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WHO, HOW AND WHEN TO COPE WITH ROLE STRESS? COPING STRATEGIES USED BY ENTREPRENEURS IN NEW VENTURES (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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INTERACTIVE PAPER SESSION

WHO, HOW AND WHEN TO COPE WITH ROLE STRESS? COPING STRATEGIES USED BY ENTREPRENEURS IN NEW VENTURES

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Principal Topic

We use a self regulation perspective to argue that entrepreneurial effectiveness is driven by the coping strategies entrepreneurs use to meet expectations of stakeholders involved in the opportunity exploitation processes. As stakeholders advance their expectations and thus impact the roles of entrepreneurs in the process, role related conflicts, ambiguities and overloads, easily emerge. To resolve such conflicts entrepreneurs engage in coping strategies. We posit that four coping strategies are relevant for entrepreneurial effectiveness: structural role redefinition, personal role redefinition, reactive role behavior, and passive role behavior.

Method

The empirical data was collected with a survey that was administered to 3,600 Slovenian and Swedish entrepreneurs, who started a venture between 1999 and 2004. Altogether, 935 responses were collected, rendering a total response rate of 26%. After excluding returned questionnaires that did not meet our inclusion criteria, the final data set included 469 responses. Profile analysis and structural equation modeling were leading empirical methods.

Results and Implications

We examine to what extent entrepreneurs' use the four coping strategies and what are antecedents to each coping strategy used. We specifically analyze whether the coping strategy engaged will depend on the size of the founding capital and the composition of the founding team, while controlling for cultural context. The research goal is to measure influences of coping strategy on venture performance. The average entrepreneur in our sample is 44 years old, had about 23 years of work experience from similar or different industries. 13% were females, 42% of the sample had no prior experience of starting up a new venture. Preliminary analysis indicates significance of coping strategies used.

By identifying entrepreneur's role related stress, which emerges in dealing with its stakeholders, and pertinent coping strategies, the empirical results provide a base for implications on selection of successful coping strategies during venture's infancy. Our findings extend field's current knowledge on how entrepreneurs use coping strategies and what effects different coping strategies have on their ventures' performance.

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