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## PASSION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERTISE: EXPLORING THE MOTIVATIONAL AND SELF-REGULATORY MECHANISMS BEHIND ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT (SUMMARY)

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 SUMMARY **PASSION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERTISE: EXPLORING THE MOTIVATIONAL AND SELF-REGULATORY MECHANISMS BEHIND ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

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**Principal Topic**

The study of expertise in the field of entrepreneurship is still in its infancy, as scholars strive to identify those personal, behavioral, and environmental characteristics that influence skill development. Prior expertise research indicates that a key predictor of expertise development is individual engagement in deliberate practice – intense, prolonged, and highly focused efforts to improve one's skills. Further, this research has also identified certain motivational and self-regulatory constructs that may play a crucial role in enabling persistent engagement in deliberate practice. Consequently, in this study we explore entrepreneurial passion as a key motivational driver of skill development, investigating how an entrepreneur's passion both directly and indirectly (through its influence on goal orientation) influences the development of entrepreneurial expertise. We hypothesize that there is a direct positive relationship between entrepreneurial passion and skill development, as well as an indirect positive relationship as mediated by the entrepreneur's learning goal orientation. In addition, we propose that entrepreneurial passion also reduces an entrepreneur's performance goal orientation, which then has a negative relationship with the development of entrepreneurial skills.

**Method**

We collected survey data from 204 entrepreneurs with businesses located mostly across the mid-western United States. A year later we also asked a high-level employee at each business to assess their entrepreneur's level of skill across a range of entrepreneurial tasks. The article's hypotheses were tested using path analysis.

**Results and Implications**

Results supported our hypotheses. Our results suggest that passion as an important antecedent to entrepreneurial skill development, while also identifying goal orientation as a mediating mechanism by which passion influences skill acquisition. These findings extend current theories of entrepreneurial learning by identifying the important role that passion and goal orientation play in facilitating the development of various entrepreneurial capabilities. This study also adds to a growing stream of research that emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurial passion in explaining a wide range of individual and venture outcomes. Overall, we believe this study holds important implications for entrepreneurs as they seek to improve their various skills and, ultimately, their chances for new venture success.

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