ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY: A MODERATING FACTOR FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL STRATEGIES AND JOB PERFORMANCE (SUMMARY)

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SUMMARY

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Principal Topic

At the firm-level, research on the relationship between specific entrepreneurial strategies and performance measures has been mixed. New complementary research at the individual-level may clarify this. For example, recent research has shown that social dimensions of a work group (e.g. autonomy and teamwork) moderate the relationship between entrepreneurial strategies and job performance at the individual level (Monsen, 2005). In this paper we introduce organizational identity as a new moderating dimension. We apply the work of Gioia and Thomas (1996), who differentiate between normative (values-driven) and utilitarian (financially-driven) organizational identities. Our individual-level strategy-performance model draws on social identity theory and relates perceptions of a firm’s entrepreneurial strategy to job role identity, organizational identification, and individual job performance.

Method

We tested our model with data from managers and staff in an entrepreneurial, self-funding, public healthcare system. Drawing on individual survey responses and performance appraisal data from archival records, a dataset was developed for 1445 managers and staff. Established scales were used to ask managers and staff about their perceptions of the entrepreneurial orientation of their department, the clarity of their job role, their identification with their department, and the normative vs. utilitarian nature of the organization’s identity. Two types of supervisor-reported job-performance ratings were collected: one based on an individual’s job description and a second based on the organization’s values statement.

Results and Implications

We analyzed the data with structural equation modeling and different structural maps emerged depending on the reported normative or utilitarian identity. In fact, the optimal entrepreneurial strategies are different for normative and utilitarian organizations. Further, the optimal entrepreneurial strategies are different if performance is measured based on an individual’s job description or the organization’s values statement. This demonstrates that organizational identity moderates the strategy-performance relationship at the individual level. For firm-level researchers, differences in the normative or utilitarian identity of the firms examined could account for differences observed in the strategy-performance relationships. For managers, these results suggest how entrepreneurial strategies can be selected and adapted to the organizational identity of the firm to produce desired behaviors and performance.

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