

CHAPTER 9

ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACROSS THE LIFESPAN: AGE, STAGE, AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship manifests differently across various age groups. This chapter investigates how life circumstances fundamentally influence entrepreneurial paths, possibilities, and results. We examine existing research and theoretical models to address four key dimensions: emerging entrepreneurs developing core competencies, established professionals leaving traditional careers, mature adults entering business ownership as a new phase, and the changing support structures required throughout the entrepreneurial process. Emerging entrepreneurs possess technological skills and willingness to take risks. They struggle with securing investment and establishing professional reputation. Established professionals bring industry knowledge and professional connections while balancing competing priorities and family responsibilities. Mature entrepreneurs offer substantial experience and financial resources yet confront age-related biases and technological learning curves.

Different life phases demand specialized support structures that include education, mentorship, financing, and network development. This chapter shows that entrepreneurs from various age groups contribute distinct value to innovation environments. Ventures succeed across all life phases when suitable support mechanisms exist. Recognizing developmental patterns helps entrepreneurs, support institutions, and government officials create better strategies that optimize business success while acknowledging the specific benefits and obstacles that characterize different age categories. Research indicates that universal entrepreneurship support may prove insufficient. Focused interventions addressing particular developmental considerations can substantially improve individual business success and wider economic influence.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, life phases, emerging entrepreneurs, career transitions, mature entrepreneurship

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