RESOLVING THE HETEROGENEITY DILEMMA IN ENTREPRENEURIAL TEAM COMPOSITION: THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (SUMMARY)

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RESOLVING THE HETEROGENEITY DILEMMA IN ENTREPRENEURIAL TEAM COMPOSITION: THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Principal Topic

A strong body of existing research highlights the importance of considering heterogeneity in entrepreneurial team composition. Adding to this stream of research, we focus on the effects of heterogeneity in team members’ individual entrepreneurial orientation (iEO). Drawing on theories of social psychology and organizational behavior, we argue that iEO heterogeneity negatively affects team performance. Additionally, we propose a moderated mediation approach to shed light on the black box of the heterogeneity-performance relationship. We argue that relationship conflict is a partial mediator of this pivotal relationship. Furthermore, we argue that emotional intelligence bears the potential to reduce negative effects of heterogeneity.

Method

We decided to exclusively focus on entrepreneurial teams consisting of two members to avoid distortions of the effects of heterogeneity due to blocs of team members forming coalitions. Therefore, the database applied in this study encompasses all young ventures (maximum 12 years old) managed by two persons from all 56 existing Technology and Start-Up Centers in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany (N=382 teams). We base our analysis on 104 usable complete team responses, corresponding to a response rate of 27.23 per cent. The sample of 208 individuals combines 163 (78.4%) men and 45 (21.6%) women, with age ranging from 22 to 66 years (M=40.13, SD=9.99). Research highlights that measuring intrateam diversity with incomplete member data may result in a distortion of true diversity-outcome relations. Instead of relying on key respondents judging the level of heterogeneity in the team, we therefore collected individual data from each team member and then aggregated our measures to the team level.

Results and Implications

Findings of a SEM analysis support the hypothesized direct, mediated and moderated relationships. Our multi-informant study contributes contentual and methodological to academic theory and provides important insights into team composition for the managerial practice. First, we contribute to the ongoing discussions on the heterogeneity dilemma by identifying the negative effect of iEO heterogeneity on team performance. Moreover, our results lend further credence to the heterogeneity-relationship conflict link. Furthermore, our study contributes to calls for research aiming at minimizing negative heterogeneity effects by identifying the moderating effect of emotional intelligence.

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