 Existential Crises and Work
Tailoring among Entrepreneurs for Meaning
By

Prof. Aichia Chuang
National Taiwan University

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Abstract

In the extant entrepreneurship literature, entrepreneurs tend to be identified as individuals who seek to create wealth by creating services and products to resolve external problems. Our study, in contrast, focuses on what we term entrepreneurs for meaning, or those individuals who have become entrepreneurs as a means to resolve an internal problem: their existential crisis. Applying a grounded theory approach, we develop a theory of work tailoring that explains how it is designing work for the entrepreneurs themselves that frames their entrepreneurial process and outcomes. The theory addresses why such entrepreneurs opt to create new work in the first place, provides a description of the entrepreneurial process as involving three phases of work tailoring, and identifies entrepreneurial outcomes as meaningful, realistic, and legitimate tailor-made work. Our study provides a better understanding of entrepreneurial work design and its association with founders’ existential crisis.

Prof. Aichia Chuang is Distinguished Professor at the National Taiwan University (NTU) in Taiwan where she is professor of OBHRM in the Department of Business Administration. She earned her doctorate in Human Resources and Industrial Relations from the University of Minnesota and B.A. in Sociology from the NTU. She served as visiting scholar at Stanford University. Her research interests include leadership, multilevel theories and methods, cross-cultural management, inclusion (person-environment fit and diversity), service climate and service performance, and creativity. Her work has appeared in such journals as the Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology, Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes, Journal of Organizational Behavior, and Harvard Business Review. She has won several teaching and research awards. In relation to teaching, she has received the Herbie Award of Teaching Excellence from the Center for Human Resources and Labor Studies at the University of Minnesota. Regarding research, Chuang is the recipient of the 2014 Outstanding Research Award and the 2007 Ta-You Wu Memorial Research Award (early career achievement award) from the Ministry of Science and Technology in Taiwan, the 2013 Center for Creative Leadership Award (best paper published at the European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology), and the 2006 AOM’s Dorothy Harlow Distinguished Paper Award. She is currently an Associate Editor of Human Relations and the Representative-at-Large: Asia Pacific for the IACMR. She has served as the HR Ambassador (since 2008) representing Taiwan and as the Chair of the Best Student Conference Paper (2008 and 2009) for the HR Division of the AOM. Chuang is on the editorial board of Academy of Management Journal, Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, Human Resource Management Review, Management and Organization Review, and Asia Pacific Journal of Management.

All interested are welcome.