BRICOLAGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY (SUMMARY)

Maija Renko  
*University of Illinois at Chicago, USA, maija@uic.edu*

Pekka Stenholm  
*University of Turku, Finland*

Recommended Citation
Renko, Maija and Stenholm, Pekka (2016) "BRICOLAGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY (SUMMARY)," *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research: Vol. 36 : Iss. 4, Article 5.*  
Available at: https://digitalknowledge.babson.edu/fer/vol36/iss4/5
BRICOLAGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY

Maija Renko, University of Illinois at Chicago, USA
Pekka Stenholm, University of Turku, Finland

Principal Topic

Entrepreneurs have a strong sense of self and they tend to see themselves as different from non-entrepreneurs. In the process of building one’s entrepreneurial career, entrepreneurial identity becomes a powerful motivator that can help explain why some individuals continue to engage in entrepreneurial activity while others do not (Farmer et al., 2009; Wry & York, 2015). Our study contributes to the emerging line of research on entrepreneurial identity by suggesting that improvisational activities and, specifically, bricolage, are central to the development of such an identity. We investigate the specific role of bricolage in strengthening the early development of an entrepreneurial identity over the course of participating in an accelerator program. Bricolage refers to “making do by applying combinations of the resources at hand to new problems and opportunities” (Baker & Nelson, 2005). In entrepreneurship, it involves creative manipulation of available resources to solve a problem at hand or to create new opportunities.

Accelerator programs have become widely popular as a way to speed up the early and “lean” development of startups. We expect entrepreneurial identities to strengthen over the course of an accelerator program, and engagement in bricolage activities to further support this development.

Method

We collected data from Finnish nascent entrepreneurs who participated in a 10-week-long accelerator program organized by a student-led entrepreneurship society. These data were augmented with data collected from a university startup program. We collected survey data from the participants (n=84) during the first week of the programs (T0) and conducted two follow-up surveys (T1–T2). The key constructs of entrepreneurial identity and bricolage were measured with previously developed and tested scales (Farmer et al., 2009; Senyard et al., 2014). We analyze the data with the partial least squares (PLS) approach to structural equation modeling.

Results and Implications

Our initial results show that the levels of entrepreneurial identity actually increase significantly over the course of the programs. Also, bricolage behaviors are positively associated with the perceived entrepreneurial identity at T2 (p<0.001). Further, as we observe a strengthening of the entrepreneurial identity during the program, this effect is stronger for those who report high levels of bricolage.

CONTACT: Maija Renko; maija@uic.edu; (T): + (1)312-413-8237; (F): +(1)312-996-3559; Univ. of Illinois at Chicago, 601 S Morgan St., M/C 243, Chicago, Illinois 60607, USA.