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INFLUENCING THE HIVE MIND: INDIVIDUAL ASSERTION AND COLLECTIVE COGNITION (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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≈ INTERACTIVE PAPER ≈

**INFLUENCING THE HIVE MIND: INDIVIDUAL
ASSERTION AND COLLECTIVE COGNITION**

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Theory and Background

In new venture teams (NVTs), entrepreneurs think both individually and jointly. Entrepreneurial teams make a lot of decisions early that create path dependencies, such as the establishment of lasting values, norms, and procedures, initial corporate strategies, organizational culture, and human resource management (Baron et al., 1996; Boeker, 1989; Straw, 1991). Furthermore, collective cognition in entrepreneurial teams is more than simply an aggregation of individual modes of thinking (Chowdury, 2005; Cosette & Audet, 1992). Despite the collective nature of cognition in NVTs, influential individuals may have a disproportionate impact on decision making processes. Indeed, founders can have imprinting effects on new ventures that create lasting effects on the firm (Baron, 2007; Barney et al., 1998; Baum et al., 1998; Nelson, 2003; Schein, 2002). Investigating such interactions among the levels of cognitive processing (Gregoire et al., 2011) can help build our understanding of the major influencers on NVT decision making.

Our study adds to existing research on new venture team cognition by diving deeper into the dynamic processes related to decision making. Specifically, we are interested in how influential team members impact the collective processes that lead to critical venture decisions. Our investigations will focus on how these influencers impact decision making through processes such as cognitive and affective team conflict, agreement on role identification, collective affect, and even individual level factors such as assertiveness.

Methods and Results

The research method for this project will be a mixed-method design (Ucbasaran et al., 2001; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Hoang & Antoncic 2003) utilizing qualitative interviews and quantitative survey data. A qualitative approach (Charmaz, 2006) is being utilized to build and expand on limited theory through patterns of behavior (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Quantitative investigations test the validity of the patterns uncovered in the qualitative data. The qualitative data is analyzed according to established inductive research procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and the quantitative data is analyzed to relationships and dynamics gleaned from the qualitative data.

Initial results have been obtained from observations of early-stage NVTs. These results have revealed some interesting trends in the decision making processes and influences of powerful team members. Data collection and analysis will continue throughout the year. We look forward to sharing some early stage results with colleagues at the BCERC and receiving feedback to develop and improve our study.

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