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ENTREPRENEURS' DISPOSITIONAL AFFECT AS ANTECEDENT OF NETWORK SIZE AND QUALITY: WHAT'S AFFECT GOT TO DO WITH IT? (SUMMARY)

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≈ SUMMARY ≈

**ENTREPRENEURS' DISPOSITIONAL AFFECT AS
ANTECEDENT OF NETWORK SIZE AND QUALITY:
WHAT'S AFFECT GOT TO DO WITH IT?**

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Principal Topic

Networking is of utmost importance for entrepreneurial success (e.g., Stam, Arzlanian, & Elfring, 2014) and continues to be a prominent theme in entrepreneurship research (Busenitz, Plummer, Klotz, Shahzad, & Rhoads, 2014). Network characteristics, such as network size and quality, can differ significantly from one entrepreneur to another. However, it remains unclear why those differences occur. Sarasvathy and Venkataraman (2011) go so far as to say that “almost the entirety of social networks research takes networks as mostly given.” This study tries to shed some light on the dark by empirically investigating “entrepreneurs’ dispositional affect”, which can be defined as entrepreneurs’ “stable tendency to experience positive [or negative] moods and emotions” (Baron, Hmieleski, & Henry, 2012). Specifically, this study analyzes to what degree entrepreneurs’ dispositional affect (independent variable) can predict entrepreneurs’ network size, time spent networking, and long-term orientation & quality of relationships (dependent variables).

Method

An online survey was conducted with entrepreneurs from the alumni network of a business school. To ensure a high response rate (>50%), every entrepreneur was contacted by phone and personally invited to participate. The independent variable was measured with the extended “Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule” (PANAS-X) (Watson & Clark, 1994). The dependent variables were measured with adapted items from Semrau and Werner (2014), Greve and Salaff (2003), and Ganesan (1994). Hypotheses were tested with ordinary least squares regression models.

Results and Implications

As of this writing, calculations are still in progress. Final results will be presented at the BCERC in June 2015. This study contributes to research in three important ways: First, it enriches the well-established research field of entrepreneurial networking by addressing imperative yet unanswered research questions on why networks differ among entrepreneurs. Second, it helps build the foundation for the emerging research field of entrepreneurial affect. Third, given the “extreme emotional context” (Cardon et al., 2012) of entrepreneurship, research on entrepreneurial affect can also enrich theory development in other disciplines (such as organizational behavior, psychology, and strategic management). In addition, this study contributes to practice by helping entrepreneurs better understand how affect impacts one of the key success factors of entrepreneurship, namely: the size and quality of their network.

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