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FOLLOW YOUR PASSION: HOW ENTREPRENEURIAL PASSION MOTIVATES ALERTNESS TO OPPORTUNITIES (SUMMARY)

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 SUMMARY **FOLLOW YOUR PASSION: HOW ENTREPRENEURIAL
PASSION MOTIVATES ALERTNESS TO OPPORTUNITIES**

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Principal Topic

Opportunity identification has been recognized as a crucial first step in the entrepreneurial process. Before an entrepreneur can move towards exploiting an opportunity he or she must be alert to information that, when coherently tied together, suggest the existence of a new business opportunity. Consequently, understanding how and why certain individuals are more alert to the presence of entrepreneurial opportunities than others represents one of the core intellectual questions in the domain of entrepreneurship. Prior work in psychology indicates that performance of most tasks is a function of motivation and ability. Entrepreneurship scholars have made significant progress in extending our understanding of how certain entrepreneurs are more able to identify opportunities – identifying and exploring the underlying cognitive frameworks and processes that enable alertness. However, work focusing on the motivational antecedents to alertness has been sparse. This study explores how passion, a motivational construct of growing importance in the entrepreneurship literature, may help to drive entrepreneurial alertness. Utilizing social cognitive theory, we identify the mechanisms by which passion leads to higher levels of alertness. We hypothesize that entrepreneurial passion indirectly strengthens an entrepreneur's alertness by nature of its positive relationship with proaction, creativity, and learning goal orientation.

Method

Data were collected, through a survey, from 204 entrepreneurs with businesses located in twenty-six states of the United States. The measures used in the study have been previously established and validated. The article's hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling.

Results and Implications

Our model explained a significant amount of the variance in entrepreneurial alertness, with results confirming that passion indirectly heightens entrepreneurial alertness by motivating proaction, creativity, and a learning goal orientation. In other words, passion drives entrepreneurs' motivation to proactively pursue new information, creatively integrate that information, and continuously learn from new information in order to identify new venture opportunities. Our results suggest that an entrepreneur's passion is an important motivational antecedent to alertness. Additionally, the relationship between passion and creativity suggests that motivation may play an important role in helping to develop or enable the cognitive frameworks and processes that are crucial to the opportunity identification process.

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