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LEARNING AND PERFORMING: EFFECTS OF LEARNING GOAL ORIENTATION AND STRESS ON ENTREPRENEURIAL MOTIVATION AND PERCEIVED ABILITY TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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≈ INTERACTIVE PAPER ≈

**LEARNING AND PERFORMING: EFFECTS OF LEARNING GOAL ORIENTATION
AND STRESS ON ENTREPRENEURIAL MOTIVATION AND PERCEIVED ABILITY TO
OVERCOME OBSTACLES**

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Principal Topics

Goal orientation research shows that entrepreneurs have higher achievement goal orientation than non-entrepreneurs (DeMartino et al., 2006), that entrepreneurs from different cultures have varying achievement goal orientation levels (Stewart et al., 2003), and that goal orientation predicts success (Sebora et al., 2009). Despite the expansive achievement goal orientation literature, the impact of learning goal orientation on entrepreneurial outcomes is glaringly missing.

As learning goal orientation is strongly linked to self-regulatory processes (Payne et al., 2007), we suggest that it will have the biggest impact on outcomes when self-regulatory processes are needed. Such a situation exists when entrepreneurs are undergoing stress. Since learning goal orientation facilitates goal achievement by motivating people to work hard and smart (Sujan et al., 1994) and to self-regulate (Payne et al., 2007), we predict that when entrepreneurs experience stress, this orientation reduces the negative impact of stress.

Specifically we examine the joint impact of stress and learning goal orientation on motivation and perceived ability to overcome obstacles. Motivation is critical during venture creation as the business gestation period is long (Carter et al., 1986) requiring entrepreneurs to complete many activities to establish an on-going business.

Methods

Our sample consisted of 1,663 reports from 63 Filipino entrepreneurs. Over 15 days the entrepreneurs provided twice daily reports of stress, perceived ability to overcome obstacles and motivation. At the start of the study, they also completed the trait learning goal orientation scale.

Results/Implications

Results reveal that stress reports in the morning predict lower motivation and perceived ability to overcome obstacles. Learning goal orientation attenuates these relationships. Slope analyses show that when entrepreneurs face higher stress, their motivation and perceived ability to overcome obstacles drop. However, these drops are lower for entrepreneurs with high learning goal orientation.

This paper contributes to two expanding areas in entrepreneurship research--stress and self-regulation. Venture implementation is a high stress activity and coping strategies are only partially successful (Uy et al., 2013). In this stressful environment, approaches to mitigate the negative consequences of stress, such as a learning goal orientation, can increase the chance that entrepreneurs continue to be productive, effective, creative, and motivated.

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