INDIVIDUAL LEARNING STYLE AND LEARNING FLEXIBILITY: MEDIATED EFFECTS ON ENTREPRENEURIAL PERFORMANCE (SUMMARY)

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Recommended Citation
Principal Topic

We surveyed 172 technology entrepreneurs to explore links between learning style, learning flexibility and behaviors hypothesized to produce entrepreneurial innovation and success. Our findings reveal a system of entrepreneurial learning and innovation with subtle and surprising interactions between learning processes and behavioral mediators.

The results of this study provide support for individual Kolb experiential learning style traits as predictive measures of entrepreneurial behaviors and practices. Learning flexibility and the learning style preference for active experimentation have significant effects on the behaviors of technology entrepreneurs who develop innovative products and processes.

Method

Our study confirms the profound role of experimental practices within our entrepreneurial learning model of innovation - an overwhelmingly large portion of the innovation performance achieved by our entrepreneurs (52%) can be explained by their hands-on, iterative approach to learning and problem solving.

Results and Implications

The positive indirect influence of learning flexibility and innovation was confirmed as expected; however, it was achieved via a chain of two consecutive negative effects. Entrepreneurs with high learning flexibility were more likely to take longer to make key strategic decisions; however, in the process of doing so, they were more innovative. Our result adds to the literature regarding the relationship between decision speed and firm results and suggests that technology entrepreneurs are slightly more innovative when taking time to more carefully consider the options for and consequences of key decisions.

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