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THE ESSENCE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING (SUMMARY)

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SUMMARY

THE ESSENCE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING

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Principal Topic

Learning is often assumed to be inherent in the entrepreneurship process (Corbett, 2005). Researchers agree that the entrepreneurial learning is experiential in nature (Cope, 2005; Politis, 2005). It has been shown that with experience entrepreneurs are more likely to act effectually and/or adapt their dominant logic to the nature of the task (Dew et al., 2009; Gustavsson, 2004). Acting effectually is thus what makes entrepreneurs entrepreneurial (Sarasvathy, 2001). Therefore, the entrepreneurial learning can be conceptualized as a process of development of effectual logic. To put it simply, effectuation is the outcome of the learning process.

In this process, perceived control motivates individuals to engage in action (Bandura, 2001). The choice of the behavior relies on and is congruent with entrepreneurs' salient identity. In particular, it has been argued that individuals show prevalence for either professional or managerial identity. However, how these orientations influence the self-regulatory processes and the prevailing decision making logic in the entrepreneurship process has not been researched so far. Thus, the purpose of the paper is to develop a conceptual framework illustrating the factors determining the process of development of effectual logic.

Method

This paper adopts an agency perspective and uses social identity theory to develop a framework for understanding the development process of effectual logic. While the agency builds the fundamental element of personal control (Bandura, 2001), the social identity is defined and bounded by membership in social groups (Tajfel, 1974). Both allow for development of a model explaining the learning process.

Results and Implications

The paper offers a new conceptualization of the entrepreneurial learning process which sees effectuation as the outcome of a learning process. By drawing specific attention to both the role of the perceived control and the social role identity, the paper illustrates their importance to the entrepreneurship process and to the individuals who manage this process. The paper contributes to the entrepreneurship literature by 1) identifying the elements influencing development of effectual logic; 2) emphasizing the different impact of professional and managerial identity on the learning process as well as 3) extending the understanding of the learning process itself. Finally, it contributes to more contextualized view of the learning process through linking together the individual and social facets.

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