The Science of Doing: Behavioral Mechanisms Behind an Entrepreneur's Venture, Cognitive Punishment and Reinforcement

Charles S. Guccione

M.S. Clinical Behavioral Psychology - Graduate Student

Department of Psychology, Eastern Michigan University

EID: E02221288

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Description of Topic: This essay will look at how an entrepreneur behaves under various conditions that they may face when trying to start and scale their business in terms of well-established behavioral mechanisms. Punishments are events that decrease the probability of a behavior pattern, while reinforcements are events that increase the probability of a behavior pattern. Both punishments and reinforcements can be described in terms of an applied state (positive) or in terms of a removed state (negative). Entrepreneurs are subjected to these four classes of behavioral mechanisms (positive punishment, negative punishment, positive reinforcement, and negative reinforcement) while progressing through their venture.

Essay Significance: Most entrepreneurs are oblivious to how behavioral mechanisms can affect building and running a successful business. By highlighting what those mechanisms look like, an entrepreneur can be better prepared for identifying when these mechanisms are at play and be much more effective at addressing them in order to maximize their efficiency as well as be more resilient to an ever-changing business ecosystem. For an entrepreneur, every action taken is an important one, and time is money. If they are not making sure that the optimal things are being reinforced and the worthless things are being punished, their venture will die.

Data Collection and Completion Timeline: I will collect primary source data by performing a set of behavioral interviews with various entrepreneurs. After the data collection, I will create functional diagrams that highlight the emergent set of behavioral classes and events that were most present in the data. This essay will be completed by August 2024.