained about an isolated population in order to describe the characteristics of them (Lizote *et al.*, 2020). Thus, the quantitative approach through cross-sectional design was chosen by this researcher.

4.2 Research aims and objectives

Although there are studies related to IEO, the literature is still scarce about these behaviours in the organisational context. During the literature review phase, the researcher realised there is a gap regarding how to promote entrepreneurial orientation among employees working in Ireland. Furthermore, job satisfaction, employee age and subjective norms could promote the entrepreneurial orientation desired by managers and business owners. For this reason, this research aims to address:

1. Analyse whether job satisfaction can impact the IEO of employees.
2. Examine the effect of the employees' age on IEO.
3. Investigate the moderator effect of subjective norms on the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO.
4. Define the moderator effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between age and IEO.

4.3 Research philosophy

During the literature review phase, the researcher acquired knowledge of the issues addressed in this study and developed the hypotheses that will be tested by the quantitative method. Research philosophy means a "*system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge*" (Sauders *et al.*, 2019, p.130). Positivism philosophy is one of the five best-known research philosophies in management and business; quantitative methods are generally used. (Sauders *et al.*, 2019). This philosophy was chosen because it allows the researcher to gain knowledge by observing a phenomenon without interfering with it (Kariuki *et al.*, 2022) and develop the hypothesis based on theories that already exist in the literature.

4.4 Research approach

Considering that this study is a scientific investigation based on existing theories, the research approach that makes the most sense to use is a deductive method (Sauders *et al.*, 2019). Using this approach, this researcher can analyse the literature in order to elaborate on the hypotheses that will be tested through the quantitative method. Data was collected through valid and reliable scales to test and investigate variables and to reject or validate the hypotheses.

4.5 Research design

4.5.1 Instrument of data collection

The three scales (IEO, subjective norms and job satisfaction) used to build the measurement in this research were taken from reliable and valid constructs already existing in the literature. Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation was adopted from the IEO questionnaire developed by Bolton and Lane (2012) to verify EO for an individual. The items on Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation were divided into three dimensions, namely risk-taking (3 items), Innovativeness (4 items) and proactiveness (3 items). The IEO survey was based on these three dimensions developed by Lumpkin and Dess (1996) and the validated measures provided by Lumpkin *et al.* (2009) in their study on Entrepreneurial Orientation at the organisational level. Studies like Kraus *et al.* (2019), Rudawska (2021) and others also used the IEO scale in their research.

The four items concerned with employee perception of subjective norms were adopted from (Do and Luu, 2020), which was adapted from an instrument developed by Karimi *et al.* (2017) and Liñán and Chen (2009).

In addition, the 9 items about job satisfaction were acquired from Saridakis *et al.* (2020), who developed a questionnaire based on the one created by Rose (2007). Besides the same survey can be found in the studies of Wood and Ogbonnaya (2016), Lai *et al.*, (2017) and Bryson *et al.*, (2010). Finally, five demographic questions related to gender, age, marital status, education, and salary were made.

Variables

Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO) (Bolton and Lane, 2012)

Risk-taking

RT1 I like to take bold action by venturing into the unknown.

RT2 I am willing to invest a lot of time and/or money on something that might yield a high return.

RT3 I tend to act 'boldly' in situations where risk is involved.

Innovativeness

INV1 I often like to try new and unusual activities that are not typical but not necessarily risky.

INV2 I tend to do things the same and not try different, unproven approaches.

INV3 I prefer to try my own unique way when learning new things rather than doing it like everyone else does.

INV4 I favour experimentation and original approaches to problem solving rather than using methods others generally use for solving problems.

Proactiveness

PRO1 I usually act in anticipation of future problems, needs, or changes.

PRO2 I tend to plan ahead on projects.

PRO3 I prefer to 'step up' and get things going on projects rather than sit and wait for someone else to do it.

Subjective Norms (SUB) (Do and Luu, 2020)

SUB1 Risk-taking, Innovativeness and Proactiveness conflict with my organisation values.

SUB2 Innovativeness and creativity are thought of as important at my workplace.

SUB3 My co-workers approve me investing time for establishing activities within the organisation.

SUB4 My firm encourages me to act in the prediction of problems, needs and changes.

Job Satisfaction (SAT) (Saridakis et al., 2020)

SAT1 I am satisfied with my sense of achievement in my current job.

SAT2 I am satisfied with the scope of using my own initiative in my current job.

SAT3 I am satisfied with my influence in my current job.

SAT4 I am satisfied with the training I received in my current job.

SAT5 I am satisfied with the amount of pay at my current job.

SAT6 I am satisfied with my job security

SAT7 I am satisfied with the work itself in my current job.

SAT8 I am satisfied with my involvement in decision-making in my current job.

SAT9 I see myself working in my current job (or in a better position) in the same company for the next 5 years.

Table 1. scales used in the questionnaire of this study

This study is based on a quantitative methodology in order to analyse the research model shown in *Figure 1* (chapter three) and test the hypotheses developed. The survey was administered between 21/06/2022 and 04/07/22 via a web link with a cover letter stressing the importance of the study and ensuring complete anonymity. For this purpose, the method of convenience sampling was selected to determine the research sample.

The questionnaire above contains a total of 23 items, of which 10 were for Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation, 4 were for subjective norms, and 9 were related to job satisfaction. Participants were asked to rate the items on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. At the end of the survey, demographic questions were asked to check the participants' gender, age, marital status, education, and salary.

The reason for utilising these questionnaires is because they have been used in other studies in the field and they also showed good reliability. Regarding the research methods, this study uses quantitative methods because most studies related to entrepreneurship are conducted using this methodology (Hatak *et al.*, 2015; Kraus *et al.*, 2019 and much more).

4.5.2 Data Analysis

Firstly, as shown above the researcher created the measurement used in this study through reliable and valid scales (Bolton and Lane, 2012; Do and Luu, 2020; Saridakis *et al.*, 2020). A total of 408 participants completed the questionnaire. However, after eliminating observations with incomplete data, the sample was reduced to 249 participants, which means a completion rate of 61%. The questionnaire had five response options: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree and strongly agree. The data collected from these responses were entered into SPSS v27 and Microsoft Excel software and transformed into Likert scales to be statistically analysed. Secondly, participants' demographic information was analysed, and mean and standard deviation was calculated to obtain descriptive statistics analysis. In order to verify the value of Cronbach's Alpha, a reliability test was run. Finally, Spearman's correlation and multiple regression analysis were performed. In the next chapter, it will be possible to observe the graphs and tables showing the results that may confirm the hypothesis.

4.5.3 Research population and sample

For this, a questionnaire was designed and answered by working adults from different industries and different occupational statuses in Ireland, aiming to assess the effects of age and job satisfaction on individual entrepreneurial orientation. This study employed a non-probability and convenience sampling methods using volunteers as respondents (Sauders *et al.*, 2019) to obtain the relevant data for the research objective.

The sample contained 249 participants, between 19 and 56 years old, who are currently working in Ireland. The target audience to answer the EO scale created by Covin and Slevin to measure the EO of a firm were senior managers (mainly CEOs) because they are considered the company's representatives. However, placing only CEOs or managers in higher positions to answer the EO scale denies the possibility of entrepreneurial-oriented employees at several company levels (Kraus *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, this research does not wish to ignore EO in employees at any level of the organisation and does not focus on any specific job title.

4.6 Limitations

Although the questionnaire used in this study was developed from reliable and valid constructs already existing in the literature, Cronbach's alpha score for the "IEO" scale was 0.59, and for the "subjective norms" scale was 0.42. However, considering this research has a limited and short time, the researcher did not have the opportunity to adapt the questionnaire and distribute it again to obtain a more appropriate Cronbach's Alpha score. However, even with these unexpected results, this study remains of interest in the entrepreneurship and organisational behaviour field and provides essential and exciting insights into the literature.

Also, one of the objectives of this study is to investigate the relationship between age and Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation. Thus, the researcher considers that 91.55% of participants being between 21 and 40 years old as a limitation.

4.7 Ethics

This study followed the ethics required in research involving human beings and rightly managed the data obtained only for study purposes. The first page of the survey carried out for this study was the completion of a consent form where participants became aware of their anonymity, general information about the project and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to demonstrate and analyse the data acquired from the survey. Demographic information of the participants, descriptive statistics analysis, mean, standard deviation and Cronbach's alpha are reported. Also, Spearman's correlation was carried out to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO as well as to explore the relationship between age and IEO. Multiple regression analyses were run to check if subjective norms moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO and if job satisfaction moderates the relationship between age and IEO.

The survey was distributed through an internet link and obtained 408 responses. However, after analysis and exclusion of incomplete responses, a total of 249 correct responses were obtained, 61% completion rate. To find the results, the researcher transferred the data from SurveyMonkey.com to Excel to organise and code them into Likert scales. After that, the data were transferred to SPSS v27; the software used to perform statistical analysis. Therefore, the data analysis carried out in this chapter is essential for this research as it will reveal whether the hypotheses developed during the literature review phase will be accepted or rejected.

5.2 Demographic Information

Before delving into the analysis of the results, it is important to describe demographic information about the participants. Among the 249 participants, 58.63% were women, and 41.37% were men. Furthermore, the participants' ages vary between 19 and 56 years, with an average age of 31.47 and an average income of €31.567,23. Regarding marital status 34.54% of the respondents were married and 65.46% were unmarried. Regarding education 6.83% of the respondents completed secondary school, 51.81% completed undergraduate, 40.56% completed a master's degree and 0.80% completed PhD. All this data and more demographic characteristics can be found in *table 2*.

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	(%)
Gender		
1. Male	103	41.37%
2. Female	146	58.63%
Age		
1. Less than 20 years	1	0.40%
2. 21–30 years	118	47.38%
3. 31–40 years	110	44.17%
4. 41 - 50 years	18	7.22%
5. Over 51	2	0.80%
Education		
1. Secondary Schools	17	6.83%
2. Undergraduate	129	51.81%
3. Masters degree	101	40.56%
4. PhD	2	0.80%
Marital Status		
1. Married	86	34.54%
2. Unmarried	163	65.46%
Salary		
1. Less than € 20,000	65	26.10%
2. €20,000 - €30,000	88	35.34%
3. €30,000 - €40,000	48	19.28%
4. €40,000 - €50,000	21	8.43%
5. €50,000 - €60,000	10	4.02%
6. €60,000 - €70,000	6	2.41%
7. €70,000 - €80,000	3	1.20%
8. €80,000 - €90,000	2	0.80%
9. €90,000 - €100,000	2	0.80%
10. €100,000 - €110,000	2	0.80%
11. greater than €120,000	2	0.80%

Table 2. gender, age, education, marital status, and salary

5.3 Descriptive statistics analysis

With a view to testing the hypotheses developed in this study, statistical analysis was performed on IBM SPSS software. As demonstrated, the survey for this study was developed based on relevant subject-matter literature to guarantee its validity and reliability. Throughout the analysis, individual entrepreneurial orientation will be

denoted by EO, job satisfaction will be denoted by SAT, age will be denoted by AGE, and subjective norms will be denoted by SUB.

To better demonstrate the statistical analysis, table 1 (chapter 4) shows the questions performed in the survey and table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation for each item and question. To summarize the results, IEO had a mean of 3.642 and a standard deviation of 0.944; SUB had a mean of 3.398 and a standard deviation of 0.963; SAT had a mean of 3.198 and a standard deviation of 1.167.

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N.
IEO	3.642	0.944	249
RT1	3.449	0.97	-
RT2	3.59	0.963	-
RT3	3.108	1.055	-
INV1	3.694	1.009	-
INV2	3.164	1.043	-
INV3	3.658	1.011	-
INV4	3.542	0.87	-
PRO1	3.988	0.81	-
PRO2	3.996	0.918	-
PRO3	4.228	0.787	-
SUB	3.398	0.963	249
SUB1	2.7229	0.991	-
SUB2	3.72	1.017	-
SUB3	3.47	0.88	-
SUB4	3.68	0.964	
SAT	3.198	1.167	249
SAT1	3.33	1.134	
SAT2	3.55	1.047	
SAT3	3.45	1.073	
SAT4	2.95	1.19	
SAT5	2.85	1.173	
SAT6	3.4	1.139	
SAT7	3.33	1.131	
SAT8	3.29	1.13	
SAT9	2.64	1.488	249

Table 3. IEO, SUB and SAT descriptive statistics

5.4 Reliability test

According to Salles *et al.* (2019), Cronbach's alpha is the most widely known and used method to calculate reliability. The author adds that values above 0.7 are considered satisfactory, indicating good consistency.

Although the questionnaire used in this research was taken from reliable and valid scales (Bolton and Lane, 2012; Do and Luu, 2020; Saridakis *et al.*, 2020), in this research, the IEO scale obtained a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.59, SUB obtained a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.42, and SAT had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.88. However, as explained in the previous chapter, the researcher could not recreate and repeat the entire research process to increase the Cronbach's Alpha score due to the time required to conduct this study. However, this research still contributes to the literature by providing meaningful insights into the entrepreneurship and organisation field. Also, it helps to cover the gap on how to promote the IEO of employees in Ireland.

Variable	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha	N
IEO	3.642	0.944	0.59	249
SUB	3.398	0.963	0.42	249
SAT	3.198	1.167	0.88	249

Table 4. Internal Consistency Reliability test, Means and Standard Deviations

5.5 Hypothesis testing

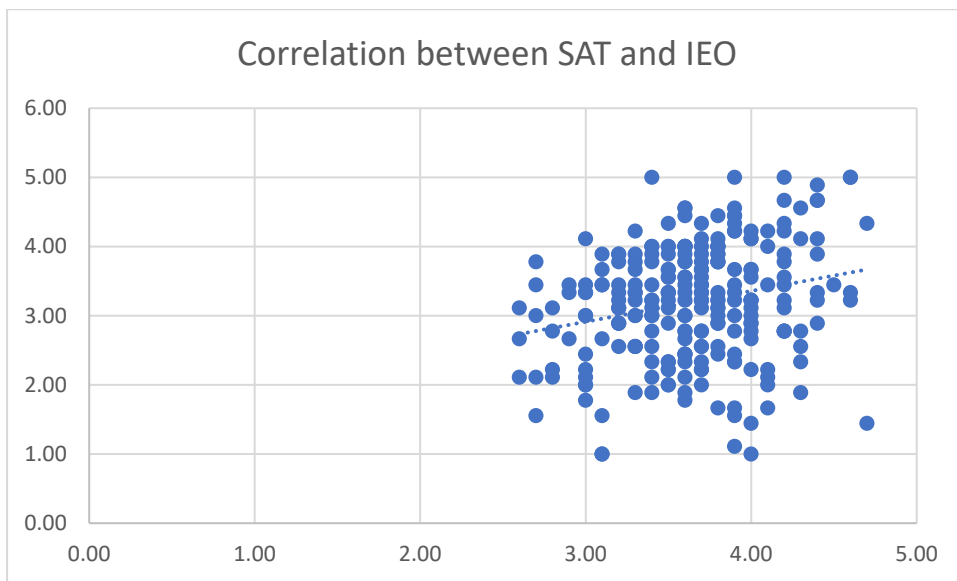
5.5.1 Correlation analysis

To investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO as well as age and IEO, we performed Spearman's correlation.

5.5.1.1 The relationship between job satisfaction and IEO

The results showed a significant positive relationship between the two variables, which means that people who are satisfied in their job are more likely to present individual entrepreneurial orientation ($\rho(249) = 0.209, p = 0.01$). Therefore, there is a statistically significant relationship between the two analysed variables, providing support for *H1*.

This result is in harmony with what has been demonstrated in the most recent literature. Although we are not aware that there is a study that investigates the relationship between job satisfaction and individual entrepreneurial orientation, the literature has shown a positive relationship between workplace behaviours (organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, innovative behaviour) and elements of job satisfaction.



Graph 1. Correlation between SAT and IEO

Spearman's correlation		IEO	SAT
Spearman's rho	IEO	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.209**
		N	<.0001
	SAT	Correlation Coefficient	.209**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	<.0001
		249	249

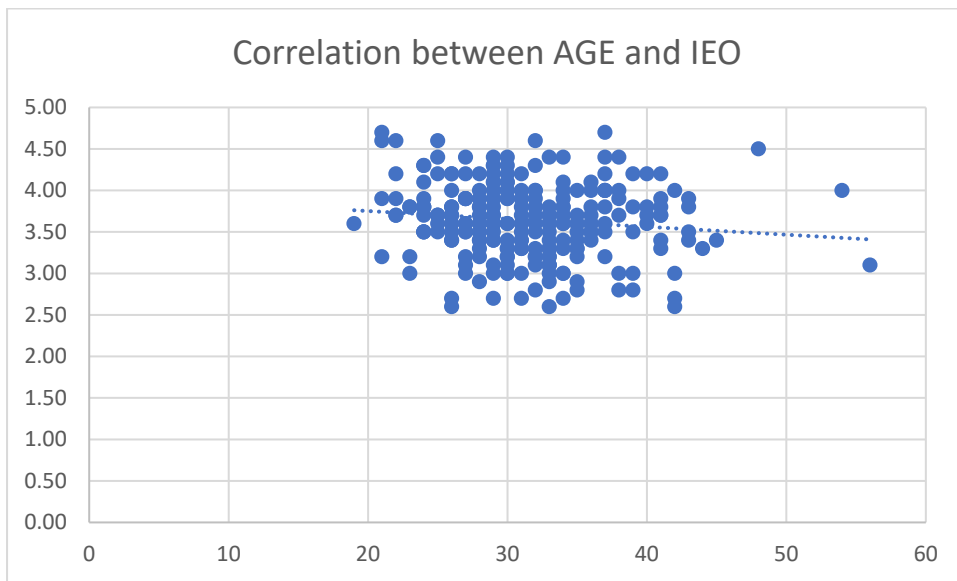
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5. Spearman's Correlation between SAT and IEO

5.5.1.2 The relationship between Age and IEO

In order to analyse the relationship between age and IEO Spearman's analysis was also carried out. A significant negative relationship between the two variables was

found, such that older participants were less likely to be entrepreneurially oriented ($\rho(249) = -0.125, p = 0.05$). Note that the coefficient is not high, thus being a weak relationship. Thus, age is associated with a lower likelihood of having characteristics related to Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation, providing support for *H2*. Although we also did not find studies that demonstrate the relationship between age and individual entrepreneurial orientation, this coefficient agrees with many studies that demonstrate a negative relationship between entrepreneurial behaviours and age.



Graph 2. Correlation between AGE and IEO

Spearman's correlation		IEO	AGE
Spearman's rho	IEO	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.
		N	249
	AGE	Correlation Coefficient	-.125*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.50
		N	249

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6. Spearman's Correlation between AGE and IEO

5.5.2 Regression analysis

The statistical technique applied to test hypotheses 3 and 4 was regression analysis.

5.5.2.1 Subjective norms as a moderator of the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO

In order to analyse a potential moderation by SUB of how SAT predicts IEO, we performed a regression analysis, including an interaction term of IEO x SUB. There was no significant interaction between these two variables ($t(249) = 1.135, p = 0.257$). Thus, H3 is rejected. In other words, the relationship between job satisfaction and individual entrepreneurial orientation is not influenced by subjective norms.

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.346	2.084		1.126	0.261
	IEO	-0.286	0.569	-0.151	-0.502	0.616
	SUB	-0.141	0.620	-0.098	-0.227	0.820
	IEO_X_SUB	0.191	0.168	0.628	1.135	0.257

a. Dependent Variable: SAT

Table 7. Regression Analysis 1

5.5.2.2 Job satisfaction as a moderator of the relationship between age and IEO

Hypothesis 4 predicts that job satisfaction moderates the relationship between age and IEO. However, as shown in table 8, there is no such interactive effect ($t(249) = 0.214, p = 0.83$). Therefore, hypothesis 4 was also rejected, meaning job satisfaction has no impact on the relationship between age and individual entrepreneurial orientation.

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.557	0.180		19.738	0.000
	AGE	-0.010	0.005	-0.131	-2.138	0.034
	SAT	0.126	0.032	0.238	3.879	0.000
2	(Constant)	3.689	0.638		5.780	0.000
	AGE	-0.014	0.020	-0.187	-0.704	0.482
	SAT	0.084	0.196	0.159	0.428	0.669
	AGE_X_SAT	0.001	0.006	0.099	0.214	0.830

a. Dependent Variable: IEO

Table 8. Regression Analysis 2

5.6 Conclusion

After going through different statistical techniques, the above results provide insightful perspectives on the issues addressed in this study. As expected, the results show that employees with job satisfaction show more entrepreneurial behaviour than unsatisfied employees. Moreover, older people tend to have less entrepreneurial orientation. However, this research also obtained unexpected results, such as subjective norms not affecting the relationship between job satisfaction and individual entrepreneurial orientation. Also, job satisfaction does not present a moderating effect between age and individual entrepreneurial orientation. The researcher has reasons that may explain these unexpected results, which will be the next chapter's subject.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to demonstrate the critical analysis of the researcher after the literature review process and the finding of the primary data. Also, the results will be compared with past studies to examine whether the theories and explanations demonstrated in the literature review chapter explain them. Finally, practical implications and limitations will also be discussed in this chapter.

The findings indicate that job satisfaction has a favourable effect on IEO. Consequently, addressing the employee's needs and expectations raises job satisfaction levels in the company, positively affecting the employees' IEO. Nonetheless, subjective norms did not affect the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO, which can be attributed to cultural differences and the low level of social norms of younger employees. Moreover, age is negatively related to IEO. Thus, older employees are not prime choices for promoting entrepreneurial behaviour in firms in Ireland.

6.2 Effects of job satisfaction on IEO

According to the findings, there is a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and individual entrepreneurial orientation. There is a consistency between the results presented in this study and research on the effect of job satisfaction on entrepreneurial behaviour and organisational behaviour (Itzkovich *et al.*, 2021; Antoncic and Antoncic, 2011; Ahmed *et al.*, 2013; Kuratko *et al.*, 2005). Equity theory might support these findings as job satisfaction levels will increase when the employee feels that there is a fair exchange between personal inputs such as their knowledge and skills as well as personal outcomes, such as salary, recognition, quality of management, culture and value of the organisation (Kollmann, *et al.*, 2020; Saridakis *et al.*, 2018; Antoncic and Antoncic, 2011). Consequently, satisfied employees will exhibit more qualities associated with IEO (Chung and Kim, 2017).

Furthermore, considering the literature has shown that individuals with EO are considered essential assets since they positively impact teamwork, bringing performance and competitive advantage to the organisation (Gawke *et al.*, 2017; Fellnhofer, 2018; Ahmed *et al.*, 2013; Ahmed, 2020), firms should encourage and create a work environment facilitative to risk-taking, innovation and proactivity (Hughes *et al.*, 2017 and Mustafa *et al.*, 2018).

6.3 Effects of age on IEO

The results of the present study show that age has a negative relationship with individual entrepreneurial orientation. Past studies involving entrepreneurial behaviour, organisational behaviour and age are in harmony with the results found here (Adachi and Hisada, 2016; Holmquist and Sundin, 2021; Hatak *et al.*, 2015; Ting, 2015; Hador and Klein, 2019; Urbano *et al.*, 2013). The upper echelon and decremental theories may explain these outcomes because, during ageing, human beings lose cognitive skills and become more resistant to change, thus presenting fewer qualities associated with risky decision-making and innovativeness (Majdi, 2015; Camelo-Ordaz *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, age norms may also explain why age negatively impacts IEO. For example, a negative perception of age norms, meaning an individual who has the perception that they will not be able to engage in entrepreneurial activities because of their age, will result in a decrease in entrepreneurial behaviours (Lin and Wang 2018).

6.4 Subjective norms as a moderator of the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO

In previous studies, the subjective perceptions of an individual of their environment were considered an antecedent of entrepreneurial behaviour (Jaén and Liñán, 2013) and were considered even more important than environmental factors (Karimi *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, past studies have used and point out subjective norms as a significant moderator of entrepreneurial behaviours (Aga *et al.*, 2022). However, the results reveal that subjective norms do not moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO because there is no such interactive effect. This outcome is in

line with previous studies, such as Liñán and Chen (2009) and Doanh and Bernat (2019).

Some factors may explain this result. Firstly, respondents of this research may rely more on individual considerations than on the considerations of their managers, co-workers (Karimi, 2017) and even the culture of the organisation. Thus, social norms do not have the power to influence their entrepreneurial behaviour. Secondly, another explanation could be cultural diversities (Liñán and Chen, 2009). As this research was conducted with respondents living in Dublin but from various nationalities, it can be assumed that people from different countries have different levels of perceived subjective norms. Third, most respondents are students and work part-time in jobs outside their specialisation. Therefore, knowing that they will not stay long in that job, respondents who are also studying are not much influenced by subjective norms. Furthermore, some studies highlight subjective norms as the least important factor for entrepreneurial behaviour (Karimi *et al.*, 2017). Also, the authors state that acts related to entrepreneurship are significant for young people, and therefore they are generally not influenced by social norms. Therefore, as 91.55% of the participants are between 20 and 40 years old, the respondent's age may be one of the explanations for this result.

6.5 Job satisfaction as a moderator of the relationship between age and IEO

This study suggested that older employees are less likely to possess IEO-related characteristics, which would be even less likely if there is a high degree of job satisfaction. This hypothesis was based on empirical research present in the literature, such as Hatak (2015), who proved that job identification has moderating effect on the relationship between age and entrepreneurial intention. However, the results found in this research demonstrate that there is no such effect. This may be because although older people have lower IEO than younger people, job satisfaction as a moderator may bring other effects between age and entrepreneurship-unrelated behaviours. For example, Kim and Kang (2017) state that older employees have more engagement at work and emotional regulation, having career identity as a mediator of this relationship.

6.6 Practical Implications of the Study

The results of this study provide theoretical and practical contributions to the area of entrepreneurial and organisational behaviour. As demonstrated, job satisfaction has the power to increase individual entrepreneurial characteristics. Thus, the organisation should create a work environment conducive to entrepreneurial behaviour because if employees feel insecure and afraid to make risky decisions, they will not do so (Qomari *et al.*, 2021). However, the employee's perception of subjective norms has no moderating effect on that relationship. This result can be explained by the cultural difference of the participants, meaning that, depending on nationality, people have different degrees of perception of subjective norms. For example, Majeed *et al.* (2021) say that culture in Pakistan is very much based on community. Thus, the decision-making process of an individual is impacted by the society in which they live. Also, the Chinese are brought up rigidly to respect and obey the people around them and therefore have high behavioural norms (Lan *et al.*, 2003). Furthermore, given that most participants were between 20 and 40 years old, it could be said that subjective norms do not impact this generation as much.

The findings also provide insights into the negative relationship between age and IEO. Thus, if an organisation is interested in having high levels of entrepreneurial behaviour in its decision-making, creation of new products, processes, and others, it should focus on hiring younger employees. However, job satisfaction does not moderate this relationship.

Furthermore, this study offers managerial implications as it provides insights into the positive effects of entrepreneurially oriented leadership. First, management that applies risk-taking, innovativeness and proactivity in its day-to-day life has the power not only to strengthen the company's vision but also to bring competitive advantage (Garcia, *et al.*, 2021). However, the manager should be vigilant as EO can cause an environment of ambiguity (Mustafa *et al.*, 2018) that can cause feelings such as fear, worry and intimidation of the employee. Thus, it is up to the manager to provide their employees with an enabling and comfortable environment for entrepreneurial behaviour through support, motivation and rewards (Qomari *et al.*, 2021; Ahmed, 2020). Managerial support is present in several studies in the literature as a promoter of entrepreneurial behaviours and attitudes (Andersén, 2017). This support can be

achieved by giving autonomy and discretion to the employee so that they can make their own decisions and create their processes (Kuratko, 2014).

Moreover, an organisation's management's effectiveness can be measured by its employees' job satisfaction levels (Munir and Iqbal, 2018; Manoppo, *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, if a firm is interested in knowing whether the management is negatively impacting the employee's performance, it is interesting to survey the employees' job satisfaction levels. Besides, organisations should research the needs and interests of their employees and try to meet them as much as possible since empirical research link job satisfaction with organisational commitment and job performance (Bakhtiari and Jalilian, 2018; Tomaževič *et al.*, 2014; Ahmed *et al.*, 2013), which will consequently bring IEO.

6.8 Limitations

The researcher points out some limitations regarding this study that future scholars may consider to direct their research better. Firstly, the respondents of this study live in Dublin, but most are from other nationalities. Thus, the cultural difference may have impacted the results. Therefore, future studies may ask to include a question about the respondent's nationality in the survey. Secondly, even though the scale used by the researcher to measure the participants' subjective norms has been validated in other research, in this study, it did not have a good reliability result. Thus, future researchers should use a different instrument to measure subjective norms. Third, the results may have been altered because participants in this study are mostly students working part-time jobs temporarily. Therefore, upcoming scholars should focus on full-time employees who have been employed longer.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the results obtained in this study and compared them with various research studies relevant to the literature. As a result, some conclusions can be drawn, such as the positive impact that job satisfaction has on IEO, the negative influence that age has on IEO, and that job satisfaction does not moderate the relationship between age and IEO. Further, the individual's perception of

subjective norms does not increase the positive relationship between job satisfaction and IEO. Therefore, this study answers the research question of how to promote IEO in employees working in Ireland by promoting high levels of job satisfaction, hiring younger employees and supporting and motivating entrepreneurial employee behaviour.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This quantitative study aimed to explore how to promote individual entrepreneurial orientation among employees in Ireland. The objectives were achieved through an intensive literature review and analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire. Thus, four significant conclusions can be drawn from the present study. The first conclusion is that employees show more qualities associated with IEO when job satisfaction levels are higher. This result is in agreement with that found by Itzkovich *et al.* (2021), Antoncic and Antoncic, (2011), Ahmed *et al.* (2013) and Kuratko *et al.* (2005). This is because job satisfaction means meeting the interests and needs of the employee, making them feel comfortable acting entrepreneurially. Thus, companies interested in promoting job satisfaction and consequently IEO should seek to know and fulfil their employees' needs and desires as far as possible. As a result, a work environment conducive to risky decision-making, innovation, and proactivity will be created (Hughes *et al.*, 2018).

In addition, managers can leverage entrepreneurial behaviours by supporting their employees through motivations such as creating a secure work environment for entrepreneurial activities through motivation, autonomy, discretion, and rewards (Qomari *et al.*, 2021; Ahmed, 2020; Kuratko, 2014). Managerial motivation also avoids creating ambiguity in the work environment that happens when employees feel threatened and fearful (Mustafa *et al.*, 2018). Consequently, if the employee feels that his behaviour will not result in punishment, there will be no ambiguity, resulting in innovative ideas.

The second conclusion is that age is negatively associated with IEO. This outcome is in harmony with the results found by Hador and Klein (2019) and Urbano *et al.* (2013). This might be explained since older individuals have different interests than younger people, i.e., older people feel they have already acquired much knowledge throughout their lives and are generally not interested in gaining new expertise. Therefore, they are more rigid with change and prefer not to take risks (Bayon and Lamotte, 2020). However, the acquisition, sharing of new knowledge, innovativeness and risk-taking decision-making are essential in entrepreneurial activities (Latif *et al.*, 2020),

especially in the contemporary world where innovation is essential to gain economic advantage. In addition, the upper echelon and decremental theories explain that during ageing, people lose cognitive skills such as memory, logic, and reasoning (Majdi, 2015; Camelo-Ordaz *et al.*, 2011), which also explains the negative relationship between these two researched concepts.

The third conclusion is that the perception of subjective norms does not have the power to impact the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO. This outcome is in line with previous studies, such as Liñán and Chen (2009) and Doanh and Bernat (2019). This finding was unexpected, especially since the literature considers subjective norms as one of the antecedents of entrepreneurial behaviour (Jaén and Liñán, 2013). However, the cultural diversity of the participants may explain this result (Liñán and Chen, 2009). Each culture has its level of perception of social norms, some nationalities have a high degree of subjective norms, and before making a decision, they will consider the opinion of those around them. On the other hand, other countries do not have such a high perception of social norms and do not consider social norms before the entrepreneurial behaviour. Age should also be considered, as different generations have different levels of subjective norms. Younger people generally do not care much about the opinions of those in their environment (Karimi *et al.*, 2017).

The fourth conclusion is that job satisfaction has no negative moderating effect on the relationship between age and IEO. This finding was also not expected by the researcher but can be explained by the literature. Although older employees have less IEO and identify more with their jobs, job satisfaction does not impact relationships involving entrepreneurial behaviours (Kim and Kang 2015).

Therefore, organisations interested in promoting IEO in their employees must first promote job satisfaction. Older employees possess many qualities, such as better regulating their emotions and better engagement at work (Johnson *et al.*, 2017). However, hiring younger employees is more appropriate if managers are interested in creating EO in the firm. Moreover, even though subjective norms do not moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and IEO, it is recommended that companies create a work environment conducive to entrepreneurial behaviour, aiming to make the employee feel comfortable performing entrepreneurial acts.

7.1 Research Recommendations

Considering that the most significant limitation of this study was the low Cronbach's alpha score obtained by the subjective norms scale, the researcher recommends that future researchers who explore subjective norms focus on only one nationality. This is because, as already explained, the participants of this study have different nationalities and, therefore, different cultures with different degrees of social norms, which may have affected the result. Also, if researchers are not interested in knowing the subjective norms of students, they should be avoided, as students usually work in part-time jobs that are not their area of interest. Therefore, these participants' results may not be as reliable as employees who already work in their area of expertise. Furthermore, future scholars interested in studying the relationship between age and entrepreneurial behaviours should try to obtain approximately the same percentage of participants from different age groups.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: survey questionnaire consent form

Exploring Entrepreneurial Orientation

Consent form

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research project aimed at studying Entrepreneurial Orientation being conducted by Natalia Martins, who is currently undertaking an MSc in Management at the National College of Ireland. Please read this sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate.

The 24 survey questions with five responses, ranging from 1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree. Please select the option that best reflects how you feel about the question. The questions will be divided into three topics. Next, you will be asked demographic questions.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw anytime. If you choose not to participate in this study or withdraw from participating at any time, you will not be penalised.

The procedure involves filling out an online survey that will take approximately 5 minutes.

Your responses will be confidential, and we do not collect identifying information such as your name, e-mail address or IP address.

Your information will be kept confidential. All data is stored in a password-protected electronic format. To help protect your confidentiality, the surveys will not contain information that will personally identify you. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only and will be destroyed five years after the study's completion.

This research has been approved, as required, by the National College of Ireland for research involving human subjects.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Natalia Martins via e-mail X20247834@student.noir.ie.

* 1. ELECTRONIC CONSENT:

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:

- you have read the above information
- you voluntarily agree to participate
- you are at least 18 years of age

Agree

NEW QUESTION

or Copy and paste questions

Next