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## QUANTIFYING ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY AND FUNCTIONAL-ROLE HETEROGENEITY (SUMMARY)

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≈ SUMMARY ≈

## QUANTIFYING ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY AND FUNCTIONAL-ROLE HETEROGENEITY

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### Principal Topic

Theorists have struggled to definitively answer the question “Who is an entrepreneur?” for over 300 years. Exceptional minds representing lifetimes of contemplation and achievement have arrived at conflicting conclusions about this all-important question. Cantillon (1931 [1730]) stressed risk-bearing in the midst of uncertainty as the *prima facie* indicator of entrepreneurship, as did Knight (1921). Menger (1976 [1871]) argued that entrepreneurial risk-bearing is inconsequential, and Clark (1892, 1907) and Schumpeter (1934) both advocated that only the owners of capital truly bear risk, not entrepreneurs *per se*. Mises (1949) asserted that “every actor is always an entrepreneur and speculator” (p.253). Taussig (1915) stressed that innovation is inconsequential to entrepreneurship, but Schumpeter (1934) contended that innovation alone represents the unique core of entrepreneurial activity.

In similar fashion, empirical researchers have been equally unable to achieve a consensus definition of “the entrepreneur.” Gartner (1989) after reviewing dozens of entrepreneurship journal articles, lamented: “many (and often vague) definitions of the entrepreneur have been used” (p.48), that many studies never even attempted to define the entrepreneurs they were researching, and that few studies employed the same definitions. .

### Method

Methodologically, we develop and validate our measurement instrument in three steps: developing functional categories using the five-step free-list content-mapping analysis set forth by Jackson and Trochim (2002), analyzing items for discrimination capabilities using item response theory (Drasgow & Hulin, 1990), and validating the functional categories and items using confirmatory factor analysis (Harrington, 2009).

### Results and Implications

The study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, development of a meaningful measurement instrument that parses the distinct and sometimes disparate functional roles required to successfully launch a new venture will enable future researchers to more explicitly define the entrepreneurial populations sampled by their studies. Second, the development of a measure of individual and collective functional heterogeneity for entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial teams will provide new insights into the practical question regarding when an entrepreneur is better off launching a new venture as a solo entrepreneur versus as a member of a founding team. Third, the functional-role and heterogeneity measurement constructs will enable future development of entrepreneurial “functional profiles” that can be used to guide future theory as well as empirical research.

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