DOES PASSION LEAD TO BUSINESS CREATION OR IS IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND? A TEST OF TWO ALTERNATIVE THEORETICAL MODELS IN A RANDOMIZED FIELD EXPERIMENT (SUMMARY)

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Summary

Does Passion Lead to Business Creation or Is It the Other Way Around? A Test of Two Alternative Theoretical Models in a Randomized Field Experiment

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Principal Topic

Passion has been conceptualized as a motivational driver that enables entrepreneurs to realize their business ideas (Cardon et al., 2009). Given that entrepreneurship is a process that takes several months or years with countless hours of intensive work (Reynolds & Curtin, 2008), it makes intuitive sense to argue that passion plays an important role in entrepreneurship.

However, the role of passion in entrepreneurship is not as clear as it seems. On one hand, Cardon et al.’s (2009) theoretical model suggest that passion is a driver of entrepreneurial effort and performance. On the other hand, Gielnik et al.’s (in press-a) theoretical model contends that passion is an outcome of entrepreneurial effort and performance.

By testing the two models using a longitudinal quasi-experimental design, we add to the theoretical discussion on whether passion is an antecedent or an outcome of entrepreneurship. We build on the dualistic model of passion (Vallerand et al., 2003) and provide a more nuanced theoretical perspective on passion as a predictor or outcome of business creation. We also identify pathways through which training could impact business creation and entrepreneurial passion.

Method

We conducted a randomized controlled field experiment with over 300 participants using an action-oriented entrepreneurship training (cf. Bischoff et al., 2014) in Nairobi, Kenya. We compared the training group with a non-intervention control group and used a longitudinal pre-/post-test design with three measurement waves over one and a half years.

We compared each of the alternative models to the common parent model using a Chi²-difference test (Bollen, 1989). To distinguish between the measurement model and the structural model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), we conducted path modeling (Hofmann & Morgeson, 1999).

Implications

Our findings highlight the need to consider the alternative perspective of including passion as an outcome of entrepreneurial behavior. Our longitudinal design also provides more fine-grained insights on the nature and directionality of the proposed linkages. Lastly, we contribute to the development of a comprehensive theory of entrepreneurship training.

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