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DEVELOPING AND VALIDATING A NEW INSTRUMENT FOR MEASURING REGULATORY FOCI IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP (SUMMARY)

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≈ SUMMARY ≈

DEVELOPING AND VALIDATING A NEW INSTRUMENT FOR MEASURING REGULATORY FOCI IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Principal Topics

Although an increasing number of scholars are investigating the role of self-regulatory foci in entrepreneurship, progress has been hindered by important methodological challenges. Many studies have relied on measures framed in terms of one's early upbringing and education. These measures have worked reasonably well in educational contexts. But when applied in entrepreneurship research, with adult respondents engaged in a broad diversity of affectively-intense and personally-significant activities, with uncertain outcomes, empirical results have proven somewhat more elusive. Among the most troubling issues, many studies have suffered from low levels of validity and reliability, leading to weak statistical support for the theorized relationships. The net result is that entrepreneurship studies of self-regulation form a theoretically-appealing but empirically-unproven body of work. To address these issues, we developed and validated a new, entrepreneurship-specific instrument for measuring individual differences in self-regulation foci.

Methods and Results

Building on a qualitative study focusing on entrepreneurs' efforts to address adverse situations, we generated a pool of 94 candidate items. After discussing the meaningfulness of each item with four experts, we reduced the number of items to 42. We then conducted a content-validity survey with 60 academics and entrepreneurs, and reduced the pool of candidate items to 28. Next, we conducted two surveys (n=561; n=231) with entrepreneurs to assess the proposed instrument's structural and nomological validity. This validated a 13-item entrepreneurship-specific instrument for measuring individual tendencies towards enacting promotion and/or prevention foci. Lastly, we assessed the measure's criterion validity with another study of 62 entrepreneurs.

Results and Implications

By offering a valid instrument for measuring self-regulatory foci in entrepreneurship contexts, we hope to foster new advances in the motivational dynamics of entrepreneurship. At a theoretical level, our research contributes a better specification of the dimensions through which self-regulation foci can manifest themselves in entrepreneurship pursuits. At a methodological level, the new instrument helps address some of the validity issues that have plagued prior research. Building on these preliminary results, we hope to interest scholars in leveraging our instrument to make new advances in the self-regulation dynamics of entrepreneurship.

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