EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND PASSION MATTERS: HOW EMOTIONAL SUPPORT IMPACTS SURVIVAL THROUGH ENTREPRENEURIAL PASSION (SUMMARY)

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EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND PASSION MATTERS: HOW EMOTIONAL SUPPORT IMPACTS SURVIVAL THROUGH ENTREPRENEURIAL PASSION

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Principal Topic
Apart from a financial support effect, startup grants also have a secondary effect on survival through the perception of the grant as emotional support. The focus of this study is on how the emotions attached to receiving public subsidies encourage and enhance entrepreneurs’ passion and how this subsequently influences survival. This is a move away from perceiving emotional support as a separate concept and instead focusing on how it is related to the very tangible concept of financial support and how it influences other emotions such as entrepreneurial passion. Therefore, by integrating theories on emotional support and entrepreneurial passion we gain deeper knowledge on how emotional support influences entrepreneurial survival through the mediating effect of entrepreneurial passion.

Method
To test our hypotheses, we use survey data collected in early 2012 from Finnish entrepreneurs who had started new businesses between the years 2005–2010. The sample frame was all individuals (n=17,885) who had received a start-up grant from the government during the specified period of time. We include in our analyses those entrepreneurs who did no longer receive start-up grant during the time of the survey (n=2,469). We use structural equation modelling (SEM) with entrepreneurial survival as our DV, and emotional perception of public start-up grant as IV and entrepreneurial passion as mediator.

Results and Implications
Our SEM partly supports our theoretical model. We are not able to empirically demonstrate a direct link between emotional support and survival, but we find that emotional support is positively associated with three different dimensions of entrepreneurial passion. Furthermore, we demonstrate how entrepreneurial passion is positively associated with entrepreneurial survival, which substantiates our expectation about entrepreneurial passion as the mediator between emotional support and survival. With this study, we demonstrate how a very tangible type of support such as a public start-up grant also carries an emotional meaning. This underlines the importance of studying emotional support in combination with other support types and not as single entities. Emotional support influences entrepreneurial survival through the effect on entrepreneurial passion, and is thus an important antecedent to entrepreneurial behavior. This substantiates the need to pay attention to the role of less structured and planned antecedents of entrepreneurial behavior as emotions are.

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