DOES IT MATTER WHO I AM? AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY (SUMMARY)

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THE ENTREPRENEUR AND CHARACTERISTICS

\( \sim \) SUMMARY \( \sim \)

DOES IT MATTER WHO I AM? AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY

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Principal Topic

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions are documented predictors of an entrepreneurial career (Souitaris et al., 2007). Career choice theories tell us that an individual's identity factors into his/her career choice. However, because of the limited inroads made in entrepreneurial identity research, as Fauchart & Gruber (2011) observe, much remains to be explored on the role of entrepreneurial identity on entrepreneurship process. We do not know how an individual's identity, self-efficacy, and intentions play out for the consequential event of realized entrepreneurship. In this research, I develop a theory and empirically test the insights of the theory. I theorize that an individual's entrepreneurial identity constitutes two dimensions, intrinsically prospected entrepreneurial identity and socially constructed entrepreneurial identity. Intrinsically prospected entrepreneurial identity answers the “who do I want to be” question and the socially constructed entrepreneurial identity answers the “who am I” question for an active or prospective entrepreneur. I develop arguments to make this case: Not only does entrepreneurial identity have an affirmative bearing on entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial self-efficacy but the dimensions have differential impact on entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions as well.

Method

Employing targeted sampling, the cross-sectional data for this study was collected using online survey in a medium-scale firm, in finance industry, in a mid-western metropolis in the USA. I used structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the data sample of 143 responses.

Results and Implications

As hypothesized, intrinsically prospected entrepreneurial identity was strongly related with both entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. I found that socially constructed entrepreneurial identity also was related to entrepreneurial intentions. As predicted, the impact of prospected identity was stronger than the impact of socially constructed entrepreneurial identity on entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. The influence of socially constructed identity on entrepreneurial self-efficacy was not significant. However, the overall narrative, that entrepreneurial identity is a significant predictor of entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial self-efficacy, is supported by the SEM results. This study has substantive research implications for the nascent entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial cognition research domains – theoretical and empirical. The findings clearly suggest that entrepreneurial identity plays a major role in forging entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial self-efficacy, crucial for materialized entrepreneurship.

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