WHO IS THE ENTREPRENEUR?
PROTOTYPICAL VIEWS OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ROLE ACROSS THREE CULTURES (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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INTERACTIVE PAPER SESSION

WHO IS THE ENTREPRENEUR? PROTOTYPICAL VIEWS OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ROLE ACROSS THREE CULTURES

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Principal Topic

Researchers have suggested that entrepreneurship can be seen as a social role—a patterned set of behaviors, rights, and obligations connected to a social position (Davidsson, 2007). Role content stems from expectations within the larger society, so role-holders who conform to those expectations will receive the legitimacy and approbation required for effective role performances (Stryker & Statham, 1985). Individuals who adopt or internalize the entrepreneurial role will be strongly motivated to carry out role-consistent activities. Thus, a focus on the entrepreneur role can help us understand and predict entrepreneurial behavior. However, we know very little about the entrepreneur role content. The purpose of this study is to assess the content of the entrepreneur role as a shared social construct in three cultures (U.S., China, and Taiwan). Our research questions center on 1) the entrepreneur prototypical schema that will emerge, 2) the relationship between the prototypical entrepreneur schema and prototype holders’ personal values and exposure to entrepreneurship, and 3) the extent to which the prototypes and those relationships are similar or different across cultures.

Method

Using a qualitative inductive method, we first generated a large number of characteristics and behaviors of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs (counter role) from each culture. We then went through an iterative process and created an inclusive list of prototype items (e.g., persistent), which was given to separate samples from each culture for evaluation of their prototypicality. Data on personal values and exposure to entrepreneurship were also collected.

Results and Implications

Entrepreneur prototype was found to fit better with a formative than a reflective model (Edwards & Bagozzi, 2000) such that the entrepreneur prototypical schema was “caused” by the prototype items rather than being the “cause” of them. We found that culture-specific summate measures of top-ranked items consistently correlated 1) positively with exposure to entrepreneurship, 2) positively with Schwartz’s (1997) value dimension of openness to change (stimulation and self direction), and 3) negatively with the value dimension of conservation values (tradition, conformity, and security). This indicates that the formation of entrepreneur prototype is the same across cultures (etic) even though the prototype content differs from culture to culture (emic).

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