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RESEARCH PAPER

Interpersonal Social Relationships and Startup Teams Success

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ABSTRACT

The starting point of this study is to predict the future of interpersonal team and social relationships. Therefore, this study aims to establish a model of start-up team's Interpersonal Social Relationship (ISR) quality in order to predict team success. The core reason why many start-ups fail is not because of problems in their business; it is rather because of arguments and interpersonal conflicts in their team. Understanding what makes teams come together, work together and stay together is an important, but currently under evaluated, aspect. Drawing on theoretical as well as empirical literature, we find out eight features (i.e., interpersonal communication, team coordination, mutual support, team cohesion, team potency, interpersonal trust, team norms & team conflicts) of ISR. To sum up, this study predicts that interpersonal social relationship quality is vital for the success of start-up teams. The accurate assessment of ISR quality is immensely crucial for investors in order to achieve team/start-up success.

Introduction

In the start-up world and throughout everyday life, interpersonal Social Relationships can either encourage or hamper quest for greatness or accomplishing specific objectives. Indeed, however frequently neglected, solid interpersonal relations and information on the unpredictable group dynamics in start-ups can be significant to viable success. Individuals and most entrepreneurs from any small team so far as that is concerned, naively presume that hard work, devotion and extended periods of time at the business are the main reasons behind their success. Actually, their success is associated with how well they build up their work relationships.

Introducing the concept of social interaction within start-up teams is the objective of this study, an important issue mostly ignored by the research. Start-up team according to Schjoedt and Kraus (2009) is a social entity or unit in which members of the team build their effective and cognitive states, for example collective mind (West, 2007), cohesion and commitment (Ensley, Pearson, & Pearce, 2003) and affection and trust (Vihervuori, 2017).

The organization of start-ups is established on a team, which is often called as a start-up team, an entrepreneurial team, a top management team, a founding team and new venture team. As stated in Salamzadeh and Kesim (2015) start-ups are recently conceived

organizations which strive for survival and are for the most part shaped dependent on splendid thoughts and develop to succeed. The core reason for why many start-ups fail is not because of problems in their business; it is rather because of problems in their team (Ries, 2011; Blank, 2013). It is only recently that researchers are using startups as their unit of investigation (Klotz et al., 2014; Diakanastasi, et al., 2018; Lazar et al., 2019), and this is also the case for this research.

Given how much we already know about how to manage start-ups, it is time we also pay attention to the fundamental issue of how to manage relationships with and within start-up teams. Literature grasping the team-level has moved consideration regarding interpersonal interaction and dynamics (e.g., Lechler, 2001) and further proposed that team performance is usually associated to the team-level problems in particular (Eisenhardt, 2013).

Start-ups accounts for a sizeable fraction of new product innovations hence play a key part in today's economy (Hernandez, Fernandez-Mesa & Edwards-Schachter, 2018). Numerous new start-ups fail to succeed in spite of various success stories, thus it is getting progressively essential to distinguish the variables that can lead these start-ups to anticipated cohesiveness, sustainability and viability. After review of the literature we come to the conclusion that as of recently there is little evidence on social interaction in start-ups; despite the fact that social interaction outcomes in other field of research are certainly clear. It is expected that for startup teams the quality of social interaction might play a significant role. Hence, this study aims to establish a model of start-up team's interpersonal social relationship (ISR) quality in order to predict team success.

This study throw-out the literature focused to get the answer for, what factors are important to predict the lasting success of different business relationships in start-ups?

Literature Review

Start-ups are newly born organizations which strive for survival and are for the most part shaped dependent on splendid thoughts and develop to succeed (Salamzadeh & Kawamorita, 2015, Hernandez et al., 2018). Brattström et al., (2019) define a startup team as, "two or more individuals who commit to each other to create a new firm". More than 100 million startups are launched per year, which are about 3 startups per second although there are many success cases, however more than 50% of startups fail in the initial four years (Shah, 2019); many new ventures quit mainly because the team quits their effort (Diakanastasi, Karagiannaki & Pramatari, 2018). Similarly Brattstrom (2019) argue that the core reason for why many startups fail is not because of problems in their business; it is rather because of problems in their team. Venture capitalists attribute 60-65% of failures to problems within the startup team. Teams carry the potential of inefficient communication, complex long lasting decision processes and personal conflicts (Lechler, 2001). In the past decade, we have witnessed a surge of interest in how to manage startup companies. Yet, there is a noticeable lack of practical advice on how to successfully manage a startup team (Klotz et al., 2014; Hernandez et al., 2018; Lazar et al., 2019).

According to Vyakarnam et al. (1997) research on start-up formation, functioning, and their association with new ventures success is scarce. The majority of research focuses on individual entrepreneurs, seeking to understand the personalities, abilities, and motivations that make them successful (Davidsson & Honig, 2003). Yet, most startups are founded and managed by teams, not by entrepreneurs who operate in solo (Ruef, 2010; McKelvie et al.,

2018). The ability to predict the success and failure of an early stage company in this high-risk environment is critical for investors. Prior studies marked human and social capital as important factors determining the potential of a startup to succeed, some venture capitalists claim that they do not invest in a company, but in teams. According to Diakanastasi, Karagiannaki and Pramatari (2018) team is not just a mixture of members working together rather it is a social bond.

Understanding what makes these teams come together, work together and stay together is an important, but currently under evaluated aspect (Brattstrom, 2019). However, very little is known about interpersonal relationships in startup companies (Lederman, 2019). Hence, the starting point of this study is to predict the future of interpersonal team and social relationships. Thus, the primary question is who will work together with others in a startup team?

Research literature documents the manner which if follows by team members can play a significant role in their success (Ensley & Pearce, 2001; Ensley, Pearson, & Pearce, 2003). Nevertheless, the manner numerous determinants (e.g., motives, team structure, collaboration, communication) influence team dynamics as well as new venture creation process, have been examined in isolation. According to Ensley et al. (2003) within start-up teams only few social interaction facets are examined e.g. team conflicts; hence social interaction has not been studied as a whole until now. In innovation success the quality of social interaction play a significant role hence it is expected that it might also play an important role in start-up team's success. Watson et al. (1995) are one of the few researchers that investigated the facets of social interaction within start-up teams. Their results indicate that only venture success is significantly influenced by team commitment and leadership. Lechler (2001) also examined the influence of social interaction quality in the context of 159 German entrepreneurial teams. The findings suggest that new venture success largely depends on the social interaction quality within teams.

Vihervuori (2017) examined numerous factors e.g. psychological safety, constructive conflict and shared leadership that are associated with team dynamics. He offers a framework of team assessment that provides high-level view on startup human capital components. The influence of team diversity on the performance of entrepreneurship has been studied by Zhou and Rosini (2015) and found positive association, while interprofessional teams has been studied by Mitchell et al. (2014). Diakanastasi et al. (2018) findings indicate that team cohesiveness and dynamics is associated with various factors i.e. team structure, improper leadership, ineffective communication, variation in the intentions and expectations and engagement. In another study, Solansky et al. (2014) examine the job of balancing out strains in an entrepreneurial team which comprises of individuals from various enterprises. In a study Pirola-Merlo et al. (2002) found that team climate is negatively affected by the differences in the expectation of team members.

Lederman (2019) used a combination of technology and methodology to study the link between founders' dynamics and performance in early ventures. They found differences in social interaction patterns between high-and low-performing startup companies, and examined factors that affect convergence of opinions in these companies. The main study confirmed the relationship between social interaction and performance in early ventures. In general, higher internal communication is correlated with better, more consistent, performance.

As indicated by Hernandez et al. (2018) collaboration and dynamic capabilities are coordinated as a fundamental condition among various firms and organisations. In a startup, collaboration serves as interaction among people inside the organization where everybody works together to accomplish a reasonable and shared goal in a particular setting. As indicated by Bulinska-Stangrecka and Bagienska (2019) collaboration in team happens when there are internal relations are integrating employees and when they are success-oriented.

According to Bulinska-Stangrecka & Bagienska (2019) in order to achieve a fruitful collaborative relationship the most significant aspect is trust in team members. In addition, trust is also recognized as an essential ingredient for successful and effective communication. The relationship between collaboration and trust is established from existing literature (Bond-Barnard, Fletcher & Steyn, 2018). Similarly, the link between trust and high work engagement is also confirmed by the existing studies (Costa & Anderson, 2011). Interpersonal trust facilitates collective actions in teams. It is evident from current literature that team collaboration develops an environment that nurtures social interaction (Bulinska-Stangrecka & Bagienska, 2019).

Trust is not only an interpersonal but collective phenomenon (Costa & Anderson, 2011) and is expressed at three levels within organizations: organizational, teams and individual. The expanding significance of interpersonal and team dynamics in accomplishing powerful collaboration has added to bring trust in the research agenda. The existing literature undoubtedly suggest that positive workplace attitudes and behaviours for example information sharing and more open communication (e.g., Smith & Barclay, 1997), higher organizational commitment (e.g., Brockner, et al., 1997), organizational citizenship behaviour (Aryee et al., 2002) and high job satisfaction (e.g., Smith & Barclay, 1997) is associated with higher level of trust within teams. Trust leads to higher level of team work, team performance and effective communication within teams (e.g., Smith & Barclay, 1997; Costa & Anderson, 2011).

Studies have shown that the initial divisions of roles and relationships in a startup typically prevail over time. Known as the "forming stage", members tend to be careful with each other as they test and develop norms around appropriate behavior. Over time, however, teams in general often undergo a "storming phase", when the challenges of task demands and interpersonal differences start to surface (Brattstrom, 2019). This can lead to conflicts, stress, and quarrels that challenge team members' persistence. In the context of established organizations, teams can be held together by strong managers who force persistence upon the team, by contracts that make persistence legally binding, or by salaries that are paid out as compensation for loyalty. Among startup founders, however, there is no manager or contract to force members to stay together, and salaries are often both uncertain and distant. Instead, emotions, such as passion, attachment, joy, and energy constitute important glue that keeps the team together (Cardon et al., 2017). Shared positive emotions, for example, enable team members to learn from each other and improve their abilities to work together. By and large, building emotional attachment to and identification with an organization and team enhance the likelihood that startup team members persist (Mathieu et al., 2015).

People act and shape their views based on the information available to them. In a team, differences in the information available to team members may result in uncertainty and different understandings of what needs to be done. Team members therefore must continuously communicate and exchange information to reduce these differences (Kaiser & Müller, 2013). Studies show that these differences affect social interaction and lead to conflicts

(Lederman, 2019). Researchers have found that a higher volume and frequency of interaction facilitated better coordination (Pentland, 2012), the more evenly team members communicated with each other, the better the team performed. Very little is known about the effect interpersonal relationships have on the success of teams as well as companies. Communication according to Hoegl (1998) is a component of social interaction within startup teams.

Theoretical Background

After reviewing the literature it could be argued that in various disciplines start-ups are scarcely examined as the spotlight of theories; however there are few theories which we can certainly recognize as theories of start-ups. We have divided these theories in the field of management, in the field of organization and in the field of entrepreneurship. These theories are given below:

Management Theories

In an organisational sense, the theories of management have less to do with start-ups nonetheless when it comes to teams or individuals' management theories shed light on start-ups that organize endeavors toward some shared objectives. Besides, according to Davila et al. (2003) the interest in start-ups is now increasing in the eyes of management scholars and theorists. In research on start-ups the theories of management which applies are: Complexity theory, strategic management, human resource management, team management and small business governance etc. (see e.g., Kaiser & Müller, 2013). Nevertheless, the management theories mentioned are associated loosely to start-up research rather they use start-ups as their case or sample.

Organization Theories

To study the formation of start-ups three main approaches i.e. ecological, entrepreneurial and organizational were suggested by one of the first scholars (Van de Ven et al., 1984) and according to them researchers previously investigated only one of the three approaches and not all three at the same time. They further states that: "The organizational methodology contends the conditions under which an organization is arranged and the procedures followed in its underlying advancement have significant outcomes on its structure and performance in later life".

According to Salamzadeh (2015a) organisation theories are silent when it comes to start-up evolution; majority of organisation perspectives and theories provide answer to only organizational questions. Furthermore, as stated in Boekerb and Wiltbank (2005) the start-up phase is rarely examined in research. The relevant organisation theories related to start-up formation are: Uncertainty theory, resource dependence theory, contingency theory, organizational configurations and organizational ecology theory etc. (Tosi & Slocum, 1984; Scholz & Reydon, 2009; Davis & Cobb, 2010).

Theoretically, implicitly or explicitly the resource base theory of the firm establishes that venture success is positively linked with multiple founders. The question of team design and team success differences cannot be explained with this approach as it is too narrow. This approach infers that team member's characteristics could explain team success differences. On the basis of above literature this study designed following conceptual model
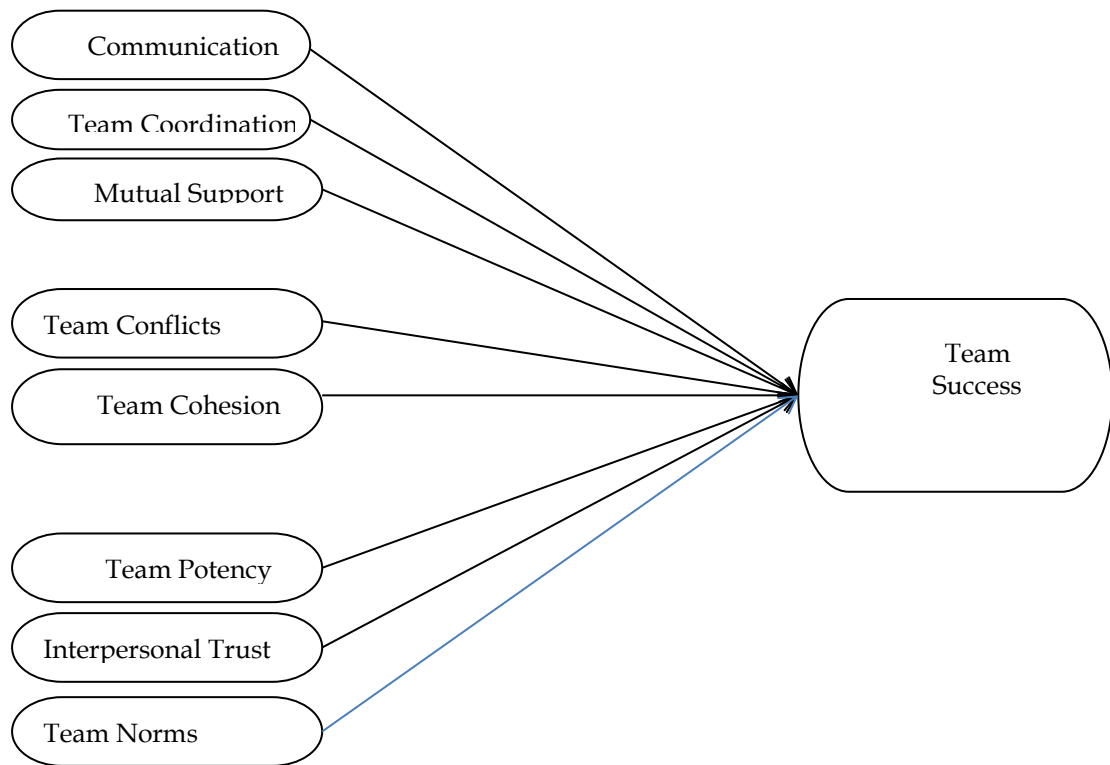
Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Dimensions of Interpersonal Social Relationship

An extensive research of startup teams indicate various factors (e.g., team structure, ineffective communication, engagement, improper leadership, variation in the intentions and expectations) to have a serious effect on interpersonal social relationship (Diakanastasi, Karagiannaki, & Pramatari, 2019). According to Vihervuori (2017) growth of start-ups is not explained by researchers yet in spite of ample research on small business and new ventures. The motivation behind this study is to present the idea of ISR, which was initially produced in the field of entrepreneurship theory and research for innovation teams. Interpersonal social relationship quality is vital for the success of new ventures within start-up teams. Stress arises due to the entrepreneurial situation and is reduced when employees works together in teams. According to Boyd and Gumpert (1983) the colleagues in the team are additionally inclined to trust and bolster one another.

According to various researchers such as Diakanastasi, Karagiannaki, and Pramatari (2019) in order to achieve high team performance a vital element is teamwork associated with start-up success, however in this study we name it interpersonal social relationship quality within teams. In start-up teams there is limited research on interpersonal social relationship and on its different aspects; despite the fact that the ISR findings are certainly clear in other research fields. It is the objective of this study to build up a model to predict team success based on ISR within startups.

Interpersonal Communication

According to Kaiser and Müller (2013) teams convey the potential of inefficient communication and personal conflicts. A significant aspect of Interpersonal Social Relationship is communication within a team which results in constructing teams as well as increasing teamwork. Communication according to Pinto and Pinto (1990) is a mean of information sharing and inside a team communication nature can be portrayed as far as how immediately colleagues can speak with one another and how broadly colleagues communicate. Because of the way that contributions and ideas can be shared, examined, and assessed all the more rapidly and effectively with other team colleagues consequently for teamwork on innovative projects informal communication is vital. Every individual ought to have the freedom to speak and hence it is in every case better that the members are allowed to speak freely and issues are discussed on an open gathering. Conflicts between team members' decline due to communication which results in enhancing interpersonal social relationship between members of the teams and as a result start-up success. As indicated by Pinto and Pinto (1990) an important aspect of ISR i.e. team members' integration will be affected if they do not exchange information openly.

Proposition 1: Interpersonal communication enhance the quality of interpersonal social relationship and as a result team success.

Team Coordination

As per McKelvie et al. (2018) team coordination suggests the utilization of procedures and standards of conduct coordinated toward the incorporation and arrangement of activities, information and targets of reliant individuals with the point of accomplishing shared objectives. Hence, coordination implies that the teams need to create and concur upon a typical task related objective structure that has adequately clear sub objectives for each team, free of overlaps and gaps. The level of regular comprehension in regards to the current status of individual commitments and interrelatedness additionally decides the nature of teamwork performed. During the time teams must collectively work major aspects of a common task; individual members of the team working on parallel subtasks should be assigned numerous activities in the task process. According to Brannick et al. (1995) synchronization and harmonization of such individual contributions is a significant element of collaboration quality in teams. To do this viably and proficiently, teams need to concede to normal deliverables, budgets, schedules and work-down structures. The manner by which the team is controlling these exercises impacts the nature of interpersonal social relationship and hence start-up success.

Proposition 2: Team coordination enhance the quality of interpersonal social relationship and as a result team success.

Mutual Support

Cooperative as compare to competitive frame of mind is the basis for intensive mutual support of individuals. As indicated by Salas et al. (2015) mutual support infers that all the on-screen characters included contribute with sources and skill, likewise as complementary capacities and assets, together sharing risks and costs to achieve one goal. Team members in start-up works together for the achievement of a common objective hence mutual support in such context is the interaction among individuals. Stewart (2006) contends that without

scrutinizing the inspirational capability of competition on account of free individual tasks for reliant tasks, and as compare to competition mutual support is more valuable. Hence, it is required that members of the team in spite of surpassing each other must support each other and show mutual respect when working on a same objective. Thus, the quality of ISR will improve when there is mutual support among team members.

Proposition 3: Mutual support enhance the quality of interpersonal social relationship and as a result team success.

Team Cohesion

The identification of process and factors that play an important role in enhancing the performance of groups is the most important aim throughout organizational research history. Group productivity rises when cohesion or bond among team members is stronger and the theoretical hypothesis suggest that these forces devise a bond. Salas et al. (2015) illustrate cohesion within teams as "the shared bond/attraction that drives members of the team to work and stay together." Cohesion according to Mullen and Copper (1994) is comprise of group pride, interpersonal attraction and task commitment. Thus, team collaboration will be difficult to achieve if members lacks desire to keep the team going and if sense of belonging and togetherness is lacking. Consequently, as compare to more cohesive teams which spent most of the time in problem solving and planning, less cohesive teams involve most of their time in fruitless social conflicts. A sufficient degree of cohesion is important to keep up a team, to participate in collaboration, and in this way to construct the reason for high ISR. To conclude, it will be difficult to obtain ISR quality if high level of cohesion is missing.

Proposition 4: Team cohesion enhance the quality of interpersonal social relationship and as a result team success.

Team Potency

As indicated by Hernandez et al. (2018) team potency inside a group is the level of aggregate adequacy toward accomplishing its objectives. According to (Schaubroeck et al., 2016) team potency is associated with teamwork effectiveness, and As per Pearce et al. (2002) a team that is exceptionally potent accepts with extraordinary assurance that it can accomplish the tasks wherein it has been framed to achieve. According to Bulinska-Stangrecka & Bagienska (2019) high potent teams as compare to teams low in potency will experience low level of anticipated time pressure and will positively counter time pressure. Hence, team potency increases the quality of ISR.

Proposition 5: Team potency enhance the quality of interpersonal social relationship and as a result team success.

Interpersonal Trust

According to Bulinska-Stangrecka & Bagienska (2019) the reciprocal and mutual association between team members can be defined as trust. Trust guides the behaviours and attitudes of team members derive from their perceptions of a relationship. Trust is an interaction that arises between the trusting and trusted parties, as stated in Bulinska-Stangrecka & Bagienska (2019) it is a crucial component of cooperation effectiveness. In addition, vast literature empathetically document that positive workplace attitudes and

behaviours arises due to trust such as organisational commitment (e.g., Brockner et al., 1997), citizenship behaviour (Aryee et al., 2002), job satisfaction (e.g., Smith & Barclay, 1997) and information sharing and open communication (e.g., Smith & Barclay, 1997). In this way, we expected that trust is a basic factor that ties team individuals together and hence encourages team adequacy and thus improve the quality of ISR.

Proposition 6: Interpersonal trust enhance the quality of interpersonal social relationship and as a result team success.

Team Conflicts

Inside start-ups, clashes and conflicts can be seen regularly, it arises due to divergence in perceptions, mindsets and attitude at the workplace. Another reason of conflict emergence according to Salas et al. (2015) is the lack of norms of social interaction and divergence of personal backgrounds and values. Furthermore, when team member's conflicts go beyond the scope of team purpose interpersonal conflict emerges. It is the human interactions that is the basis of conflicts, whenever comprehended and oversaw adequately can prompt expanded innovativeness and development, reexamining of objectives and practices and better educated work teams. Conflicts assume a significant job in ruining relationship among representatives at the workplace and must be controlled at the underlying stages to expect the best out of people. Communication mitigates workplace conflicts by adequately lessening the chances of errors. The style with which the colleagues handle growing conflicts is fundamental for their approach of the social interaction.

Proposition 7: Team conflicts enhance the quality of interpersonal social relationship and as a result team success.

Team Norms

According to Pentland (2012) norms are characterized as shared desires inside a team in regards to the conduct of team individuals. Norms with respect to exertion of team individuals are especially significant for effective ISR. Any part of team's working can be addressed by team norms, for example, wellbeing, expected work hours, email request reaction times, or meeting participation. Norms express goals; they help team individuals concede to how they'd prefer to get along before circumstances develop that may some way or another keep them from getting along. To accomplish high ISR and maintain a strategic distance from conflict among team individuals, it is significant for everybody in the team to know and acknowledge the work norms concerning adequate exertion. A consistently significant level of exertion by all team individuals is essential to the nature of collaboration and quality of ISR.

Proposition 8: Team norms enhance the quality of interpersonal social relationship and as a result team success.

Discussion

The core reason why many start-ups fail is not because of problems in their business; it is rather because of arguments and interpersonal conflicts in their team. It is only recently that researchers are using startups as their unit of investigation and this is also the case for this research. The majority of start-up research focuses on individual entrepreneurs, seeking to

understand the personalities, abilities, and motivations that make them successful. However, it is actually teams that found and manage startups rather single entrepreneurs. Understanding what makes these teams come together, work together and stay together is an important, but currently under evaluated, aspect.

The concept of social interaction within start-up teams is an important issue mostly ignored by the research. Previous research fails to study team social interaction as a whole, the constructs were studied in isolation, rather they cover only few aspects i.e. conflicts within teams. Thus, very little is known about interpersonal relationships in startup companies. Hence, the starting point of this study is to predict the future of interpersonal team and social relationships. Therefore, this study aims to establish a model of start-up team's Interpersonal Social Relationship (ISR) quality in order to predict team success.

Moreover, after reviewing the literature it could be argued that in various disciplines start-ups are scarcely examined as the spotlight of theories. The management theories are associated loosely to start-up research rather they use start-ups as their case or sample whereas organisation theories are silent when it comes to start-up evolution. However, start-ups are more focused in category of entrepreneurial theory, because entrepreneurship deals with opportunity, service or new product development, innovation, creativity, idea and so forth. Therefore, theories of entrepreneurship are progressively inclined to be considered in the beginning periods of any organization. Hence, we recommend that entrepreneurial theory can be applied to the model of ISR concepts.

This study will be of great significance to practitioners in the field of start-ups. Firstly, predicting the lasting relationships in start-ups will have significant implications for start-ups, growth catalysts and investors to find out areas of improvement. Secondly, suppliers of finance may use the outcome from this study to identify and gauge success. To predict the nature of who will functionally work together with others in start-ups, we find out eight features (i.e., interpersonal communication, team coordination, mutual support, team cohesion, team potency, interpersonal trust, team norms & team conflicts) of Interpersonal Social Relationship. Hence, the mentioned features capture team success-relevant measures of social interaction within teams and do not focus on interactions with teams from outside. Therefore, these eight features or dimensions are indicators of team members' working together.

The leading proposition of this study is that ISR and team success are positively correlated. Figure 1 show the conceptual model where team success can be predicted on the basis of the eight ISR dimensions. This conceptual model spotlights on collaborative work process (i.e., ISR) and exhibit how this influence team success. Hence, our conceptual model especially addresses the "black box" of team success and provides a thorough idea of collaboration between team members'. We predict that each of eight dimensions of ISR have a positive association with team success. This study offers a set of propositions for empirical testing and further research. The main proposition of the study is: The higher the value of interpersonal social relationship measured by interpersonal communication, team coordination, mutual support, team cohesion, team potency, interpersonal trust, team conflicts and team norms the higher will be the team success.

Conclusion

To sum up, this study predicts that interpersonal social relationship quality is vital for the success of start-up teams. The accurate assessment of ISR quality is immensely crucial for investors in order to achieve team/start-up success. The long-term start-up team's success largely depends on the quality of interpersonal and social interaction which can be greatly enhanced in a comparably short time span as compare to individual qualities like experience and skills which generally grow slowly.

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