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CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING IN ENTREPRENEURIAL TEAMS (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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≈ INTERACTIVE PAPER ≈

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING IN ENTREPRENEURIAL TEAMS

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Principal Topic

Effective problem solving processes are the key to success in every organization. For new ventures however, it is even more important since wrong decisions in early stages might cause the failure of the entire venture project. We aim at further clarifying problem solving processes in venture teams. More specifically, we shed some light to the questions (1) which team members generate and select the best idea? (2) How effective are team processes in creative problem solving?

Method

We conduct a study examining the creative problem solving in entrepreneurial teams in response to budget challenges. Participants are founders of technology-based start-up companies. We employ a two-step approach of problem solving. In a first step, each team member individually generates as many ideas as possible for meeting the challenge and selects the most promising idea regarding the probability of success. In a second step, the team works together on a solution by sharing their findings, and potentially building up on them. After brainstorming together, the teams have to choose again the most promising idea.

Results and Implications

Our results add to the literature on decision making in teams in several ways. Existing literature to date almost entirely considers the idea generation process ignoring evaluation and selection of idea. With emphasizing also on the ability of a group to discern idea quality, we focus not only on idea generation but also on processes of evaluation and selection of generated ideas. Second, a vast majority of research either analyzes the quality of the generated ideas on average, or the quantity of ideas. However, facing a problem that needs a creative solution, one outstanding idea is considerably more beneficial than a huge amount of average ideas. Hence, in contrast to the vast body of existing literature we focus on the one single best idea generated by each individual and team. Furthermore, we are able to compare idea quality not only between but also within teams. Last, team composition based on personality has been found to have important effects on team outcomes. However, little is still known about the effect of team personality composition on team creativity. Our results add to this gap by contrasting individual dispositions and individual performance with team performance.

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