6-12-2010

ENTREPRENEURIAL TEAM COMPOSITION: THE IMPACT OF TASK-MATCHED PERSONALITY TRAITS AND TEAM PROCESSES ON VENTURE SUCCESS (SUMMARY)

Florian Weiss
RWTH Aachen University, weiss@win.rwth-aachen.de

Malte Brettel
RWTH Aachen University

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://digitalknowledge.babson.edu/fer/vol30/iss10/7

This Summary is brought to you for free and open access by the Entrepreneurship at Babson at Digital Knowledge at Babson. It has been accepted for inclusion in Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research by an authorized administrator of Digital Knowledge at Babson. For more information, please contact digitalknowledge@babson.edu.
SUMMARY

ENTREPRENEURIAL TEAM COMPOSITION: THE IMPACT OF TASK-MATCHED PERSONALITY TRAITS AND TEAM PROCESSES ON VENTURE SUCCESS

Florian Weiss, RWTH Aachen University, Germany
Malte Brettel, RWTH Aachen University, Germany

Principal Topic

More and more start-ups are founded by teams rather than by single individuals (e.g., West 2007) and entrepreneurial teams are on average more successful than single entrepreneurs (Lechler 2001). Thus, the success of a start-up seems to be somehow dependent on the entrepreneurial team and we have to ask: what makes teams successful?

A growing body of research supports the notion that deep-level composition variables such as personality traits are an important determinant of team performance (Stewart 2006). However, the vast majority of this research focuses on broad trait taxonomies, such as the five-factor model of personality (Costa and McCrae 1992). Research within the field of entrepreneurship in turn has put more emphasis on specific traits (Baum and Locke 2004) but focused mostly on the level of the single entrepreneur.

This paper tries to fill the remaining research gap by analyzing the relationship between specific personality traits and venture success on the team-level. It seeks to determine whether the same traits that predict entrepreneurial success on the individual level hold true for the team level and to what extent this relationship is being moderated by team processes.

Method

665 students filled out a self-developed personality questionnaire that measured entrepreneurship-specific personality traits that are related to success on the level of the individual entrepreneur. Based on the results, more and less entrepreneurial students were distinguished and accordingly assigned to more and less entrepreneurial teams. In an experimental set-up, these teams competed in a business simulation and at the end, each student filled out a second questionnaire that measured his or her individual perception of team processes.

Results and Implications

The study confirms that teams with higher aggregated team scores on entrepreneurship-specific personality traits are indeed more successful than teams with lower team scores. However, not all traits under scrutiny contribute to this effect and some only unfold their predictive power when moderated by specific team processes.

Practically, our study helps venture capitalists in assessing the aptitude of founder teams, it helps founders finding the right co-founders, and, finally, it helps incubators advising teams on team composition. For researchers, our personality questionnaire presents a valid tool for further research in this area.

CONTACT: Florian Weiss; weiss@win.rwth-aachen.de; (T): +49-241-8096222; (F): +49-241-8092371; RWTH Aachen University, Templergraben 64, 52062 Aachen, Germany.