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SPIN-OFF VERSUS START-UP INTENTIONS: A TALE OF TWO PASSIONS (SUMMARY)

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≈ SUMMARY ≈

SPIN-OFF VERSUS START-UP INTENTIONS: A TALE OF TWO PASSIONS

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Principal Topic

An emerging body of entrepreneurship literature indicates that passion plays a key role in the venture creation process. Recent research has valuably extended our knowledge on entrepreneurial passion by shedding light on its multi-faceted rather than singular nature and its impact on cognitive processes and entrepreneurial actions. However, while prior studies have focused on different types of entrepreneurial passion, the “*passion orchestra*”, i.e. the coexistence and interrelation of entrepreneurial passion and passion for other non-entrepreneurial roles within the person, remains an unexplored area. Our study acknowledges that different types of passion might affect entrepreneurial intentions and explores these relationships empirically in an academic context, where research scientists are increasingly required to simultaneously engage in entrepreneurial and scientific activities. Specifically, drawing on role identity theory and passion literature, our paper disentangles the joint effect of entrepreneurial and scientific passion on spin-off and start-up intentions.

Method

Our study is based upon cross-sectional data collected in 2012-2013 at 24 universities in five European countries (Sweden, Germany, Spain, Slovenia and Belgium). The data collection process encompassed interviews with each university’s technology transfer office (TTO), and online questionnaire results from 2,478 research scientists in different disciplines. The data analysis includes hierarchical regression analysis and moderated mediation techniques.

Results and Implications

First, our findings confirm that, across the five countries under study, spin-off and start-up intentions are distinct constructs. Second, we offer empirical evidence that research scientists’ *entrepreneurial* and *scientific* passions are associated *differently* with spin-off and start-up intentions respectively. Concretely, our analyses reveal that entrepreneurial passion is only *positively* related to start-up intentions. Furthermore, research scientists with high levels of scientific passion show *stronger* spin-off intentions but *weaker* intentions to found an independent venture, or start-up. Moreover, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and affective commitment are mediators in these relations. Finally, next to its direct effect, scientific passion also acts a moderator in the entrepreneurial passion–intentions relationship. In particular, while scientific and entrepreneurial passion reinforce each other in the case of spin-off intentions, we find scientific passion to weaken the positive relationship between entrepreneurial passion and start-up intentions. Our findings have important implications for both academics and practitioners, including government agencies and TTOs.

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