

ENTREPRENEUR NEGOTIATION SCHEMA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to discover how entrepreneurs think about negotiation. Examining cognition has increased our understanding of many entrepreneurship phenomena. However, much research to date focuses on the opportunity recognition and decision to exploit phases of entrepreneurship, and pays little attention to later stages of the entrepreneurial process. I aim here to fill that gap in the literature and examine the cognitions entrepreneurs have regarding negotiation-relevant activities.

Using in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs, I uncovered the structure of entrepreneurs' schema about the activities in which they engage that entail negotiation. Six key dimensions of those knowledge structures were identified, along with underlying cognitive subcategories. Differences between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs in their schema were analyzed and found. As for the differences, Entrepreneurs tend to put more emphasis on building relationships, outcomes for others, and risk taking. Additionally, entrepreneurs put less weight on extracting personal value from negotiations. Findings from this dissertation contribute to research in the area of entrepreneur cognition, by building a theoretical perspective of how entrepreneurs think in social interactions beyond just the founding of a firm. This approach also provides a framework on which future research is discussed.