SELF-LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES AND SUBJECTIVE MEASURES OF ENTREPRENEUR SUCCESS

by

James A Kalp

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Self-leadership refers to a self-influence process consisting of behavioral and cognitive strategies intended to improve personal effectiveness (Neck & Houghton, 2006). These strategies fall into three categories – behavior-focused strategies, constructive thought pattern strategies, and natural reward strategies. Research on self-leadership has shown evidence of positive outcomes such as job performance and job satisfaction (Frayne & Geringer, 2000; Harari et al., 2021; Prussia et al., 1998). Due to the variety of ways entrepreneurs measure success, and based on the numerous desirable outcomes of self-leadership strategies, it is important to explore these strategies as potential predictors of entrepreneur success. In a review of the literature, research to examine the three types of self-leadership strategies as potential predictors of entrepreneur success was not found. D'Intino et al. (2007) reviewed the literature on self-leadership to suggest that these strategies can help entrepreneurs achieve success; however, an empirical study to validate a predictive relationship was not identified from the literature review. The purpose of this quantitative survey study was to explore relationships between self-leadership strategies and subjective measures of success in entrepreneurs. Participants with at least three years of experience and in an entrepreneurial or business leadership role at the time of participation were recruited through the LinkedIn group, Survey Exchange, and SurveyCircle, and data were collected via online survey questionnaires. Implications include an understanding of specific strategies that are more likely to influence positive outcomes most important to those in entrepreneur and business leadership roles.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Organizational leaders and those charged with influencing the success of business ventures develop their skills and abilities in a variety of ways (Khorakian & Sharifirad, 2019; Liu et al., 2019). One approach growing in prevalence in the literature and relating to self-management is the theory of self-leadership (Katewa & Heystek, 2019; Khahan & Saribut, 2020; Knotts et al., 2022). Self-leadership refers to a self-influence process consisting of behavioral and cognitive strategies intended to improve personal effectiveness (Neck & Houghton, 2006). In essence, self-leadership relates to the leadership of oneself as opposed to being led by a supervisor or other formal leader. Those in leadership roles, as well as their followers, can develop and utilize self-leadership strategies in the pursuit of goal attainment (Bakker et al., 2021; Godwin et al., 1999). The success of entrepreneurs and business owners depends on one's ability to set and achieve set targets. Self-leadership strategies have the potential to predict entrepreneur success based on the nature of internally controlled areas of focus (Bendell et al., 2019).

Background

Self-leadership refers to the process of influencing oneself in the pursuit of task accomplishment, especially when tasks are not necessarily desirable or naturally motivating (Manz, 1983; Stewart et al., 2019). While self-leadership theory focuses primarily on aspects of the self, research has shown positive outcomes related to the interaction between individuals and groups (Bracht et al., 2018; Flores et al., 2018). Entrepreneurs and business leaders require positive interactions with others to effectively

influence people and lead organizations. The literature on self-leadership has shown evidence of positive outcomes such as job performance, job satisfaction, trust, and self-efficacy (Alnakhli et al., 2020; Frayne & Geringer, 2000; Harari et al., 2021; Prussia et al., 1998). Due to the variety of ways entrepreneurs measure success and based on the numerous desirable outcomes of self-leadership strategies, it is important to explore these strategies as potential predictors of entrepreneur success. Moreover, it is critical for entrepreneurs to maintain high levels of commitment and engagement in their work. Researchers have found positive links between self-leadership strategies and these key variables (Cranmer et al., 2019; Knotts & Houghton, 2021). Goal-oriented strategies can also help reduce burnout, a potential negative outcome of the long and tedious hours typically accompanying the work of entrepreneurs (Sjöblom et al., 2022). Likewise, researchers have found positive connections between self-leadership strategies and job embeddedness, a desirable outcome related to the success of entrepreneurs (Harunavamwe et al., 2020; Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017).

Problem Statement

Self-leadership strategies fall into three categories – behavior-focused strategies, constructive thought pattern strategies, and natural reward strategies (D'Intino et al., 2007; Houghton & Neck, 2002). According to recent research, self-leadership strategies are effective in improving job performance outcomes (Kalra et al., 2021; Napiersky & Woods, 2018). Entrepreneurs and business leaders strive for continued improvement, and self-leadership strategies can be quite beneficial in this pursuit. The existing literature has explored several perspectives in relationships between self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur performance (Bendell et al., 2019; D'Intino et al., 2007; Goldsby et al.,

2021a). Due to the nature of entrepreneurial work, innovation and creativity are critical to success. This is likely the reason for such an increase in published articles over the past decade dealing with self-leadership and these variables (Goldsby et al., 2021b). Additionally, research has also explored relationships among the three individual self-leadership strategies (Wang et al., 2021). However, in a review of the literature, no existing research was identified examining these three types of self-leadership strategies as potential predictors of entrepreneur success based on subjective measures of success. D'Intino et al. (2007) reviewed the literature on self-leadership to suggest that these strategies can help entrepreneurs achieve success; however, an empirical study to validate a predictive relationship was not identified.

It is important to evaluate entrepreneur success as a subjective measure due to the differences in how entrepreneurs and business leaders define successful attainment of set goals. While many in this line of work measure success in terms of financial performance, others do so in terms of job satisfaction and other achievement-related outcomes (Salisu et al., 2020; Wach et al., 2018). Therefore, research is needed to explore possible predictive relationships between the three self-leadership strategies and a measure of entrepreneur success that incorporates a variety of success criteria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative survey study was to explore relationships between self-leadership strategies and subjective measures of success in entrepreneurs.

Research Question(s) and Hypotheses

Research Questions

RQ1: What effect do self-leadership strategies have on entrepreneur success?

RQ 2: Which self-leadership strategies are most likely to predict success in entrepreneurs?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant relationship between behavior-focused self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success.

Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant relationship between constructive thought pattern self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success.

Hypothesis 3: There is a statistically significant relationship between natural reward self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success.

Hypothesis 4: There is a stronger positive relationship between constructive thought pattern self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success than the relationships between behavior-focused strategies and entrepreneur success or natural reward strategies and entrepreneur success.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

Assumptions

Several assumptions of this study include those more common in survey designs. Due to the nature of Likert-style survey questionnaires, there exists a level of risk relating to response bias (Chyung et al., 2018). This risk may be particularly relevant based on the subject matter. Specifically, entrepreneurs may be susceptible to inflated perceptions of their own ability to accomplish goals, therefore producing an additional level of bias in responses. The researcher, while acknowledging this potential risk, assumes that participants read each item completely and answered honestly. Similarly, participants had the ability to answer dishonestly regarding their experience as entrepreneurs or business

leaders. The use of previously validated forms of measurement was intended to minimize these risks. Another assumption of this study is that participants reported their work experience and self-leadership practices honestly. In acknowledgement of this assumption and the associated risk, participants were recruited through a database that asks members to agree to statements relating to honesty in survey completion. In addition to these assumptions, several limitations need to be discussed.

Limitations

The primary limitation to this study is its cross-sectional nature, which makes it challenging to draw causal inferences. The identified relationships do not necessarily mean that self-leadership strategies predict or cause success in entrepreneurs. However, this limitation is unavoidable due to the time constraints that accompany an academic dissertation. Another limitation to this study relates to the similarity of the variables being explored. Entrepreneurs often require a significant degree of self-influence and determination due to the nature of working for oneself (Al Issa, 2021). This presents a perception of possible overlap between self-leadership strategies and the general nature of entrepreneurial work. However, not all entrepreneurs attain the outcomes they set out to achieve. For example, an individual might leave the corporate world to go into business for themselves, which could lead to higher income levels but an unhealthy balance between work and personal life. This could leave the entrepreneur with a sense of regret or lack of perceived success. Finally, recruiting participants online presents a methodological limitation with regard to what is known of the population. Specifically, an accurate description of the population is limited based on a lack of information obtainable from the participant population. The results of this study still present an

opportunity to better understand why some entrepreneurs are more successful than others. With these limitations in mind, the relationships between these variables still provide a significant contribution to the field.

Theoretical Foundations of the Study

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory explains the influence of behavioral, cognitive, and environmental factors playing an interconnected and complex role in human behavior (Bandura, 1986). Social cognitive theory is the primary foundational construct for understanding and studying self-leadership, particularly due to the idea that individuals hold a capacity to manage or control themselves (Neck et al., 2020). Furthermore, social cognitive theory recognizes the important process of learning through observation and creative imagination. Essentially, individuals are both a product of and an influencer on their environment, and humans possess the ability and capacity to harness this interconnected relationship in the pursuit of goal attainment, a key in entrepreneurial ventures and business leadership.

Self-Management Theory

Self-management, a branch of social cognitive theory, focuses more explicitly on the pursuit of goal attainment (Goldsby et al., 2021b); however, self-management often occurs without the absence of direct supervision from higher-level influencers (Cohen et al., 1997). Self-management theory also focuses heavily on task behaviors and accomplishments. Self-leadership, stemming from both social cognitive theory and the concept of self-management, applies the consideration of a higher purpose and emphasizes the individual nature of goal pursuit without pressure from immediate or

direct supervisors. This concept is critical in industries or professions that typically do not follow the more traditional organizational hierarchy. For example, entrepreneurs often report only to themselves, at least in the initial startup stages, and must rely on a process of self-influence to progress toward the achievement of their own goals.

Biblical Perspective

From a biblical perspective, the concept of self-management and self-control can be found in many areas of Scripture. In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he commands his readers, "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith" (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, 2 Corinthians 13:5). This provides a clear implication of the concept of self-consideration and self-management. Why else would one examine themselves if not to compare some aspect of the self to a more desired version before setting a goal and striving toward that better version. Paul also said to the Philippians to think thoughts related to nobility, righteousness, and purity (Philippians 4:8), suggesting the power of constructive thought patterns. Clearly, there is biblical evidence supporting the idea of self-leadership strategies.

Definition of Terms

The following are key terms and definitions used in this study.

Self-leadership – a self-influence process of directing and managing oneself toward the accomplishment of tasks that are either naturally motivating or lack natural motivation yet still need done (Goldsby et al., 2021b; Manz, 1983).

Behavior-focused – a category of self-leadership strategies including self-rewards, self-punishments, internally set goals, and self-cues (Mayfield et al., 2021; Neck & Houghton, 2006; Neck et al., 2020).

Constructive Thought Patterns – a category of cognitive self-leadership strategies intended to develop habitual ways of thinking and include visualizing successful accomplishment of the target, engaging in positive self-talk, and evaluating one's personal beliefs and assumptions (Neck & Houghton, 2006; Neck et al., 2020).

Natural Rewards – a category of self-leadership strategies including manipulating one's environment and emphasizing the higher purpose of a project or task (Neck et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021).

Entrepreneur Success – the subjective perception of one's ability to attain intended outcomes from their professional work as an entrepreneur or business leader (Al Issa, 2021).

Significance of the Study

While there are limitations in the design due to constraints related to the dissertation timeline, results still provide an opportunity for future research. Future longitudinal and experimental research could help validate a causal inference. Moreover, future studies could explore these relationships in other cultures to determine the impact of culturally related factors. Implications for uncovering predictive relationships between these variables include several positions. From an entrepreneur's perspective, an understanding of specific strategies that are more likely to influence positive outcomes could help narrow self-development goals to those more aligned with their interpretation of success. From a consultant's perspective working with an entrepreneur, intervention strategies can be more specific based on what the individual desires to accomplish. Finally, from an investor's perspective, an understanding of which strategies an entrepreneur typically engages in can potentially lead to better investment decisions

based on links between specific self-leadership strategies and success criteria relating to set goals.

Summary

Self-leadership refers to a process of self-influence consisting of behavioral and cognitive strategies intended to improve personal effectiveness (Neck & Houghton, 2006). The three categories of self-leadership strategies include behavior-focused, constructive thought patterns, and natural rewards. Entrepreneurs continuously strive for improvement, and self-leadership strategies can be beneficial in this pursuit. The existing literature has explored several perspectives in relationships between self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur performance (Bendell et al., 2019; D'Intino et al., 2007). The relationship between self-leadership and innovation has been one of the most explored in the self-leadership literature over the past decade (Goldsby et al., 2021b). However, no research has been identified that explores the three self-leadership strategies as possible predictors of subjective measures of entrepreneur success. This study sought to address this gap with a quantitative survey design including entrepreneurs through the LinkedIn group, Survey Exchange, and SurveyCircle, and online research community. The results of the identified relationships among these variables could lead to more efficient development strategies for entrepreneurs seeking to improve their chances of success as they define it. Before such an exploration could begin, however, a thorough review of the literature on self-leadership was necessary.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Self-leadership refers to a self-influence process of "leading oneself toward performance of naturally motivating tasks as well as managing oneself to do work that must be done but is not naturally motivating" (Manz, 1983, p. 589). The self-leadership literature consists of research relating to outcomes typically desired in organizational settings, but self-leadership strategies can also be used in the pursuit of personal goals. Entrepreneurs define success in different ways (Al Issa, 2021; Wach et al., 2018). Due to this variety, it is important to explore the construct from the subjective point of view of entrepreneurs seeking different goals. The following chapter covers the search strategy applied and a thorough review of what is currently known on the topics of self-leadership and entrepreneur success. A biblical perspective of the two constructs is also explored.

Description of Search Strategy

The search strategy to obtain academic resources for the literature review included the Liberty University database, Google Scholar, Annual Reviews, and JSTOR. The following keywords were used as search terms: *self-leadership, self-regulation, behavior-focused, constructive thought patters, natural rewards*, and *entrepreneur success*. Delimitations included the exclusion of book reviews, dissertations, and newspaper articles. Additionally, peer-reviewed publications and journal article content were selected as filters. Most searches were limited to include only articles published between 2017 and 2022 to obtain a minimum of 80% of references being published in the most recent five years (see Table 1). Older resources were used to provide foundational and theoretical information for the study. Biblical research was conducted using

OpenBible.info and the YouVersion Bible mobile application to identify key verses. Those verses were then analyzed in commentary texts and a theological dictionary for themes and contextual Scripture references relating to the following terms: *leadership, self-control*, and *business*.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of Resources in the Literature Review

Resources	Within 5 Years	Older than 5 Years	Total
Peer-reviewed articles	71	10	81
Books	1	6	7
The Holy Bible	0	1	1
Total	**72**	**17**	**89**
Total %	81%	19%	100%

Review of Literature

Self-Leadership

Grounded in social cognitive theory, self-leadership emphasizes the interconnected nature of behavioral, cognitive, and environmental factors in processes such as self-reflection and self-regulation (Bandura, 1986). Essentially, social cognitive theory considers the influence internal experiences, observable actions, and environmental factors have on individuals. Self-management, another construct stemming from social cognitive theory, also emphasizes a self-influence process intended to help one in the pursuit of goal attainment (Goldsby et al., 2021b). However, self-management is distinct from self-leadership in at least two ways. First, self-leadership strategies tend to focus more on a higher purpose or reasoning than the theory of self-management would consider. Second, self-management does not necessarily imply the absence of direct supervision by those ranking higher in authority (Cohen et al., 1997). In other

words, self-leadership relies primarily on a self-influence process as opposed to a combination of self-motivation and direction from supervisory roles. The theory of self-leadership expands on these foundational concepts, applying strategies to capitalize on these self-influences in a way that allows one to regulate their own behaviors and to some degree control outcomes (Stewart et al., 2019). Closely related to self-efficacy and core self-evaluation, the concept of taking control over one's thoughts and actions to improve personal effectiveness is dependent on an internal evaluation of one's own skills and capabilities (Ahn et al., 2018; Ozyilmaz et al., 2018; Talsma et al., 2018). Self-leadership requires an individual's ability to regulate aspects of the self without assistance from external authorities (Bracht et al., 2018), and research has shown leaders who self-regulate their attention are perceived to be more effective by their followers (Dietl & Reb, 2019). Furthermore, self-regulation skills in leaders can help them maintain effective leadership approaches (Carleton et al., 2018; Walsh & Arnold, 2018). For entrepreneurs and business leaders, follower perception of their effectiveness is critical in their efforts to influence work-related behaviors. In this vein, Bracht et al. (2018) contributed to the self-leadership literature by incorporating the idea of self-leadership-culture, which considers relationships between the leader and others, as well as the leader and the organization. The researchers used the term *intrapreneurial* to explain a dimension of self-leadership that refers to goals related to the organization and not solely the individual. In that regard, self-leadership for entrepreneurs often includes a broader view of purpose-driven goals that drive self-motivation. Most of the existing research has explored outcomes and antecedents of self-leadership, with antecedent factors typically

branching into two categories – those considered internal or innate and those attributed to the external environment.

Outcomes of Self-Leadership Strategies

The literature on self-leadership to date has focused primarily on outcomes of self-leadership strategies (Stewart et al., 2019; Goldsby et al., 2021b). Individual performance, a key outcome in any organizational setting and a critical component of entrepreneur success, has been shown to increase as self-leadership strategies are more prevalent (Frayne & Geringer, 2000; Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019). Moreover, job satisfaction has been found to relate positively to self-leadership (Frayne & Geringer, 2000; Lee, 2021). In an eight-month experimental study of private bankers, participants in a treatment group completed a self-leadership training program to determine relationships among self-leadership, adaptive performance, and job satisfaction (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019). Half-way into the training, an unexpected bailout occurred, presenting a unique opportunity to study self-leadership during times of unpredictability. Results of the study showed a significant increase in self-leadership, adaptive performance, and job satisfaction for those who received the training as compared to a control group. These results are particularly interesting because of the unexpected bailout. Entrepreneurs often deal with unpredictable work environments, and this study offers evidence of self-leadership serving as a strategy to improve performance when changes are rapidly occurring.

In a recent meta-analysis of self-leadership research, Goldsby et al. (2021b) found that creativity and innovation accounted for more published articles on self-leadership than any other variables. Creative and innovative behaviors are highly influenced by self-

leadership strategies (Banerjee, 2021; Lin, 2017). In the world of entrepreneurs and business owners, creativity and innovation make up the key ingredients in new venture growth (Bendell et al., 2019). In one study, Bendell and colleagues collected data from more than 400 high-growth technology firm founders to explore gender as a possible factor in self-leadership strategies. While there were differences in male and female application of several individual strategies, results confirmed self-leadership to be influential in the development of intellectual property. From an entrepreneurial perspective, these results show an important link between self-leadership and innovation. Likewise, a climate of psychological safety, where organizational members feel comfortable speaking up about issues and concerns, has been shown to improve when those organizational members are engaging in self-leadership practices (Mayfield, 2021). Self-leadership has also been found to assist new group members in the socialization process (Cranmer et al., 2019), a process that entrepreneurs are familiar with during the start-up phases of getting a new venture off the ground.

Self-efficacy refers to the degree an individual believes in his or her own capabilities to engage in the behaviors necessary to accomplish specific tasks (Bandura, 1986). Research has shown self-efficacy to be positively influenced by self-leadership strategies (Prussia et al., 1998; Şahina & Gülşen, 2022). Self-efficacy is critical to entrepreneur success for its effect on performance. In a survey-design study of 151 undergraduate students, self-efficacy was found to improve as self-leadership strategies increased (Prussia et al., 1998). Moreover, self-efficacy related positively to performance, and self-efficacy perception was found to fully mediate the positive relationship between self-leadership and performance. In essence, self-leadership positively influences

performance by way of improving one's evaluation of their own capabilities. Job embeddedness, another critical component in entrepreneurial endeavors, has also been identified as a positive outcome of self-leadership strategies (Harunavamwe et al., 2020; Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017). Likewise, burnout presents a threat to those working as entrepreneurs, due to the often necessary long and tedious work hours, and strategies involving the orientation of goals can help reduce this threat (Sjöblom et al., 2022). In addition to these outcome variables, self-leadership has also been researched as an outcome of antecedent factors.

Internal Antecedents of Self-Leadership Strategies

Antecedents of self-leadership can be in the form of internal or innate aspects of the individual or in the form of external or contextual factors. Natural rewards, one of the three self-leadership strategy categories, is by nature an internal and intrinsic approach to motivating oneself. From an internal perspective, personality has been studied and confirmed as a key factor in self-leadership (Goldsby et al., 2021b; Harari et al., 2021). Although similar in nature, self-leadership and personality are distinct (Bailey et al., 2018; Neck & Houghton, 2006), and training can positively influence levels of self-leadership (Montalvo-Garcia et al., 2021; Stewart et al., 2011). Of the Big-Five personality traits, conscientiousness has consistently shown more of a relation to self-leadership than the other traits (Harari et al., 2021; Stewart et al., 1996; Stewart et al., 2019). However, extraversion has also been found to associate strongly with self-leadership (Bailey et al., 2018). For entrepreneurs measuring high in the extraversion trait, creativity has been shown to increase as well, but only to an extent (Gao et al., 2020), shedding light on multiple factors in the success of entrepreneurs. Core self-

evaluation has been found to play an integral role in the prevalence of self-leadership practices (Cristofaro & Giardino, 2020). Specifically, those exhibiting higher core self-evaluations are more likely to engage in self-leadership strategies to set and strive for goals. Indeed, self-leadership strategies are inherently dependent on one's internal evaluation of their capabilities in accomplishing predetermined goals. Therefore, antecedent personality factors are an important consideration in determining the likelihood of an individual engaging in self-leadership practices. Still, external factors can also play critical contributing roles in self-leadership.

External Antecedents of Self-Leadership Strategies

From a contextual and environmental perspective, self-leadership strategies can be enhanced through training, and similar development interventions may be particularly helpful to those lower in the conscientiousness trait (Stewart et al., 1996; Stewart et al., 2019). Neck et al. (2020) argued that an individual's use of self-leadership strategies can be improved with intentional practice, stressing the importance of training programs and development interventions. Numerous studies have confirmed the benefits of self-leadership training (Botke et al., 2022; Sampl et al., 2017; Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019; van Dorssen-Boog et al., 2021), primarily the improvement of self-leadership practices that ultimately lead to the aforementioned desired outcomes. Entrepreneurs looking to enhance their creativity, innovation, and job embeddedness would arguably do well to invest resources in self-leadership training. Researchers have explored relationships between self-leadership, mindfulness, and emotion regulation (Flores et al., 2018; Furtner et al., 2018); however, the direction of these positive correlations is often unclear. This suggests that one's ability to regulate emotions might act as an antecedent

factor as opposed to an outcome. Finally, self-efficacy, a construct explaining an individual's overall self-concept and thought to be relatively fixed as a personality trait, has been found to influence self-leadership behaviors (Kalra et al., 2021). Moreover, this relationship can be strengthened by higher levels of technical knowledge, further pointing to the importance of the efficacy, confidence, and overall self-concept one has developed. The way in which self-leadership has been measured in the literature has also experienced attention.

Measuring the Use of Self-Leadership Strategies

Measuring the construct of self-leadership has undergone some level of advancement in recent years. Houghton & Neck (2002) originally developed the Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (RSLQ) to measure three categories of self-leadership strategies, and this assessment device has been widely used in the self-leadership literature (Bum, 2018; Müller & Niessen, 2019; Nientied & Toska, 2021). Due to the length of the 35-item measure, Houghton et al. (2012) later consolidated the items in the Abbreviated Self-Leadership Questionnaire (ASLQ), which consists of only nine items measuring the strength of the three strategies. Although the ASLQ is widely used in the literature (Gülşen & Şahin, 2022; van Dorssen-Boog et al., 2020), many researchers still prefer the use the original RSLQ (Nientied & Toska, 2021). Indeed, a recent study modified the RSLQ for use with Thai participants (Boonyarit, 2021). The three strategies that make up each of the questionnaires include behavior-focused strategies, constructive thought pattern strategies, and natural reward strategies.

Behavior-Focused Self-Leadership Strategies

Self-leadership strategies that fall into the category of *behavior-focused* take into consideration the motivation needed to execute sometimes unpleasant but necessary tasks (Neck & Houghton, 2006). These strategies can take the form of choosing to exercise instead of sleeping in, reading challenging material to gain knowledge in an area, and putting in extra writing hours instead of watching a movie (Brevers et al., 2018). Behavior-focused strategies include self-rewards, self-punishments, internally set goals, and self-cues (Mayfield et al., 2021; Neck & Houghton, 2006; Neck et al., 2020). One can use self-rewards in the simple act of mentally congratulating oneself after delivering a solid speech. Self-punishment refers to the opposite of rewarding oneself for a job well-done, and examples include skipping a concert for not studying or intentionally going hungry after missing a planned workout. Essentially, the individual self-induces some form of punishment for not living up to a self-imposed standard or set goal. Neck and colleagues argued that self-punishment should be closely monitored, as self-critical thoughts and feelings of guilt can often do more harm than good. The intentional act of setting challenging but attainable goals also represents a behavior-focused self-leadership strategy, but it is critical that goals are specific and include short- and long-term targets (Weintraub et al., 2021). These strategies typically involve observable actions taken by the individual designed to achieve a predetermined goal or target, such as when a leader seeks feedback from others with the intent to improve (Avolio et al., 2018; Bäcklander et al., 2021). Additionally, using reminders to focus one's attention in the form of cues can help individuals in the goal pursuit process. For example, placing a Bible on the coffee table might serve as a reminder to spend time in God's word when sitting down to watch TV after dinner. The use of self-cues, internally set goals, and self-rewards can be

instrumental in one's efforts to self-lead. For entrepreneurs, this aspect of the self-management process is critical, as those running their own business do not have the traditional supervisor role influencing task accomplishment. Constructive thought patterns can offer additional strategies.

Constructive Thought Pattern Self-Leadership Strategies

Constructive though patterns refer to cognitive strategies intended to develop habitual ways of thinking and include visualizing successful accomplishment of the target, engaging in positive self-talk, and evaluating one's personal beliefs and assumptions (Neck & Houghton, 2006; Neck et al., 2020). Furthermore, these strategies require the individual to recognize dysfunctional perspectives and discard them so as not to negatively influence the pursuit of set goals. Research has found that self-talk strategies can improve an individual's attention on a task, thus improving overall task performance when contextual distractions are present (Chiu et al., 2019; Galanis et al., 2018). Moreover, Robin et al. (2022) found improvements in performance when participants engaged in self-talk strategies and imagining successful execution of behavioral tasks. Mental practice or imagery involves the consistent rehearsal of flawlessly accomplishing the desired result by relaxing, concentrating, and focusing on individual elements or behaviors leading to full attainment (Neck et al., 2020). Visualizing successful accomplishment also relates to the power of positive thinking, as opposed to negative thinking, which can have detrimental effects on the pursuit of one's entrepreneurial goals. Constructive thought pattern strategies also include the evaluation of beliefs and assumptions, with the goal being to remove harmful ways of thinking. This self-awareness approach has also been referred to as intuitive thinking and relates

positively to task performance (Alaybek et al., 2022). Indeed, those who practice mindfulness strategies, intending to become more self-aware and acknowledging dysfunctional ways of thinking and discarding them, are often more effective in goal attainment than those not practicing them (Furtner et al., 2018; Neck et al., 2020). For the entrepreneur, self-leadership strategies relating to constructive thought patterns represent a clear advantage. Natural rewards can also provide advantages for entrepreneurs.

Natural Reward Self-Leadership Strategies

Natural or intrinsic rewards have been thoroughly researched and often deemed more important than external or extrinsic rewards in the pursuit of motivating individuals toward their goals (Hua et al., 2019; Victor & Hoole, 2021; Woolley & Fishbach, 2018). From a self-leadership perspective, natural reward strategies include manipulating one's environment and emphasizing the higher purpose of a project or task (Neck et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). In relation to manipulating one's own environment, for example, an office can be decorated and designed to stimulate brainstorming efforts and creativity. A writer can work from a place where attractive scenery can be viewed through an office window. Natural rewards can also include focusing on the long-term benefits of a task, which can help detract from the sometimes unpleasant or tedious nature of that task. This strategy can be especially important for long-term visions that require entrepreneurs to maintain task engagement and commitment for long periods of time. Those building their own business or brand often encounter situations of high stress and concerns for job security (Goldsby et al., 2021a). These psychological states can be influenced with self-leadership strategies such as maintaining a vision of the overall purpose or mission. For example, if having more time for family is the reason for going into business for oneself,

a family photo might serve as a reminder to focus on that purpose. These types of strategies help to ease the pressure of high-stress work environments. Collectively, behavior-focused strategies, constructive thought pattern strategies, and natural reward strategies encompass the practical approach to self-leadership. It is the tendency of entrepreneurs to engage in these strategies that has the potential to predict entrepreneur success.

Subjective Measures of Entrepreneur Success

Entrepreneur success is not and cannot be universally defined. This is because entrepreneurs define success is a variety of ways (Al Issa, 2021; Goldsby et al., 2021b). Financial performance is an important outcome for entrepreneurs and business owners, but many of these professionals rank job satisfaction or personal fulfillment as more important success criteria (Dijkhuizen et al., 2018). This makes measuring entrepreneur success potentially challenging, and researchers have attempted to measure the construct in different ways. Welsh and Kaciak (2019), for example, measured entrepreneur success on two dimensions – annual income of the business and the number of years the business had been in operation. While this approach might be effective in predicting business longevity and survival, it arguably measures organizational success more than entrepreneur success. Al Issa (2021) utilized a more subjective measure of success which included career satisfaction, perceived career achievement, and perceived financial attainment. Wach et al. (2018) explored a variety of success criteria, including firm performance, workplace relationships, personal fulfilment, community impact, and personal financial rewards, in a series of studies of entrepreneurs. Data were collected via self-reports in order to measure participant interpretations of success. Comparing criteria

entrepreneurs desire with measures of what they actually achieve led to a framework that appreciates a subjective measure of entrepreneur success. Similar criteria were used to measure the construct in a more recent study of entrepreneur creativity with the additional consideration of social reputation (Chang & Chen, 2020). Cultural differences must also be considered in the variety of ways in which entrepreneurs measure success. In a study of Chinese entrepreneurs, political connectedness was found to be a significant factor in the success of entrepreneurial business ventures (Burt & Opper, 2020). Those less concerned or connected with governmental affairs were less likely to be successful, leading to the perceived value of political connections as a success factor. Due to the variety in ways entrepreneurs define success, it is appropriate to measure entrepreneur success based on self-reports of goal attainment, regardless of what those goals are. In addition to measuring entrepreneur success in a subjective manner, it is important to consider factors likely to lead to some form of success for entrepreneurs and business owners.

Factors Contributing to Success in Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneur success, regardless of what the criteria are that make up that success, is thought to be largely dependent on internal factors such as psychological states and personality traits (Fatma et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2021). Specifically, overconfidence and optimistic hope can significantly contribute to the success of entrepreneurial ventures. Furthermore, these factors may be more influential for females than for males. An entrepreneur's personality can play an important role in their likelihood of success, especially when traits are aligned with the local environment. Termed *Confucian personality*, Chinese researchers have found entrepreneurs with a stronger interpersonal

relatedness within their respective communities are more likely to experience higher levels of income. Clearly, there are cultural factors at play in these relationships.

Due to the nature of self-leadership and the strategies that focus on an internal and individual approach, entrepreneurs represent a relatively unique population with the potential for strong advantages. Entrepreneurs do not follow the traditional chain of command by reporting to an immediate supervisor and following a set of structured organizational policies and procedures. Indeed, entrepreneurs and business owners often rely on self-motivation and self-regulation strategies to make progress toward their goals. In this regard, self-leadership theory has the potential to predict entrepreneurial success based on its foundational aspects of self-influence. D'Intino et al. (2007) suggested that self-leadership strategies may provide a means of entrepreneurial success; however, an empirical study has not yet explored this possible predictive relationship. Research confirming self-leadership strategies relate to higher levels of entrepreneur success, as measured by a subjective approach, could provide those in business for themselves with tools to improve their odds in challenging industries. Self-leadership and entrepreneur success can also be explored from a biblical perspective.

Biblical Foundations of the Study

The biblical account of Job provides arguably one of the most extreme examples of discipline and self-control in Scripture. Once referred to as, "the greatest man among all the people of the East," (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Job 1:3), Job ultimately loses everything – his wealth, family, friends, and eventually even his physical health. This is all in an attempt by Satan to get Job to curse God. Yet, even after everyone he knows has turned away from him, Job remains faithful to the Lord. This requires great

mental strength. Job came from Northern Arabia, where men were known for their unparalleled wisdom, which was often expressed in songs, stories, and proverbs (Walvoord & Zuck, 1985). Success, therefore, came to Job in the form of material things, relationships, his faith in God, and his intellect. Throughout the book, Job wrestles with his internal thoughts as he holds various conversations with his once friends. Much of his self-control and perseverance can arguably be attributed to Job's ability to see beyond his immediate circumstances, a self-reflective strategy of self-leadership. From a biblical perspective, however, the gift of faith is something provided by the Holy Spirit (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, 1 Corinthians 12:9; Thomson & Elwell, 2001). Self-leadership strategies, in essence, used in the perseverance of faith can be considered a form of strength and skill coming from the Lord.

The Scriptures elevate one's ability to control their thoughts and behaviors as an important virtue. According to Solomon (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Proverbs 25:28), "Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control." According to Old Testament commentary, Solomon is referring to the vulnerability of enemy attacks when a city's walls are broken down (Walvoord & Zuck, 1985). Similarly, an individual is vulnerable to trouble when they lack self-control.

The concept of self-examination is arguably more prevalent in the New Testament, as Almighty God was primarily responsible for searching man's inner thoughts and intents within the Old Testament (Edman, 2001). For example, Paul informs the church in Corinth they ought to "examine themselves" by using the Greek word *dokimazō*, meaning "to examine himself." Likewise, the term *diakrinō* refers to the act of judging oneself, which often leads to confession and forgiveness. In Paul's second letter

to Timothy, he advises, “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline” (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, 2 Timothy 1:7). Clearly, the characteristic of self-control is a virtue provided by God for one’s benefit. Being aware of internal beliefs and assumptions, choosing to consciously disregard dysfunctional perspectives, and focusing on the alignment of thoughts and behaviors with good and pure goals are noble pursuits supported by a biblical foundation. Paul said to the church in Philippi, “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things” (Philippians 4:8). To lead oneself or others in a way that is true, right, and admirable, one must acknowledge the influence thoughts have on self-control and discipline. Moreover, one seeking to better lead themselves or others can appreciate strategies of self-leadership.

Examples of Success in Scripture

Success can be defined in many different ways depending on what is important to each individual. Those in Christ often refer to this as a *calling* or *life purpose*, and success can be understood as a degree of progress toward fulfilling their purpose in life. Scripture is full of examples of different versions of success and can be seen first in the book of Genesis. In Chapter 12, the Lord told Abram to leave his country with his family and all of his people and possessions (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Genesis 12:1). For Abram, later re-named Abraham, success was a path defined by God that involved the creation of a great nation of people. This nation of people, the Israelites, would ultimately be led by Joshua into the land the Lord had promised. Joshua was commanded by the Lord several times to be strong and courageous as he led the people

into battle for possession of that land (Joshua 1:7-9). Joshua's success was defined by his obedience to God in leading the Israelites to the place they were destined to call home. Jesus told his followers, "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Their calling or mission was to spread the Gospel message throughout the land, and success was determined by their willingness and ability to share the Lord's word with others. Those who heed God's call often find what Hamilton (2005) calls "a divine resource and promise of God" (p. 92). This is in contrast to the many who reject God's will for their life and find only that the Lord allows them to pursue their own way.

Entrepreneurs also have different paths to success. For example, a Christian business owner might feel called to produce wealth, an ability gifted by God (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Deuteronomy 8:18). Therefore, his or her success might be defined by their income. From this perspective, however, it is important to note that becoming financially wealthy should not be sought for the sake of itself. This would equate to greed. Instead, Christian entrepreneurs should seek to become good stewards with the resources God provides. In one sense, the ability to produce wealth can create a dangerous potential to forget the Lord and attribute financial success to one's own abilities. Therefore, the goal of seeking wealth must be thoroughly understood from a position of intent. For other entrepreneurs, success might be defined by their ability to raise up God-fearing children; and starting a home-based business would allow them the flexible working hours to dedicate the necessary time and resources to raising the children. In the end, entrepreneurs are typically seeking some level of freedom from constraint, whether it be financial freedom, freedom from long working hours, or another sort. Similar to the way Christ sets prisoners free from sin, entrepreneurship has the

potential to set workers free from a number of constraints. Self-leadership, as a set of strategies, can be utilized to facilitate this process of breaking free from work constraints. Due to the varying ways in which entrepreneur success is defined, it is an important variable to study in relation to self-leadership. Moreover, measuring entrepreneur success in a subjective way allows for this variety in how each individual defines their own success.

Summary

In summary, self-leadership theory, as a practical approach to self-influence, encompasses three categories of strategies with the potential to predict entrepreneur success (Neck & Houghton, 2006; Neck et al., 2020). Behavior-focused strategies, constructive thought pattern strategies, and natural reward strategies each provide their own practical tools to assist the aspiring entrepreneur or business owner to reach toward their own subjective measures of success. There are numerous places in Scripture to support the idea of self-regulation and self-control, beginning in Genesis, among several Old Testament passages, and throughout the New Testament. Obtaining freedom from feelings of being bound by financial or time constraints in typical jobs and industries is often the overarching pursuit of those going into business for themselves. However, one's ability to achieve success, however it is defined, might depend greatly on their ability to self-regulate and engage in self-influence processes when no direct supervisor exists to push for progress. Self-leadership strategies have the potential to predict subjective measures of entrepreneur success, as suggested by the existing literature covering the two constructs (Neck et al., 2020; Goldsby et al., 2021b). The following chapter details the

research questions guiding this study, hypotheses, and the research methodology selected to explore this predictive potential.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

Overview

The purpose of this research was to explore relationships between self-leadership strategies and subjective measures of success in entrepreneurs. A subjective measure was necessary based on prior studies that have identified the variety of ways entrepreneurs define their accomplishments (Salisu et al., 2020; Wach et al., 2018). In this section, the research design and methodology are discussed in detail with appropriate justification for selecting the proposed approach. The research questions guiding the aforementioned purpose of the study are presented, and a list of hypotheses are provided in narrative form. Additionally, the participants, study procedures, and measurement devices included are explained in detail. The variables in this study include self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success, which are operationally defined in this section. The data analysis strategy is described, as well as delimitation, assumptions, and limitations. Finally, the chapter is concluded with a summary of the overall research methodology.

Research Question(s) and Hypotheses

Research Questions

RQ1: What effect do self-leadership strategies have on entrepreneur success?

RQ 2: Which self-leadership strategies are most likely to predict success in entrepreneurs?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant relationship between behavior-focused self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success.

Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant relationship between constructive thought pattern self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success.

Hypothesis 3: There is a statistically significant relationship between natural reward self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success.

Hypothesis 4: There is a stronger positive relationship between constructive thought pattern self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success than the relationships between behavior-focused strategies and entrepreneur success or natural reward strategies and entrepreneur success.

Research Design

The design in this study was a quantitative survey. Specifically, survey questionnaires were electronically distributed via email to participants in order to collect data relating to the use of self-leadership strategies and objective perceptions of entrepreneur success. Previous studies have utilized a similar approach with the same variables (Bendell et al., 2019; Salisu et al., 2020; Wach et al., 2018). While an experimental or more longitudinal design has the potential to provide stronger results, there are several reasons for initially conducting a quantitative survey design. First, the dissertation process consists of time constraints that would have made a longitudinal study more challenging and less feasible than what would accompany an emailed questionnaire. Additionally, to the knowledge of the researcher, an empirical study has not yet been conducted exploring these two variables in an effort to identify a predictive relationship. D'Intino et al. (2007) investigated the literature to suggest that self-leadership strategies have the potential to help entrepreneurs lead themselves toward goal attainment, and the researchers suggested that future research explore possible

relationships at a deeper level. However, no research answering this call was identified in a thorough review of the literature. Therefore, an initial survey design was determined to be most appropriate to gather enough information to empirically determine if such a relationship between these variables exists. Based on the predictive relationships found in this study, future research should take the next step in designing a more longitudinal or experimental design to further validate the predictive relationship.

Participants

Entrepreneurs have previously been recruited through social media platforms, online networks such as LinkedIn, various entrepreneur associations, Chambers of Commerce, and through personal networks of the researchers (Wach et al., 2020; Welsh et al., 2021). This study recruited participants through two resources. The first was a LinkedIn group named Survey Exchange, with more than 10,000 members. The second was SurveyCircle, an online research community. Invitations containing the survey link were posted in the LinkedIn group. Participants were recruited through SurveyCircle by creating an account on their website and posting the survey questionnaire for members to view. Qualification criteria included a minimum of three years of experience as an entrepreneur or business owner, and participants must have been in an entrepreneurial or key executive position at the time of questionnaire completion. These criteria were based on entrepreneurs being in business long enough to have had a reasonable chance of attaining whatever success they set out to achieve. Additionally, those no longer in an

entrepreneurial role would have arguably skewed the results based on them no longer being in the role that is currently under study.

The targeted sample size for this study was 78 participants. This target was determined by conducting an a priori power analysis using data from two previous studies (see Appendix A). Goldsby et al. (2021a) measured the impact of self-management practices on entrepreneurial psychological states. Bendell et al. (2019) measured self-leadership strategies among high-growth entrepreneurs. These studies resulted in correlation values of $R^2 = .15$ and $R^2 = .115$, respectively. Based on these previous studies, a power analysis was conducted in the G*Power 3.1.9.4 program using the average of both values, where $R^2 = .13$. The resulting total sample size needed, using three predictor variables, was reported as 77 participants. Therefore, the targeted sample size of 78 participants was determined to be sufficient to produce the desired power of .80 and estimated effect size ($f^2 = .1494253$). This overall sample size of 78 required a sample of 26 participants for each of the three strategy categories. In the event surveys were to be distributed, a review of previous studies was conducted to determine an anticipated response rate in order to obtain this sample size. Distributed surveys ranged from 400 to 639, which resulted in useable responses ranging from 256 to 472 (Al Issa, 2021; Bendell et al., 2019; Goldsby et al., 2021a). In order to obtain the target overall sample size of 78, a minimum of 112 surveys would need to be distributed, assuming a response rate of 70%, which is less than the average response rate of the aforementioned previous studies. However, recruiting participants via SurveyCircle and on a social media

platform allows the survey to be posted for all members to view. Therefore, surveys were not distributed to individual participants.

Study Procedures

The study began after IRB approval was received. A request to join the LinkedIn group, Survey Exchange, was submitted and approved. An account was created on the SurveyCircle platform, and the survey questionnaire was posted for participants to view via both resources. Within a provided link, information included an explanation of the study, participant qualifications, and the questionnaire (see Appendix F). Upon obtaining informed consent on the first page of the survey and verification of participant qualification, data were collected via survey questionnaires including the two primary measurement instruments. Additional demographic data were collected, including age, gender, level of education, years in business, and industry (see Appendix B). The questionnaire was developed in Qualtrics and completed online by participants. The link to complete the survey questionnaire was scheduled to be live for 15 business days; however, this time was extended to obtain the target number of participants. The total timeframe for surveys to be completed consisted of 47 calendar days. Completed responses were collected electronically and screened for completion. Incomplete surveys were not included in data analysis, as they might have negatively affected the quality of the study.

Instrumentation and Measurement

Self-leadership

Self-leadership was measured with the Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (RSLQ) developed by Houghton and Neck (2002; see Appendix C). The RSLQ has been

widely used in self-leadership research and is supported by strong reliability and validity (Houghton & Neck, 2002; Mayfield et al., 2017). The questionnaire consisted of three dimensions totaling 42 items encompassing the three strategies of self-leadership. The dimension of behavior-focused strategies consisted of six sub-scales totaling 18 items. These sub-scales included self-observation, cueing strategies, self-goal-setting, self-reward, self-punishment, and practice. The dimension of constructive thought pattern strategies consisted of three sub-scales totaling nine items. These sub-scales included evaluating beliefs and assumptions, self-talk, and mental practice. Finally, the dimension of natural reward strategies consisted of five sub-scales totaling 15 items. These sub-scales included distinguishing natural rewards, choosing pleasant surroundings, building naturally rewarding activities into one's work, focusing on the pleasant aspects in one's work, and focusing on natural rewards rather than external rewards. Reliability values range from .73 to .93 for each of the sub-scales (Houghton & Neck, 2002). Example items include, from behavior-focused strategies, "I like to work toward specific goals I set for myself," from constructive thought pattern strategies, "I visualize myself successfully performing a task before I do it," and from natural reward strategies, "When I can, I do my work in surroundings that I like." Participants responded to each item on a five-point Likert-style scale from 1 (does not describe me at all) to 5 (describes me very well).

Entrepreneur Success

Entrepreneur success was measured with the scale developed by Chang and Chen (2020), which covers three subjective dimensions of entrepreneur success (see Appendix D). These included financial satisfaction, perceived career achievement, and

entrepreneurial happiness (job satisfaction). Prior studies have utilized similar scales in the context of entrepreneurs (Chen et al., 2017; Lau et al., 2007; Salisu et al., 2017). Example items include, from financial satisfaction, "I am satisfied with my current individual income," from perceived career achievement, "I have fulfilled some of my goals from my career as an entrepreneur or business leader," and from entrepreneurial happiness, "I am satisfied with the combination of work and life in my professional role." Participants responded to each item on a five-point Likert-style scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Prior measures of reliability and internal consistency resulted in values of .90 for financial satisfaction, .90 for perceived career achievement, and .81 for entrepreneurial happiness (Chang & Chen, 2020).

Operationalization of Variables

Behavior-focused self-leadership strategies – this variable is an ordinal variable and will be measured by an 18-item sub-score on the Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (RSLQ; Houghton and Neck, 2002).

Constructive thought pattern self-leadership strategies – this variable is an ordinal variable and will be measured by a 12-item sub-score on the Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (RSLQ; Houghton and Neck, 2002).

Natural reward self-leadership strategies – this variable is an ordinal variable and will be measured by a five-item sub-score on the Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (RSLQ; Houghton and Neck, 2002).

Entrepreneur Success – this variable is an ordinal variable that will be measured by the scale developed by Chang and Chen (2020), which includes three subjective measures of

entrepreneur success – financial satisfaction, career achievement, and entrepreneurial happiness.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this quantitative survey design is correlational in nature. Therefore, the Spearman rank correlation was explored to identify significant relationships among the variables. According to Martin and Bridgmon (2012), another appropriate statistical approach for this type of design includes bivariate and multivariate correlations using sequential multiple linear regression; however, a Spearman correlation is often preferred when analyzing results as ordinal data. Each of the predictor variables, the three categories of self-leadership strategies, were assessed individually for their predictive effect on the outcome variable, entrepreneur success. Additionally, the combination of self-leadership strategies was assessed for overall predictive effect on entrepreneur success. Upon receipt of all completed survey questionnaires, the collected data were entered into SPSS for analysis. Prior to testing the hypotheses, each variable was individually assessed for univariate outliers. Combinations of scores were assessed for multivariate outliers. A Spearman rank-order correlation analysis was then conducted. Tests of normality were not necessary due to the nonparametric nature of the Spearman rho. The results were then analyzed to determine relationships among the variables and to test each of the stated hypotheses. Upon analyzing the significance values of the predictor variables, a determination was made as to whether each hypothesis was confirmed. Finally, the relationship determined to be the strongest was then explored at a deeper

level to understand which self-leadership strategy subscales had the most significant impact on the identified relationship.

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations

Delimitations included the focus on participants in an entrepreneurial or business leadership role, having at least three years of experience in that role, and being in that role at the time of survey completion. Prior research with entrepreneurs has set similar boundaries, ranging from 2-6 years of experience, due to the nature of risk involved in new business ventures and the typical sustainability of entrepreneurial motivation and persistence (Al Issa, 2021; Bendell et al., 2019; Su et al., 2020). Participants not in an entrepreneurial or business leadership role at the time of survey completion were not included in the results as these individuals may have been more likely to express a negative perspective of success in the event their business venture failed. The subjective measure of entrepreneur success essentially asked participants to rate their perception of several success criteria, and those no longer in an entrepreneurial role are thought to have not succeeded. Therefore, their responses to the measure of entrepreneur success would not be applicable.

This study sought to measure perceptions of entrepreneur success and possible effects that self-leadership strategies have on those perceptions. The primary assumption in this study was that respondents to the survey questionnaires were answering the items honestly in regard to their experience as entrepreneurs and business leaders. Previous entrepreneur research has sought to measure emotions and psychological states (Goldsby et al., 2021a; Su et al., 2020). It is assumed that study participants accurately interpreted

their own perceptions as they relate to measuring aspects of success that are most important to them.

Recruiting participants online presents a limitation with regard to what is known of the population. Specifically, an accurate description of the population is limited based on a lack of information obtainable from the participant population. However, possible relationships between these variables have not previously been researched, and an initial study often begins with several limitations before making adjustments in methodology in future research. Additionally, this study is cross-sectional by design. This is unavoidable due to the time constraints of a dissertation, and a more longitudinal design may be warranted for future research. Survey questionnaires also carry an unavoidable risk associated with honesty in responses. While this limitation cannot be avoided, it is still necessary to note. Finally, entrepreneurs represent a unique population, and success factors often come from sources outside of an internal mindset (Fath et al., 2021). This presents a possible limitation in that entrepreneur success is often heavily influenced by social relationships and competition.

Summary

This study sought to identify possible predictive relationships between self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success, as measured by subjective criteria. The most appropriate design for this research was determined to be a quantitative survey questionnaire, which is based on several factors. Prior research has yet to test for possible relationships between these variables, and a survey design can provide enough evidence for future studies to explore these constructs at a deeper level. Moreover, entrepreneurs often define their level of success in a variety of ways, justifying the need for subjective

measures of entrepreneur success (Al Issa, 2021; Goldsby et al., 2021b). This chapter operationally defined the variables being studied, presented the design strategy, and addressed limitations and assumptions associated with the approach. The following section details the results and analysis of the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Overview

The purpose of this research was to explore relationships between self-leadership strategies and subjective measures of success in entrepreneurs. The research questions guiding the study include the following:

RQ1: What effect do self-leadership strategies have on entrepreneur success?

RQ 2: Which self-leadership strategies are most likely to predict success in entrepreneurs?

Data were collected through members of the LinkedIn group, Survey Exchange, as well as SurveyCircle, and online research community. A link to the survey questionnaire was posted on these online networks to recruit interested participants meeting the qualification criteria. The following section describes the results of the data collection process, the analysis of that data, and tables relating to the statistical analysis.

Descriptive Results

Spearman rank correlations were used to identify potential relationships between 1. Behavior-focused self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success, 2. Constructive thought pattern self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success, and 3. Natural reward self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success. A total of 105 surveys were submitted, and 25 of these were excluded due to incomplete responses, leaving a total of 80 useable survey responses, or 76.2% of the total number received. The total number of participants necessary to achieve the desired statistical power was 78; therefore, the total of 80 exceeded this target. Demographic data collected included gender, age, level of education, years in an entrepreneurial role, and industry of experience. Sixty five percent

of participants were female (Table 2), half of participants indicated they were in the youngest age bracket of 18 to 26 years (Table 3), and a majority (53.8%) of participants completed a graduate degree (Table 4). Additionally, more than 81% indicated they had between three and five years of entrepreneurial experience (Table 5), and the industries represented in this sample were relatively evenly distributed (Table 6).

Table 2

Frequency of Gender Identification

With what gender do you identify?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	27	33.8	33.8	33.8
	Female	52	65.0	65.0	98.8
	Prefer not to say	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 3

Frequency of Age Range

What is your current age?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-26 years	40	50.0	50.0	50.0
	27-39 years	19	23.8	23.8	73.8
	40-54 years	18	22.5	22.5	96.3
	55 years or older	3	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 4

Frequency of Education Level Completed

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Some high school, no diploma	1	1.3	1.3	1.3
	High school	5	6.3	6.3	7.5
	Some college, no degree	5	6.3	6.3	13.8
	Undergraduate degree	24	30.0	30.0	43.8
	Graduate degree	43	53.8	53.8	97.5
	Other	2	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 5

Frequency of Years in an Entrepreneurial Role

How many years have you been in an entrepreneurial or business leadership role?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3-5 years	65	81.3	81.3	81.3
	6 years or more	15	18.8	18.8	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 6

Frequency of Current Industry

Which category best describes your current industry? - Selected Choice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Technology	15	18.8	18.8	18.8
	Sales	11	13.8	13.8	32.5
	Professional services	14	17.5	17.5	50.0
	Retail	13	16.3	16.3	66.3
	Manufacturing	4	5.0	5.0	71.3
	Healthcare	9	11.3	11.3	82.5

	Other	14	17.5	17.5	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Study Findings

RQ1: What effect do self-leadership strategies have on entrepreneur success?

The first of two research questions asked about the effect self-leadership strategies have on entrepreneur success. In answering this question, data were analyzed from three perspectives. First, the relationship between behavior-focused strategies was explored in relation to entrepreneur success. Using a significance level of 0.05, the resulting value of 0.017 represents a statistically significant relationship between behavior-focused self-leadership strategies and subjective measures of entrepreneur success (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Correlation Between Behavior-Focused Strategies and Entrepreneur Success

Correlations

			BehaviorFocusedScore	SuccessScore
Spearman's rho	BehaviorFocusedScore	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.266*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.017
		N	80	80
	SuccessScore	Correlation Coefficient	.266*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.
		N	80	80

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Next, the relationship between natural reward strategies was explored in relation to entrepreneur success. Using a significance level of 0.01, the resulting value of less than 0.001 represents a statistically significant relationship between natural reward self-leadership strategies and subjective measures of entrepreneur success (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Correlation Between Natural Reward Strategies and Entrepreneur Success

Correlations

			NaturalRewardScore	SuccessScore
Spearman's rho	NaturalRewardScore	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.400**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001
		N	80	80
	SuccessScore	Correlation Coefficient	.400**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.
		N	80	80

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Finally, the relationship between constructive thought pattern strategies was explored in relation to entrepreneur success. Using a significance level of 0.05, the resulting value of 0.042 represents a statistically significant relationship between constructive thought pattern self-leadership strategies and subjective measures of entrepreneur success (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Correlation Between Constructive Thought Pattern Strategies and Entrepreneur Success

Correlations

			ConstructiveThoughtScore	SuccessScore
Spearman's rho	ConstructiveThoughtScore	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.228*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.042
		N	80	80
	SuccessScore	Correlation Coefficient	.228*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	.
		N	80	80

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

RQ 2: Which self-leadership strategies are most likely to predict success in entrepreneurs?

The second research question sought to understand which of the three categories of self-leadership strategies would be most likely to predict success in entrepreneurs. To answer this question, the three resulting significance values were compared to identify which strategy category had the strongest relationship with entrepreneur success. Natural reward self-leadership strategies were found to have the strongest relationship with subjective measures of entrepreneur success (Figure 2).

To explore this relationship at a deeper level, each of the individual subscores within the natural reward strategy category were analyzed in relation to entrepreneur success. Results indicated the strongest relationships were in 1. Focusing on the pleasant aspects in one's work (Figure 4), and 2. Focusing on natural rewards rather than external rewards (Figure 5).

Figure 4

Correlation Between Natural Rewards Subscore (Focusing on Pleasant Aspects in One's Work) and Entrepreneur Success

Correlations

			PleasantAspectsScore	SuccessScore
Spearman's rho	PleasantAspectsScore	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.422**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001
		N	80	80
	SuccessScore	Correlation Coefficient	.422**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.
		N	80	80

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 5

Correlation Between Natural Rewards Subscore (Focusing on Natural Rewards Rather than External Rewards) and Entrepreneur Success

Correlations

			FocusNatRewScore	SuccessScore
Spearman's rho	FocusNatRewScore	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.492**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001
		N	80	80
	SuccessScore	Correlation Coefficient	.492**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.
		N	80	80

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Summary

In conclusion, Spearman rank correlations were used to identify potential relationships between 1. Behavior-focused self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success, 2. Natural reward self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success, and 3. Constructive thought pattern self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success. Statistically significant relationships were identified between each of the three self-leadership strategy categories and entrepreneur success. The strongest relationship identified was that between natural reward strategies and entrepreneur success, and within that category, two subscales were identified holding the strongest weight regarding the correlation. A discussion of these findings follows, with special attention to implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore relationships between self-leadership strategies and subjective measures of success in entrepreneurs. The three self-leadership strategy categories explored were behavior-focused strategies, natural reward strategies, and constructive thought pattern strategies. This chapter reviews a summary of the research findings and includes a discussion of results, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

The research questions asked about possible relationships between the variables and, if a positive correlation was identified, which of the three self-leadership strategies would have the strongest relationship with entrepreneur success. After the data were analyzed, results reflected significant positive relationships between each of the three strategy categories and entrepreneur success. Moreover, the results reflect the strongest relationship between natural reward strategies and entrepreneur success. A discussion of these findings follows.

Discussion of Findings

The research findings supported the first hypothesis that there would be a statistically significant relationship between behavior-focused self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success. This relationship was found to be positive. The second hypothesis was that a statistically significant relationship would exist between constructive thought pattern strategies and entrepreneur success. The results supported this hypothesis, as well, and the relationship was found to be positive. Results also

supported the third hypothesis, which stated a statistically significant relationship would exist between natural reward strategies and entrepreneur success. This relationship was also found to be positive. Finally, the research findings did not support the fourth and final hypothesis that the strongest relationship would be between constructive thought pattern strategies and entrepreneur success. Instead, the findings indicated the strongest relationship to be between natural reward strategies and entrepreneur success. Overall, the research findings support what D'Intino et al. (2007) suggested, or that self-leadership strategies have the potential to help entrepreneurs achieve success. Previous studies have identified individual performance, a key component of entrepreneur success, to relate positively with the use of self-leadership strategies (Frayne & Geringer, 2000; Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019). This study's findings provide another perspective or dimension to the understanding of contributing factors to entrepreneur success. Specifically, those harnessing the power of self-leadership are more likely to perform better and achieve their entrepreneurial goals than those not engaging in the strategies.

The results indicated the strongest relationship between natural reward strategies and entrepreneur success. Within this category of self-leadership strategies, the two most significant sub-categories included focusing on the pleasant aspects in one's work and focusing on natural rewards as opposed to external or extrinsic rewards. Goldsby et al. (2021a), in their research on psychological states, highlighted commonly encountered situations of high stress and job security concerns for those working to build their brand or business. The results of this study shed light on strategies to potentially remedy the negative side of those psychological states, increasing the likelihood of success.

Neck and colleagues (2020) posited that intentional practice can help individuals improve the use of self-leadership strategies. Previous studies have supported the effectiveness of training programs and similar intervention techniques in improving self-leadership strategies (Stewart et al., 1996; Stewart et al., 2019). The present research findings provide supportive evidence in the application of interventions intended to improve self-leadership strategies as a means to positively impact goal attainment. Several perspectives help to emphasize the potential advantages of improving self-leadership strategies, beginning with a consideration of key outcomes.

Key outcomes of self-leadership strategies identified in the literature review include performance and job satisfaction (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019). In their experimental study, Marques-Quinteiro and colleagues found a self-leadership training program to be effective in improving these outcomes. The findings in this research further stress the potential benefit to training self-leadership strategies for those in key company roles. Indeed, intervention programs designed to improve the use of self-leadership strategies would be likely to reflect positive changes in individual performance and job satisfaction among entrepreneurs and high-level business executives, further increasing their chances of success.

In the Cristofaro and Giardino (2020) study, those with higher core self-evaluations were more likely to engage in self-leadership strategies. Based on the findings of positive correlations between self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success, it is logical to assume those with higher core self-evaluations would be more likely to experience success than those with poor core self-evaluations. This could lead to alternative assessment options for selecting those for high-level positions, and it could

also lead to future research exploring more meaningful relationships between these three variables.

Entrepreneurs and high-level business leaders are often required to utilize a variety of leadership skills and approaches based on the varying needs of those under their care. Bracht et al. (2018) used the term *self-leadership-culture* to refer to the way leaders relate to their followers and to the organization they represent. This dimension of self-leadership, termed *intrapreneurial*, refers to goals related to the organization as opposed to those solely focused on the individual. The results of the present study provide evidence of a stronger likelihood of goal attainment when self-leadership strategies are being utilized. Taken together, this suggests that those engaging in self-leadership strategies would be more likely to benefit not only the individual and their self-defined goals, but also the organization and followers assigned to that individual.

Contribution to the Theory of Self-leadership

Self-leadership theory refers to a process of self-influence, or "leading oneself toward performance of naturally motivating tasks as well as managing oneself to do work that must be done but is not naturally motivating" (Manz, 1983, p. 589). Entrepreneurs often lack the influence and command of a direct supervisor, stressing the importance of self-leadership strategies to help them achieve their professional goals. This research contributes to that understanding by supporting the idea that self-leadership strategies relate positively to success in entrepreneurs. Indeed, entrepreneurs often measure their success in a variety of ways (Al Issa, 2021; Goldsby et al., 2021b), and the results of this research reflect a positive correlation between the variables based on several different criteria for entrepreneur success. Specifically, whether success is measured by

perceptions of financial performance, career achievement, or professional happiness, the results show entrepreneurs may be more likely to attain those targets when engaging in some form of self-leadership strategies.

The identification of statistically significant correlations between variables presents an important contribution to what is presently known about self-leadership strategies. However, these findings also represent possible pathways for future researchers to explore new perspectives of self-leadership. For example, researchers have previously found that self-regulation skills in leaders can help them maintain effective leadership approaches (Carleton et al., 2018; Walsh & Arnold, 2018). The results of the present study stress a potential need to explore ways in which self-regulation skills relate to self-leadership strategies. It may be likely, then, that self-leadership strategies have a positive effect on maintaining effective leadership approaches, as the variables all present some degree of overlap in the way they are defined.

Biblical Perspective

Multiple areas of Scripture refer to the concept of examining oneself in an effort to improve self-control or some other area of one's faith (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, 2 Corinthians 13:5; Philippians 4:8). These research findings offer potential strategies for strengthening those efforts. Solomon, in Proverbs 25:28, suggests the importance of self-control, and the utilization of natural reward self-leadership strategies contain the potential to assist one in this pursuit. Specifically, focusing on natural rewards rather than external rewards can be a powerful tool in the development of self-control. Even in the realm of setting individual goals related to growing in faith, self-leadership strategies can provide an effective tool in the development of new and desirable habits.

The story of Job was previously referenced in the biblical foundations of this study, and it was suggested that Job's self-control and perseverance attributed to his ability to see beyond his immediate circumstances. The results of this study support this suggestion, providing evidence of sound self-leadership strategies, specifically constructive thought pattern strategies, in the pursuit of goal attainment. Indeed, simply applying such strategies clearly contribute to the health of thoughts and perspectives formed in relation to one's immediate environment. Had "the greatest man among all the people of the East" not been equipped with the degree of self-leadership he was, one could argue that he would not have survived the losses that were incurred when being tempted (Job 1:3). Perhaps this is why God allowed for Job to be tempted by Satan – the Lord knew the heart and mind of Job, and Job's constructive thought patterns kept him from cursing his God.

Implications

Implications of the research findings include several perspectives. From that of an entrepreneur, arguably the most important perspective, an understanding of the positive, significant relationship between natural reward strategies and entrepreneur success can guide self-development efforts to help improve the likelihood of success. Indeed, all three of the self-leadership strategy categories were found to relate positively to entrepreneur success; however, natural reward strategies were found to be most strongly related. Entrepreneurs may also work with consultants or professional coaches to enhance their focus. These results hold positive implications in tailoring specific intervention strategies for coaches and consultants to be more effective in helping entrepreneurs improve their chances of success. Finally, investors providing the financial support for new ventures

can inquire of self-leadership strategies before making decisions about backing entrepreneurs. Research supporting a positive relationship between the use of self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success could guide investors to better investment decisions.

Limitations

The primary limitation to this study is its cross-sectional nature, and the positive relationships that were identified do not necessarily indicate a causal relationship. The use of self-leadership strategies cannot definitively predict entrepreneur success, based on the methodology used. However, prior research exploring possible relationships between these variables was not found during the literature review, and initial studies exploring possible relationships often consist of a cross-sectional approach before going deeper into a more longitudinal design. Therefore, the approach used was most appropriate in the search for a correlation between variables.

A second limitation relates to the similarity among the variables of interest. Al Issa (2021) noted the degree of self-influence and determination that often accompany entrepreneurial work, presenting some possible overlap between self-leadership strategies and the typical nature of work for those in an entrepreneurial or business leadership role. This must be considered, however, alongside the realization that not all entrepreneurs accomplish the targets they set for themselves or their business, which could lead to a lack of perceived success. It is still important, then, to explore and understand relationships between these variables.

Finally, a third limitation to this study relates to the applied methodology. Sourcing participant candidates from online research groups and social media platforms

presents unavoidable obstacles in truly grasping an accurate description of the population being studied. Furthermore, participants in online research groups may only be motivated to complete the questionnaire because doing so elevates their own research survey on the platform. This presents an opportunity for participants to rush through the questionnaire, not giving the care and attention this researcher attended participants to have. However, the results of this study still reflect a better understanding of why some entrepreneurs and business leaders are more or less likely to achieve their goals.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future researchers should seek to reduce or eliminate the limitations considered in this study, based on an ultimate goal of furthering what is known about how these variables relate to each other. For example, future research should design a more longitudinal methodology to address the limitation of the cross-sectional research design, building confidence toward drawing causal inferences. While this approach was not feasible based on an initial exploration of possible relationships and the time constraints of the dissertation process, future research could allow more time for various designs intended to better understand predictive relationships.

A second recommendation relates to the research findings on the strongest self-leadership strategy relationship. Specifically, natural rewards strategies can be explored at a deeper level in relation to entrepreneur success. Moreover, experimental designs could provide a means of measuring possible effects of intervention programs intended to build or develop natural reward strategies. Pre- and post-test methodological strategies could help develop a better understanding of possible predictive relationships between natural reward self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success.

Finally, future research could explore additional criteria for entrepreneur success. While this study sought to measure financial satisfaction, career achievement, and entrepreneurial happiness as perceptions from the participants, future research could develop a means of considering actual performance based on peer feedback, financial report data, or other forms of verifiable information. Additionally, criteria such as work-life balance, autonomy, and perceived reputation could be explored as alternative or additional criteria for subjective measures of entrepreneur success.

Summary

Self-leadership, or the process of influencing oneself through behavioral and cognitive strategies to improve personal effectiveness, consists of three distinct strategy categories (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Behavior-focused strategies, natural reward strategies, and constructive thought pattern strategies were explored in this study for their relation to entrepreneur success, as measured by a variety of subjective criteria. Utilizing the Spearman rank correlation approach to data analysis, a total of 80 completed survey questionnaires were analyzed for possible relationships. The results of this quantitative survey study found a significant and positive relationship between 1. Behavior-focused self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success, 2. Natural reward self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success, and 3. Constructive thought pattern self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success. The strongest relationship identified was the correlation between natural reward strategies and entrepreneur success.

A biblical perspective was explored, as well as implications and contributions to the field of self-leadership and entrepreneurship. Limitations and recommendations for future research were explained in an effort to guide future researchers and further what is

known about self-leadership and its potential impact on the numerous ways entrepreneurs and business leaders define success.

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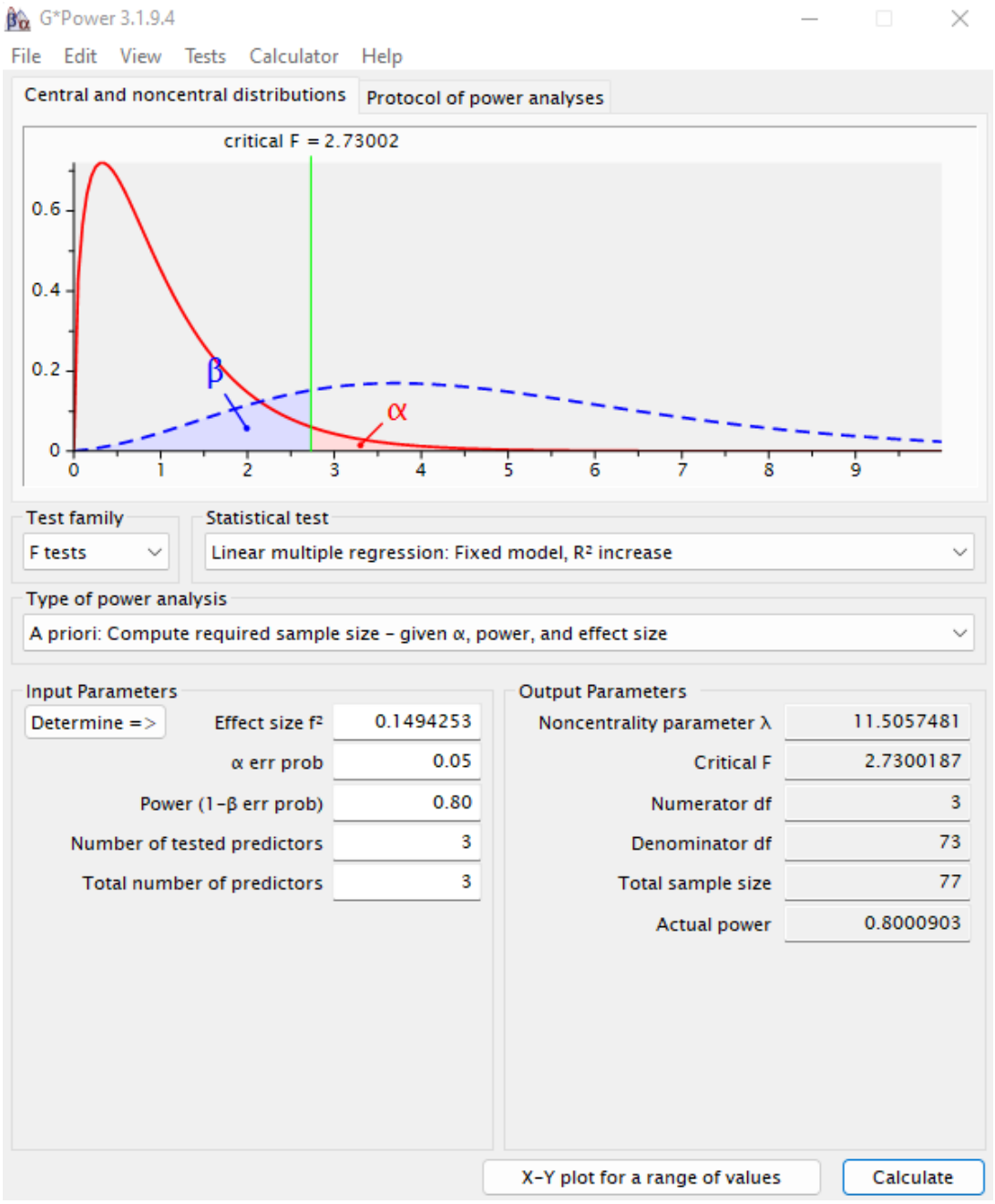
APPENDIX A: G*Power Test for Sample Size



APPENDIX B: Demographic Survey

1. What is your current age?
    a. 18-26 years
    b. 27-39 years
    c. 40-54 years
    d. 55 years or older
    e. Prefer not to say

2. With which gender do you identify?
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Non-binary / third gender
    d. Prefer not to say

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
    a. Some high school, no diploma
    b. High school
    c. Some college, no degree
    d. Undergraduate degree
    e. Graduate degree
    f. Other

4. How many years have you been in an entrepreneurial or business leadership role?
    a. 3-5 years
    b. 6 years or more

5. Are you currently in an entrepreneurial or business leadership role?
    a. Yes
    b. No

6. Which category best describes your current industry?
    a. Technology
    b. Sales
    c. Professional services
    d. Retail
    e. Manufacturing
    f. Healthcare
    g. Other

APPENDIX C: Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS: Select the option corresponding to the description that best reflects your position regarding each statement.

1: Does not describe me at all 2: Does not describe me very well 3: Describes me somewhat 4: Describes me well 5: Describes me very well

Behavior-focused Strategies

1. I try to keep track of how well I'm doing while I work.
2. I often use reminders to help me remembers things I need to do.
3. I like to work toward specific goals I set for myself.
4. After I perform well on an activity, I feel good about myself.
5. I tend to get down on myself when I have performed poorly.
6. I often practice important tasks before I actually do them.
7. I usually am aware of how I am performing on an activity.
8. I try to arrange my work area in a way that helps me positively focus my attention on my work.
9. I establish personal goals for myself.
10. When I have completed a task successfully, I often reward myself with something I like.
11. I tend to be tough on myself when I have not done well on a task.
12. I like to go over an important activity before I actually perform it.
13. I keep track of my progress on projects I'm working on.
14. I try to surround myself with objects and people that bring out my desirable behaviors.
15. I like to set task goals for my performance.
16. When I do an assignment well, I like to treat myself to something or an activity I enjoy.
17. I am often critical of myself concerning my failures.
18. I often rehearse my plan for dealing with a challenge before I actually face the challenge.

Natural Reward Strategies

19. I try to be aware of what activities in my work I especially enjoy.
20. When I have a choice, I try to do my work in places (e.g., a comfortable room, outdoors) that I like.
21. I seek out activities in my work that I enjoy doing.
22. I spend more time thinking about the good things than about the drawbacks of my job.
23. I pay more attention to enjoyment of my work itself than to the rewards I will receive for doing it.
24. I know the parts of my job that I really like doing.
25. I try to arrange to do my work in pleasant surroundings when possible.
26. When I have a choice, I try to do my work in ways that I enjoy rather than just trying to get it over with.

27. While I work, I think less about things I don't like about my job than about things I like.
28. My thinking focuses more on the things I like about actually doing my work than on benefits I expect to receive.
29. I can name the things I do in my job that I really enjoy.
30. When I can, I do my work in surroundings that I like.
31. I try to build activities into my work that I like doing.
32. I focus my thinking on the pleasant rather than the unpleasant feelings I have about my job.
33. I think less about the rewards I expect to receive for doing my job than about the enjoyment of actually doing it.

Constructive Thought Pattern Strategies
34. I think about my own beliefs and assumptions whenever I encounter a difficult situation.
35. Sometimes I find I'm talking to myself (out loud or in my head) to help myself deal with difficult problems I face.
36. I visualize myself successfully performing a task before I do it.
37. I try to mentally evaluate the accuracy of my own beliefs about situations I am having problems with.
38. Sometimes I talk to myself (out loud or in my head) to work through difficult situations.
39. Sometimes I picture in my mind a successful performance before I actually do a task.
40. I openly articulate and evaluate my own assumptions when I have a disagreement with someone else.
41. When I'm in a difficult situation I will sometimes talk to myself (out loud or in my head) to help myself get through it.
42. I often mentally rehearse the way I plan to deal with a challenge before I actually face the challenge.

APPENDIX D: Entrepreneur Success Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS: Select the option corresponding to the description that best reflects your position regarding each statement.

1: Does not describe me at all 2: Does not describe me very well 3: Describes me somewhat 4: Describes me well 5: Describes me very well

Financial Satisfaction
1. I am satisfied with the current financial situation of my business.
2. I am satisfied with my current individual income.
3. I am satisfied with the overall performance of my business.

Career Achievement
1. I have fulfilled some of my goals from my career as an entrepreneur or business leader.
2. I have made some of my dreams come true from my career as an entrepreneur or business leader.
3. I have a sense of achievement from my career as an entrepreneur or business leader.

Entrepreneurial Happiness
1. I am satisfied with the happiness I feel in my professional role.
2. I am satisfied with the remaining leisure time I still have in my professional role.
3. I am satisfied with the combination of work and life in my professional role.

APPENDIX E: Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study exploring possible relationships between self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success. This study is being conducted by James Kalp, a PhD candidate at Liberty University.

Qualifications to participate in this study include: (1) Currently in an entrepreneurial or business leadership role, and (2) having a minimum of three years of experience in an entrepreneurial or business leadership role.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey consisting of no more than 50 items.

Participation in this study may not benefit you directly, but it will provide information relating to possible predictive relationships between self-leadership strategies and entrepreneur success.

The information you share if you participate in this study will be kept completely confidential to the fullest extent possible.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact James Kalp via email.

By completing this survey, you are consenting to participate in this study.