

Judo and entrepreneurship: a challenging combination

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Introduction

Sports and entrepreneurship have frequently been linked to one another, in various ways. Most of the time business concepts are used to study and support sports(organisations). The use of sports for business is rather limited, mostly related to creating a winning attitude. For entrepreneurship, an entrepreneurial orientation (EO) proves to be an important asset and is an issue in several entrepreneurship supporting and educational institutions and programs. Limiting the world of sports to judo, this research investigates whether the judosport can be deployed to inspire and support an entrepreneurial orientation.

Research questions

The central research question is: To what extent can the (basic) principles of judo be deployed to inspire and/or support an entrepreneurial orientation?

The subquestions are:

- What are the (basic) principles of judo?
- What are the elements of an EO?
- To what extent can the (basic) principles of judo be linked to the elements of an EO?
- To what extent can judo deliver an added value to creating an EO?

Theoretical background

Judo was used several times as a metaphor within the literature on business (Gelman and Salop, 1985; Drucker, 1985; Yoffie and Kwak, 2001). Within judo, technical and moral principles are described. These have proven to be relevant from the start of the sport till this day onwards (Kano, 1937). Within the literature, an EO was captured in a five-dimensional construct which includes the following elements: innovation, risk-taking, proactive, competitive aggression and autonomy (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996).

Methodology

A comparative study with a blocking design was conducted. Based on analyses of documents and websites, two groups of respondents were constructed. One group containing five entrepreneurs with a background in top-level judo (among which, a world champion, an Olympic medal winner, a European champion and a national champion), the other group containing five entrepreneurs without any background in judo.

The research used a multi-methods approach, starting with semi-structured interviews with all entrepreneurs. In this interviews both the (basic) principles of judo and the elements of an EO were discussed. The entrepreneurs answered questions about the connections they see and/or experience between judo (principles) and entrepreneurship (and specifically EO). Apart from this, the delphi-method was used for the two

constructed groups, based on the aggregated results of the above mentioned interviews for each group, to identify and verify whether there are considerations of common interests.

Results and conclusions

Entrepreneurs with a background in top-level judo associate top-level sport in general with an EO; especially competitive aggression has a high score. For this group, the technical principles of judo have a high score for the various elements of an EO. Entrepreneurs without a judo background only scored high regarding the items risk taking and competitive aggression. Entrepreneurs with a background in top-level judo were also able to link all elements of an EO to concrete judo situations and techniques. Both groups connect the moral principles of judo to corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship. Furthermore both groups supply examples that are linked to judo rules/customs and training exercises. However, the group with a top-level judo background is able to describe these examples more concretely.

It can be concluded that there are indications that the (basic)principles of judo could be deployed to inspire towards and/or support an EO. For this, judo techniques, rules/customs and training exercises could be used. Especially the technical principles of judo can be translated to all elements of an EO. In addition, the moral principles of judo could help create attention for corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship, though the relation to an EO requires further investigation. Based on the data that were obtained and the abovementioned indications, a start was made to develop a training course that deploys judo to support an EO.

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