

Viewing Entrepreneurship Through a Goal Congruity Lens: The Roles of Dominance and Communal Goal Orientations in Women's and Men's Venture Interests

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Abstract : We examined gender differences in entrepreneurial career interests drawing on goal congruity theory, which posits that people adopt gender-stereotypic goal orientations in response to social pressures to conform to traditional gender roles. Aspiring entrepreneurs (N = 351) first wrote three to five sentences about what they believed made an entrepreneur successful. They then completed measures of agentic and communal goal orientations (i.e., male and female stereotypic orientations, respectively) and indicated their interests in starting ventures in stereotypically feminine (e.g., salon), masculine (e.g., auto-repair) and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM; e.g., software developer) ventures. Qualitative analyses demonstrated that participants ascribed agentic and, more specifically, dominance, attributes to entrepreneurs; few participants ascribed communal attributes (e.g., warmth). Bifactor structural equation modeling indicated that, as expected, agentic goal orientations included dimensions of competence, self-direction, and dominance orientations and communal goal orientations were unidimensional. Further, as expected, dominance and communal orientations partially accounted for gender differences in all three career types. We discuss implications for entrepreneurial education and practice from a goal congruity perspective and the use of bifactor modeling to improve the measurement of goal orientations.

Keywords : gender, entrepreneurship, gender stereotypes, agentic and communal goal orientations, entrepreneurship education

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