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The Transferable Skills of YouTubers and How They May Benefit Aspiring Entrepreneurs

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THE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS OF YOUTUBERS AND
HOW THEY MAY BENEFIT ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS

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Abstract

Starting a company and starting a YouTube channel both require that one “wear all the hats” in order to create something out of nothing. This study seeks to determine whether the two ventures develop similar underlying transferable skills in an attempt to investigate if starting a YouTube channel could be a low-risk way for an aspiring entrepreneur to develop the skills needed when starting a company. 160 entrepreneurs and 20 YouTubers were surveyed using convenience sampling to conduct a between-subjects study in an attempt to answer the research question. No evidence was found indicating that the two ventures develop the same transferable skills. Due to various limitations in this study, the results should be interpreted with caution and future studies should be conducted in order to find more reliable results.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, YouTube, transferable skills
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The Transferable Skills of YouTubers and How They May Benefit Aspiring Entrepreneurs

Introduction

Students seeking higher management positions in the future typically go on to get a Master’s in Business Administration, just as aspiring doctors go on to medical school, and aspiring lawyers go on to law school. But what about aspiring entrepreneurs? As only half (50.8%) of U.S. business owners reported having a college degree in 2007 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016), some argue that a formal education is unnecessary to succeed in this career path, while other studies have proven it to be effective (Matsuda & Matsuo, 2017). In the words of founder of the Virgin Group, Richard Branson (2014), who never graduated high school, “You don't learn to walk by following rules. You learn by doing, and by falling over.” For this reason, many prefer to simply dive right in and get hands-on experience starting a business venture, believing that the best way to learn how to start a company is to actually do it. But, there is one important obstacle that can stop an aspiring entrepreneur in their tracks: risk. Starting a company with little to no experience can often lead to failure, so if an aspiring entrepreneur is set on doing so, it can be helpful to start with a low capital investment in order to avoid large financial losses (Read, 2017).

Other aspiring entrepreneurs may opt to get further preparation in the form of pursuing a formal education (whether that be an undergraduate degree or an MBA) or through work experience by getting a job. Essentially, this means aspiring entrepreneurs are currently left with three main options: get a formal education, get a job, or go ahead and start a company. These paths are not mutually exclusive, and many may choose to pursue two or even all three of these
paths simultaneously. This paper explores the possibility of an underexplored fourth path to entrepreneurship: starting a channel on the popular video-sharing platform YouTube.

With the rise of popularity of YouTube as a source of entertainment also comes the opportunity to become a content creator. YouTube continues to see considerable year-over-year growth, both in terms of consumption and creation, with users watching over a billion hours of content a day and 50% and 40% more creators earning five and six figure incomes in 2018 than in 2017 (YouTube, 2019). Many of these so called “YouTubers” have successfully gone on to start their own companies, such as Chiara Ferragni, who started her blog, ‘The Blond Salad’ in 2009 and has since launched “a global brand that now sells everything from suitcases to stilettos and other high-fashion items” (Ashman et al., 2018). However, the chances of YouTube fame are quite low (Ashman et al., 2018), so it would be unrealistic to expect similar results for everyone who takes this path. Still, the fact that these YouTubers like Ferragni are able to start and maintain businesses may point to the possibility that starting a YouTube channel requires similar underlying skills as starting a company. While YouTube fame can be an added benefit for a small percentage of lucky YouTubers, the focus of this paper lies not in this extrinsic source of motivation, but rather from the intrinsic benefit of developing skills that could be useful when subsequently starting a company.

It could be argued that having transferable skills is vital in today’s job market because of the fact that younger generations are switching jobs and careers much more frequently than previous generations (Lyons et al., 2015; Barley et al., 2017). Additionally, and more relevant to this paper, Smith and Paton (2014) argue that entrepreneurship education should be more geared towards developing transferable skills because this “produces more consistent and sustainable results than policy led enterprise programme initiatives.”
In order for these skills to actually be transferable, however, there must be some similarity between the two processes. To justify the comparison of YouTubing and entrepreneurship, starting a YouTube channel is structurally similar to starting a company because of the fact that one must create something out of nothing and then “wear all the hats” to keep it up and running. In the case of starting a company, one effectively serves as the CEO, CFO, COO, designer, marketer, salesman, and every other possible position. When creating a YouTube channel, one effectively serves as the director, producer, cameraman, actor, editor, marketer, and every other possible position. Peter Kelly (2013) even refers to YouTubing as an “entrepreneurial DIY project,” implying that YouTubing can be considered a form of entrepreneurship in and of itself. This underlying structural similarity provides grounds for comparison of the two ventures.

Additionally, YouTubing is very flexible in nature so it can be done at the same time as the other aforementioned paths (namely, getting a formal education, getting a job, or starting a company) with relative ease. Therefore, if pursuing this path fosters similar skills as starting a company, it could be a valuable learning tool for an aspiring entrepreneur. This way, they may be more prepared when they do start a company, or further develop their entrepreneurial skills if they decide to pursue both paths simultaneously. In other words, starting a YouTube channel could serve as a low-risk simulation of entrepreneurship, due to its low cost and similarity to starting a company.

For the reasons mentioned above, it is reasonable to postulate that building a YouTube channel could potentially serve as a valuable learning experience for aspiring entrepreneurs by cultivating transferable skills that are important to have when starting a company. In order to determine the suitability of this presumption, this paper explores the following question: to what
extent do the skills developed by YouTubing and the skills developed by starting a company overlap? To do so, 160 entrepreneurs and 20 YouTubers were surveyed, answering two series of questions on 1-5 Likert Scales: the first being their reported level of each skill based on their natural ability, and the second being their reported development of each skill. Respondents were found by posting on the online community Reddit and by commenting on randomly selected recently uploaded YouTube videos. No statistically significant change in reported skill level was found in any skill for entrepreneurs nor YouTubers. Additionally, it could not be proven that the skills developed were similar between the two groups. Finally, possible reasons for these findings as well as suggestions for future attempts at replication of this study are discussed in the Discussion section.

**Literature Review**

This section will cover what was found in the literature relating to the key concepts of this paper in order to provide important background information. First, “entrepreneurship” and “YouTube” are defined and explored in depth, then the same is done for the term “transferable skills,” which is the guiding framework through which this study is conducted.

**Entrepreneurship**

One of the terms most frequently used in this paper is “entrepreneur,” so it is important that it be clearly defined from the beginning. The term was originally coined by economist Richard Cantillon in 1755, who proposes that the job of an entrepreneur is to make “decisions about obtaining and using…resources while consequently admitting the risk of enterprise”
(Cantillon, 1755). However, his definition does not specify that an entrepreneur must be one who starts a business, as many people tend to assume. Instead, an entrepreneur is more broadly a type of middleman (as *entre* in French means “between”) or an undertaker (as *entreprendre* in French means “to undertake”).

Modern definitions vary from simply being concerned with the creation of new firms (Lee and Peterson, 2000) to being more focused on the use of innovation to create value in response to perceived business opportunities (McDougall and Oviatt, 1997; Steven and Jarillo, 1990). According to Byers et al. (1997), the definition of entrepreneurship that is generally accepted by authors is that of Timmons (1994), which is “the process of creating or seizing an opportunity and pursuing it regardless of the resources currently controlled.” As “creating value” and “seizing opportunity” are rather abstract concepts, the most appropriate definition for the purposes of this study is the one proposed by Lee and Peterson (2000), meaning an entrepreneur is a person who creates a new firm. More specific guidelines as to what constitutes an entrepreneur are included in the Methods section. Further, the term “aspiring entrepreneur” simply refers to someone who plans to start a company at some point in the future.

Having transferable skills is another important element of entrepreneurship. Bat (2018) states that entrepreneurship implies that “personal skills are transferable from one work environment to another.” Additionally, as mentioned previously, Smith and Paton (2014) argue that entrepreneurship education should focus more on transferable skills than it currently does, because it “produces more consistent and sustainable results than policy led enterprise programme initiatives,” which tend to focus on “process-based teaching” as opposed to experiential learning and development of transferable skills.
YouTube

YouTube is a popular video-sharing website that was founded in February 2005 and now boasts over 400 hours of videos uploaded every minute (Brouwer, 2015). According to Ford (2014), “the site has, in recent years, been slowly transitioning into a fully-fledged network to rival the traditional providers of television entertainment.” While there are other websites that offer similar services, such as Vimeo and Dailymotion, YouTube was chosen as the focus due to the fact that its popularity means that there is more literature available about it than there is for the other sites.

According to the Oxford dictionary, the term “YouTuber” refers to “a person who uploads, produces, or appears in videos on the video-sharing website YouTube.” In this paper, the term “YouTuber” will refer to those individuals who may see YouTubing as “an entrepreneurial DIY project” (Kelly, 2013, p. 14), meaning that they are an individual or small group of individuals (not businesses) and that they upload videos consistently. However, this definition is too broad for this paper because it does not specify exactly how long the person has been creating videos, how many videos they have created, etc. These are important factors because this study aims to determine skillsets that are cultivated by the process of creating a YouTube channel, and these skillsets are likely cultivated over a longer period of time. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, a more objective and quantifiable definition is proposed in the Methods section.

Transferable Skills

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines transferable skills as “skills used in one job or career that can also be used in another.” While this definition is career-oriented, the term can
encompass a broader range of situations, as David Bridges (1993) defines them as “skills which can be deployed with little or no adaptation in a variety of social settings.” Transferable skills can be considered part of the broader concept of meta-competencies, which “are usually said to include learning, adapting, anticipating, and creating change” (Oxford, 2016). Klemp (1977, p.11) further explains meta-competence as the ability to “operate on our knowledge base and apply it to new life and work situations.”

It became apparent that there are myriad specific transferable skills, and to list all of the specific skills would go beyond the scope of this paper. However, Martin Yate, author of *Knock 'em Dead: The Ultimate Job Search Guide* (2017), proposes seven broader transferable skills which encompass nearly all of the specific ones. Namely, these are:

- Technical, which essentially means being able to competently use technology.
- Communication, which includes verbal and written communication, listening, and the ability to choose the most appropriate medium of communication.
- Critical thinking, which refers to the ability to “logically think through and clearly define a challenge and its desired solutions and then evaluate and implement the best solution for that challenge from all available options” (Yate, 2018), and includes data analysis and problem solving.
- Multitasking, which refers to organization, prioritization, and time management.
- Teamwork, which is the ability to work well with others despite differences in “responsibilities, backgrounds, objectives, and areas of expertise” (Yate, 2018).
- Creativity, which refers to seeing patterns and “connecting the dots” (Yate, 2018), and includes not only the ability to come up with ideas, but also the execution of them in order to create tangible results.
• Leadership, which requires that one be able to leverage the other skills in order to empower others to get the job done, as well as taking ownership of decisions but not necessarily taking credit for accomplishments.

Yate (2018) also notes that “all the transferable skills are interconnected — for example, good verbal skills require both listening and critical thinking skills to accurately process incoming information; these enable you to present your outgoing verbal messaging persuasively in light of the interests and sophistication of your audience so that it is understood and accepted.”

Additionally, it is important to note that some sources (WikiJob) consider qualities such as work ethic and commercial awareness (or the understanding of the environment in which one is operating) as transferable skills, when they are perhaps more appropriately considered meta-competencies because they relate to creating and anticipating change. While these are still very important, this paper focuses on transferable skills, so to include examples of other meta-competencies would go beyond its scope.

In conclusion, as the list of seven transferable skills proposed by Yate seems to best encompass all of the transferable skills and avoid including other meta-competencies, it will be the one used for this study.

**Methods**

*Design*

In order to answer the research question (to what extent do the skills developed by YouTubing and the skills developed by starting a company overlap?), two surveys were created: one for entrepreneurs, and one for YouTubers. First, all respondents were asked on a 1-5 scale how they would rate themselves on each of the seven transferable skills, based on their natural
ability. Then, respondents were asked to rate themselves on how much they feel starting a company or a YouTube channel has developed each of those skills. Asking about both their natural ability as well as how they feel the process has contributed allows for the possibility of showing the development of those skills; without the first set of questions, one could never be sure where the respondent started on the 1-5 scale before starting a company or YouTube channel. Lastly, each group was asked a series of demographic questions in order to better understand the data and find any patterns. See Appendix A for the survey guidelines that were considered when designing the survey, and Appendices B and C for the full surveys.

Materials

The survey service used was Qualtrics, which was accessed using Rollins College student credentials. The survey was administered by posting in various “subreddits” on the online community Reddit and by commenting on the most recent video of randomly selected YouTube channels found through the website Channel Crawler. Finally, data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and JMP Pro 14.

Procedure

A post was created in various subreddits asking Reddit users to take the survey. A consent statement was included at the beginning of the survey to confirm whether or not the participant agreed to participate in the study, and those who did not agree to participate were excluded from the analysis. After five days, data collection was stopped as very few additional responses were coming in, and data analysis was commenced. Responses that were incomplete and responses of people with less than one year of experience starting a company or YouTube
channel were excluded from the analysis because it is unlikely that they have spent enough time working on their company or channel to have developed these skills.

Participants

Respondents included entrepreneurs and YouTubers who are at least 18 years old and who started their company or channel at least one year ago. This requirement was included in order to ensure that respondents actually had enough experience with entrepreneurship or YouTubing to be able to have developed some skills as a result. Responses were gathered from the popular online community Reddit for two main reasons. First, it has various so-called “subreddits,” which are essentially groups of posts about specific topics, making it easier to identify entrepreneurs and YouTubers. In other words, the data were collected using a convenience sample, meaning that some level of bias was introduced, as the demographics of Reddit users are not representative of the demographics of the U.S. (Mitchell et al., 2016). A table comparing key demographics of Reddit users and the U.S. population as a whole is included in Appendix D. Secondly, as subreddits are typically open groups, Reddit is very easily accessible as opposed to many groups on other sites such as Facebook, which often require acceptance into the group based on various criteria. Posts were made asking for responses to the survey in the following subreddits: r/Entrepreneur, r/SmallBusiness, r/YouTubers, r/SmallYouTubers, and r/NewTubers. No incentive was offered for completing the survey.

Additionally, the website “Channel Crawler” (The YouTube Channel Crawler) was used to find YouTube channels to comment on, asking YouTubers to fill out the survey. Channel Crawler allows a user to search YouTube channels by criteria such as number of subscribers, total views, language, country, and more. The criteria used to find respondents for the survey
were that they must speak English, as the survey was written in English, and have at least 100 videos in order to have a significant amount of experience creating content. Then, search results were sorted by latest video (descending) in order to make sure they were still actively posting and to find those users who were most recently active and therefore more likely to see the comment and take the survey.

The survey for entrepreneurs yielded a total of 218 responses. Of those, one respondent did not select “Yes, I agree to participate,” 25 did not fully answer the survey, and 32 reported that they started their company less than one year ago, leaving 160 (n=160) valid responses from entrepreneurs. The average age was 33 (SD=9.71) and 71% of respondents were male, 28% female, and 1% reported “other.” Eighty-one percent of respondents were white, 7% were Asian, and the remaining 11% pertained to the remaining categories. About half (49%) reported having a bachelor’s degree, 21% had some college education but no degree, 12% had a master’s degree, 8% had an associate’s degree, 4% only graduated high school, 4% had a doctoral or professional degree, and 1% had less than a high school degree. 77% of respondents currently reside in the United States and the remaining 23% in other countries, particularly Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. In terms of experience, 26% of respondents started a company 1-2 years ago and 25% more than 10 years ago, representing a bimodal distribution with the majority of responses being on the extremes and fewer in the middle. This may be because entrepreneurs earlier in their journey are still excited about entrepreneurship and are more likely to participate in entrepreneurship-based activities such as surveys, and highly experienced entrepreneurs may feel as though they know enough about entrepreneurship to give valuable advice.

The survey for YouTubers yielded a total of 36 responses. Of those, 11 did not fully answer the survey and five reported that they started their company less than one year ago,
leaving 20 (n=20) valid responses from YouTubers. The average age was 32 (SD=11.77) with 25% being 18 years old, and 80% of respondents were male and 20% female. Sixty percent of respondents were white, 15% were Asian, 10% were Black or African American, and the remaining 15% pertained to the remaining categories. 25% of respondents reported having a bachelor’s degree, another 25% had some college education but no degree, 20% only graduated high school, another 20% had less than a high school degree, 5% had a master’s degree, 5% had an associate’s degree, and none had a professional or doctoral degree. 68% of respondents currently reside in the United States and the remaining 32% in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Mexico. In terms of experience, 35% started their channel 3-5 years ago, with the rest being distributed roughly evenly around that category, representing a unimodal distribution.

**Findings**

*Entrepreneurs*

Figure 1 below shows the average scores in terms of entrepreneur respondents’ natural ability as well as their perceived development for each of the seven skills. The error bars represent plus/minus one standard deviation, and, as seen in the graph, there were no statistically significant changes in reported skill levels for any skill. However, there were slight increases in reported levels of communication skills, multitasking skills, and leadership skills. There were slight decreases in reported levels of technical skills, critical thinking skills, teamwork, and creativity.
Figure 1: Bar graph of entrepreneurs’ reported levels of seven transferable skills in terms of natural ability and how they feel entrepreneurship has developed them.

YouTubers

Figure 2 below shows the average scores in terms of YouTuber respondents’ natural ability as well as their perceived development for each of the seven skills. The error bars represent plus/minus one standard deviation, and, as seen in the graph, there were no statistically significant changes in reported skill levels for any skill. However, there were slight increases in reported levels of communication skills and creativity. There were slight decreases in reported levels of technical skills, critical thinking skills, multitasking skills, teamwork, and leadership.
**Figure 2**: Bar graph of YouTubers’ reported levels of seven transferable skills in terms of natural ability and how they feel YouTubing has developed them.

*Similarity of Skills Developed*

The differences in levels of each skill in terms of natural ability and perceived development were calculated for both entrepreneurs and YouTubers. Figure 3 shows the differences in scores for both groups. The only skill developed by both entrepreneurship and YouTubing was communication. The greatest differences between entrepreneurship and YouTubing in terms of changes in skill level were for leadership (0.64) and multitasking skills (0.62). The most extreme changes in skills for entrepreneurs were a 0.45 decrease in technical skills and a 0.47 increase in multitasking skills. For YouTubers, the most extreme changes were
a 0.55 decrease in teamwork and a 0.45 decrease in leadership. However, as the standard
deviations for each skill ranged from 0.80 to 1.16, none of these changes are large enough to be
statistically significant.

![Figure 3: Changes in perceived skill levels for entrepreneurs and YouTubers](image)

**Discussion**

Overall, the skills of entrepreneurs and YouTubers were found to be somewhat similar, as
shown by Figures 1 and 2. However, no statistically significant evidence was found that
entrepreneurship and YouTubing develop similar skills. This was most likely due to some of the
limitations of the study.

**Limitations**
First, as neither “entrepreneurs” nor “YouTubers” are purely homogenous groups and have many different types, this study fails to acknowledge the differences between different types of entrepreneurs and YouTubers. For example, starting a technology company may better develop technical skills, while starting a consulting company may develop more communication skills. However, respondents were also asked about the industry in which their company operates or the type of YouTube channel they started, and no evidence was found that there were significant differences across industries. Further, there are slight differences within each particular skill. For example, having technical skills could mean being good at using Microsoft Office for entrepreneurs, but mean being able to use cameras and editing software for YouTubers, making it seem as though both groups developed the “same” skills, while in reality they are largely unrelated.

Additionally, even if the slight differences within each group and each skill were accounted for, this study focuses only on transferable skills and ignores other important factors in starting a company or YouTube channel. For example, personality traits, specific “hard” skills, and the meta-competencies mentioned in the Literature Review were not considered.

Furthermore, various methodological complications may have skewed the results. First, the majority of respondents were found by posting on Reddit, which does not have the same demographical makeup as the United States (see Appendix D), meaning the sample was not an accurate representation of the population. Along the same lines, there are many video-sharing platforms such as Vimeo or Dailymotion, but this study was limited to only YouTube, meaning a portion of the population of video content creators was not considered. Additionally, as not enough responses were found on Reddit for YouTubers, more responses were gathered by commenting on random recent videos, causing the samples for each group to have been collected
in different ways. Even then, only 20 valid responses were collected for YouTubers, meaning the small sample size may have weakened the integrity of the results. Further, as with many survey-based studies, results were self-reported, potentially leading to a degree of inaccuracy. Similarly, because the survey was optional, a level of non-response bias is introduced, as there may be underlying differences between responders and non-responders. Additionally, as the survey was anonymous and there was only one administration of it, it was not possible to test for this, as a group of non-respondents could not be identified.

Lastly, the wording of the survey questions may have caused misinterpretation, potentially skewing results. For example, a respondent who reported having high levels of a skill by selecting “5” on the first set of questions could have selected “1” on the second set of questions, meaning starting a company or YouTube channel was not at all effective in developing that skill, because they already had it. Conversely, the same respondent could have marked a “5” on the both sets of questions because they interpreted it as meaning that they were a “5” before and are still a “5” now. Further, as one respondent indicated in a comment on Reddit after taking the survey, some people may have thought they had high levels of certain skills, but after starting a company or YouTube channel, they realized just how much they “didn’t know they didn’t know,” causing them to actually report having lower levels of those skills. In other words, this survey is measuring perceived skill levels, which means that only their perception may have changed as a result of actually starting a company or YouTube channel, rather than their true skill level. Further, this means that the perception of certain skills may be affected more than others. These potential differences in interpretation could have caused the results to be inaccurate.
Implications

As no statistically significant evidence was found that entrepreneurship and YouTubing develop similar skills, YouTube may or may not be a valuable learning tool for aspiring entrepreneurs. However, by looking at specific skills in Figures 1-3, one can see which skills each path develops, and use that information to their advantage. For example, as seen in Figure 3, both entrepreneurship and YouTubing slightly develop communication skills, so one can hope that they will develop that skill by pursuing either path. Additionally, as YouTube was least effective in developing teamwork and leadership skills, an aspiring entrepreneur using YouTube as a learning tool can know that they should consider developing those skills by other means.

The final implication of this study, and perhaps the most important, is that sound research methods must be employed in order to potentially find meaningful results. This study may present more questions than answers, so future studies should learn from this one by employing more sound data collection methods and by carefully creating and testing surveys to ensure proper wording and more accurate results.

Suggestions for Proper Replication of This Study

As this study has many limitations that perhaps could have been avoided, this section details a better path for replicating this study. First, the term “YouTuber” could have been more clearly defined by using different metrics to better target the appropriate group. In this study, the only metric used was the amount of time since starting their first YouTube channel, which may not have provided a specific enough operational definition of the group. Other metrics that may be useful to consider could be number of subscribers, views, or hours of watch time. By setting minimum thresholds of these metrics, the respondents may be more likely to have developed
their skills, as they have proven that they are capable of creating strong content that generates views and subscribers. In other words, the experience curve may have more to do with how well they have done at consistently creating strong content rather than simply the amount of time since starting their channel.

Another important point to note is that some people may use entrepreneurship or YouTube as a hobby, while others pursue them full-time in the hopes of attaining profit. While it may be the case that their motivation does not have anything to do with the extent to which they develop their transferable skills, the two groups (namely, those who pursue either path as a hobby versus those who pursue it full-time) may differ, so it is important to distinguish between them. Therefore, a question should be included in the survey which aims to do this. For example, the question could be “How would you describe your motivations for starting a company/YouTube channel?” with responses such as “As a full-time venture,” “As a hobby,” or “Other (please specify).” Including this question would allow for a better breakdown of the results and find any potential differences between the groups based on their motivations. For example, it may be the case that only those who pursue either path as a full-time venture actually develop skills.

Further, the research question could have been more deeply analyzed by breaking it down into various hypotheses. For example, the first hypothesis could have tested for which skills are similar between entrepreneurs and YouTubers, using the proper methods to determine statistical significance based on a predetermined p-value. Then, based on the results, further hypotheses could have been made in order to determine why the results of the first test were the way they were. For example, if it was found that some reported skill levels actually decreased (which was
the case in this study), another hypothesis could have been created and tested to determine why that was.

Finally, a pilot test of the survey should be given to a smaller group of respondents in order to find any flaws in the survey before administering it to the entire pool of respondents. If the first administration of the survey had been a pilot and another was administered later, the results may have been more reliable. In this case, one alternative would have been to word the second question in such a way that it attempts to find the respondents’ perceived ability in each skill after having started a company or YouTube channel rather than the amount of improvement in terms of effectiveness, in order to have a “before and after” structure. Additionally, rather than grouping the questions into two groups based on before and after starting a company or YouTube channel, the groupings could have been such that both questions were asked for each skill before proceeding to the next (i.e. determine the perceived level of technical skills before and after starting a company or YouTube channel, then do the same for each skill). This structure may have made the purpose of the study clearer and allowed respondents to more accurately show their improvement in each skill as a result of starting a company or YouTube channel.

**Conclusion**

Entrepreneurship and YouTubing share an important structural similarity: “wearing all the hats” in order to create something out of nothing. This underlying structural similarity raised the thought that perhaps both ventures develop the same underlying transferable skills, leading to the research question, “to what extent do the skills developed by YouTubing and the skills developed by starting a company overlap?” If the skills do indeed overlap, starting a YouTube
channel could be a valuable learning tool for aspiring entrepreneurs by developing the same skills they will need when starting their own company.

After surveying 160 entrepreneurs and 20 YouTubers, no statistically significant evidence was found that YouTubing develops the same skills as entrepreneurship. However, this may have been due to methodological oversights, so future studies should be conducted before any conclusions are made on the subject.

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**Appendix**

**Appendix A: Survey Design Guidelines**

The popular experience management company Qualtrics was used for the design and administration of the survey for this study. Qualtrics (2018) outlines “five basic goals for scale point questions and their labels,” which are listed below. The points in bold are quoted directly
from the source, and the explanations that follow show why this study does or does not effectively follow each guideline.

1) **It should be easy to interpret the meaning of each scale point.** The wordings used for the scale points are commonly used in many surveys.

2) **The meaning of scale points should be interpreted identically by all respondents.** Including descriptions for each scale point (i.e. “Not at all,” “Extremely,” etc.) is important in order to avoid respondents’ subjectivity when it comes to rating on a sliding scale, as people may interpret the numbers differently without them. However, in this study, the first set of questions was on a scale of “low” to “high,” while the second set of questions was on a scale of “not at all effective” to “extremely effective.” This meant that a respondent answering “5” on the first set of questions could have chosen “1” on the second set because they already had the skill and it therefore could not be developed further, or could have chosen “5” because it started high and remained high.

3) **The scale should give enough points to differentiate respondents from one another as much as validly possible.** Qualtrics (2018) summarizes this point in the following way:

   “In short, the goal is to make sure respondents can answer in a way that allows them to differentiate themselves as much as is validly possible without providing so many points that the measure becomes noisy or unreliable. Even on an 11-point (0-10) scale respondents start to have difficulty reliably placing themselves, lowering the rating scale quality. This is because 3 isn’t so different from 4 and 6 isn’t so different from 7 and having this many more levels of contentment beyond the basic 5 or 7 makes survey measures more confusing.”
Additionally, a five-point scale was chosen over a seven-point scale because of the fact that the questions are unipolar (meaning they range from zero to positive) rather than bipolar (ranging from negative to positive), so less numbers are required for a similar level of differentiation (Qualtrics, 2018). In other words, “since it doesn’t make sense to measure negative effectiveness, this kind of 5-point scale is the best practice” (Qualtrics, 2018).

4) **Responses to the survey rating scale should be reliable, meaning that if we give the same question again, each respondent should provide the same answer.** The effectiveness of following this particular point is impossible to measure, as respondents only answered each question once. However, there seem to be no obvious reasons why the survey would not be reliable.

5) **The scale’s points should map as closely as possible to the underlying idea (construct) of the scale.** The survey was created while considering survey design principles in order to yield accurate responses. For example, as mentioned in Point 3, a five-point scale was used because the questions are unipolar, and because too many numbers on the scale can result in reduced accuracy of responses. However, due to the problems mentioned in Point 2, the scales did not accurately map the underlying idea.

*Appendix B: Survey for Entrepreneurs*

Study Description:

This survey involves answering a number of questions about some of your skills and how they may relate to your work. The survey should take approximately three minutes to complete. This
study should involve no risk or discomfort, but you may exit the survey at any time if necessary. Additionally, if you are below the age of 18, your responses will not be recorded. This survey is confidential, and neither your name nor contact information will be tied to your responses.

Consent Statement:
I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I also understand that any information obtained from this survey will remain confidential and will be used solely for research purposes.

- Yes, I agree to participate.
- No, I do not agree to participate.

Question Set 1:
(For this set of questions, a sliding scale of 1-5 was used with the following labels: 1 = Very Low, 2 = Low, 3 = Neither Low Nor High, 4 = High, 5 = Very High.)

“Please rate yourself on the following skills, based on your natural ability (i.e. "I have always been good at ________."):

- technical skills (i.e. ability to competently use common technologies)
- communication skills (including verbal and written communication, listening, and the ability to choose the appropriate medium of communication)
- critical thinking skills (i.e. problem solving, data analysis, constructive use of feedback)
- multitasking skills (i.e. organization, prioritization, and time management)
- teamwork skills (i.e. working effectively with others despite differences in responsibilities, backgrounds, objectives, and areas of expertise)
- **creativity** (i.e. ability to see patterns, create and execute ideas)
- **leadership** skills (i.e. ability to combine all other skills in order to inspire others and make a team function)

Question Set 2:

(For this set of questions, a sliding scale of 1-5 was used with the following labels: 1 = Not effective at all, 2 = Slightly effective, 3 = Moderately effective, 4 = Very effective, 5 = Extremely effective.)

“How effective has **starting a company** been in developing your:”

- **technical** skills (i.e. ability to competently use common technologies)
- **communication** skills (including verbal and written communication, listening, and the ability to choose the appropriate medium of communication)
- **critical thinking** skills (i.e. problem solving, data analysis, constructive use of feedback)
- **multitasking** skills (i.e. organization, prioritization, and time management)
- **teamwork** skills (i.e. working effectively with others despite differences in responsibilities, backgrounds, objectives, and areas of expertise)
- **creativity** (i.e. ability to see patterns, create and execute ideas)
- **leadership** skills (i.e. ability to combine all other skills in order to inspire others and make a team function)

Demographic Questions:

- What is your age?
- What is your sex?
• Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:
  o White
  o Black or African American
  o American Indian or Alaska Native
  o Asian
  o Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  o Other

• Are you Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino or none of these?

• What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
  o Less than high school degree
  o High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)
  o Some college but no degree
  o Associate degree in college (2-year)
  o Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)
  o Master's degree
  o Doctoral degree
  o Professional degree (JD, MD)

• Which of the following industries most closely matches the one in which you operate?

• How long ago did you create your first company?
  o Less than 1 year ago
  o 1-2 years ago
  o 2-3 years ago
  o 3-5 years ago
  o 5-7 years ago
  o 7-10 years ago
More than 10 years ago

- Are you now married, widowed, divorced, separated or never married?
- In which country do you currently reside?
- In which state do you currently reside?

Appendix C: Survey for YouTubers

Study Description:

This survey involves answering a number of questions about some of your skills and how they may relate to your work. The survey should take approximately three minutes to complete. This study should involve no risk or discomfort, but you may exit the survey at any time if necessary. Additionally, if you are below the age of 18, your responses will not be recorded. This survey is confidential, and neither your name nor contact information will be tied to your responses.

Consent Statement:

I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I also understand that any information obtained from this survey will remain confidential and will be used solely for research purposes.

- Yes, I agree to participate.
- No, I do not agree to participate.

Question Set 1:
(For this set of questions, a sliding scale of 1-5 was used with the following labels: 1 = Very Low, 2 = Low, 3 = Neither Low Nor High, 4 = High, 5 = Very High.)

“Please rate yourself on the following skills, based on your natural ability (i.e. "I have always been good at ______.")：“

- **technical** skills (i.e. ability to competently use common technologies)
- **communication** skills (including verbal and written communication, listening, and the ability to choose the appropriate medium of communication)
- **critical thinking** skills (i.e. problem solving, data analysis, constructive use of feedback)
- **multitasking** skills (i.e. organization, prioritization, and time management)
- **teamwork** skills (i.e. working effectively with others despite differences in responsibilities, backgrounds, objectives, and areas of expertise)
- **creativity** (i.e. ability to see patterns, create and execute ideas)
- **leadership** skills (i.e. ability to combine all other skills in order to inspire others and make a team function)

Question Set 2:

(For this set of questions, a sliding scale of 1-5 was used with the following labels: 1 = Not effective at all, 2 = Slightly effective, 3 = Moderately effective, 4 = Very effective, 5 = Extremely effective.)

“How effective has starting a YouTube channel been in developing your:”

- **technical** skills (i.e. ability to competently use common technologies)
- **communication** skills (including verbal and written communication, listening, and the ability to choose the appropriate medium of communication)
- **critical thinking** skills (i.e. problem solving, data analysis, constructive use of feedback)
- **multitasking** skills (i.e. organization, prioritization, and time management)
- **teamwork** skills (i.e. working effectively with others despite differences in responsibilities, backgrounds, objectives, and areas of expertise)
- **creativity** (i.e. ability to see patterns, create and execute ideas)
- **leadership** skills (i.e. ability to combine all other skills in order to inspire others and make a team function)

Demographic Questions:

- What is your age?
- What is your sex?
- Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:
  - White
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Other
- Are you Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino or none of these?
- What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
  - Less than high school degree
  - High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)
  - Some college but no degree
  - Associate degree in college (2-year)
  - Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Professional degree (JD, MD)

- Which of the following types of YouTube channels most closely matches yours?

- How long ago did you create your first YouTube channel?
  - Less than 1 year ago
  - 1-2 years ago
  - 2-3 years ago
  - 3-5 years ago
  - 5-7 years ago
  - 7-10 years ago
  - More than 10 years ago

- Are you now married, widowed, divorced, separated or never married?

- In which country do you currently reside?

- In which state do you currently reside?
### Reddit users and news users more likely to be male and young

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Honor Code

“On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work.”