



**EXPLORING THE MODERATING ROLE OF WORK
EXPERIENCE ON THE ENTREPRENEURIAL QUALITY
TEAM: EVIDENCE FROM ENTREPRENEURS IN
JIANGSU PROVINCE, CHINA**

Konan Kan Elvis Kouakou 

School of Management, Jiangsu University, Zhenjiang, China

elviskouakou@yahoo.fr

Cai Li

Jiangsu University, Zhenjiang, China

gscaili@ujs.edu.cn

Coulibaly Tiefigue Pierrette

School of Management, Jiangsu University, Zhenjiang, China

coulibaly_pierrette@yahoo.fr

Alida Magakam Tchamekwen

School of Finance and Economics, Jiangsu University, Zhenjiang, China

magakamalida@yahoo.fr

Abstract

This paper generally explores the linkage between entrepreneurial motivation traits and the entrepreneurial quality team. Thus, in this study, work experience is the control variable selected to moderate the relationship between entrepreneurial motivation traits and entrepreneurial quality team. Therefore this study aims to explore the moderating role of work experience in the relationship between entrepreneurial motivation traits and entrepreneurial quality team. Several scholars in their previous research highlight the relationship between motivation traits and the entrepreneurial intention, but in this research, we focus on its impact on

the entrepreneurial quality team. Qualitative data were collected via a structured questionnaire addressed to a sample size of 262 entrepreneurs in Jiangsu province. The data analysis methodology of this research is structural equation modeling (SEM) through Smart PLS3 software. We found that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurial motivation traits and entrepreneurial quality team. Then the moderating role of work experience is insignificant. We suggest that entrepreneurs should focus on their individual motivation to embrace a successful entrepreneurship career. The quality of the entrepreneurial team is determined by the individual motivation to achieve their personal goals. Therefore entrepreneurial motivation traits are one of the essential pillars to succeed in most of the businesses.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial motivation traits (EMT); Entrepreneurial quality team (EQT); Work experience (WE); Entrepreneurship

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of entrepreneurship as a research field has appealed a substantial amount of scholars around the world, within a few decades (Audretsch, Kuratko, & Link, 2016; Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Obloj, 2008; Busenitz et al., 2003; Déry & Toulouse, 1996; Hindle & Moroz, 2010; Schildt, 2012; Welter & Lasch, 2008). The entrepreneurs with their crucial role in economic growth, poverty alleviation, revenue generation, wealth creation, and job creation represent the mainstay of economic structure (Romer, 1994). They develop the potential to convert innovation into a new, efficient, and valuable goods and services through the exploitation of their distinct attributes and contribute to the economic development of the country (Schumpeter, 1934). Entrepreneurship has been defined as the process of discovering, evaluation, and exploitation of an opportunity (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Thus, entrepreneurship is one of the major engines of economic growth through the creation of a new venture. Entrepreneurial ventures also play a crucial role in developing the business environment through the creation of a new enterprise and encouraging entrepreneurship and the acquisition of business skills (Rasmussen & Roger, 2006).

Motivations are expressions of goals entrepreneurs seek to achieve by running a business venture. The European Commission's Green Paper on entrepreneurship (European Commission, 2003) posits that an individual's motivation to start entrepreneurial activities is highly vital (Atherton, 2007). Thus, good knowledge of what motivate persons to start their own business is of great importance (Yalcin & Kapu, 2008). Kuratko et al. (1997) asserts that the

motivation to start and sustain business venture permeates the entrepreneurial process. Carsrud and Brannback (2011) add that motivation is the link between the intention and action of entrepreneurs. Hence, knowing the motivating factors that trigger people to start their own business is essential as it provides useful data to government or any institution in designing appropriate programs and approaches to promote start-ups (Sihombing & Rachmawati, 2015).

Scholars of entrepreneurship have studied the decisive role of teams in the entrepreneurial process over the past 30 years (Kamm, Shuman, & Seeger, 1990; Timmons, 1975). It is challenging to establish and run new businesses with adequate resources, and hence, in many cases, business ventures are prone to depend on entrepreneurship. It can be deduced that the component of an entrepreneurial team's attributes may define the pervasiveness of entrepreneurship at the firm level (Wales, Monsen, & McKelvie, 2011). Several scholars have dedicated their research of entrepreneurial teams on the role of entrepreneurial team features, such as team structure on performance of the firm (Barney, Busenitz, Fiet, & Moesel, 1996; Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1990; Hmieleski & Ensley, 2007). However, research is needed to discuss how different commitment and engagements can be allocated and improved in the entrepreneurial process (Chowdhury, 2005; Ensley & Pearce, 2001; Perry-Smith & Coff, 2011; Schjoedt, Monsen, Pearson, Barnett, & Chrisman, 2013; West, 2007). Thus the overall research objective is to investigate the moderating role of work experience in the relationship between entrepreneurial motivation traits and entrepreneurial quality team. This study highlights the impact that an individual motivation may have on the formation of an entrepreneurial quality team through work experience. So far less attention has been given to examining the possible influence of work experience on relationships between entrepreneurial motivation traits and entrepreneurial quality team.

Next follows the first section of this article dedicated to the literature review on entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial teams and hypotheses development. The second section is related to model building and hypotheses testing on data gathered from respondents. The following section provides details about the analysis and empirical results. Finally, the conclusion segment presents implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Entrepreneurial motivations

The concept of entrepreneurial motivation represents the term that can be perceived as various factors or forces that push individuals towards entrepreneurial activities (Carsrud & Brännback 2011; Shane et al., 2003). Shane et al. (2003) categorize entrepreneurial motivation into general

motivation (including achievement needs, risk appetite, tolerance to ambiguity, control points, etc.) and task-oriented motivation (including self-efficacy and goal setting). Kuratko et al. (1997) classify entrepreneurial motivation into four features: extrinsic rewards, independence/autonomy, intrinsic rewards, and family security. An individual characteristics of entrepreneurial motivations received various terminologies in the entrepreneurship literature: “drivers” (Hessels et al., 2008), “factors” (Naudé et al., 2008), “reasons” (Birley & Westhead, 1994), “determinants” (Davidsson, 1991), or “entrepreneurial intentions” (Douglas & Shepherd, 2002; Kolvereid, 1996; Lee et al., 2011; Zhao et al., 2010). In the entrepreneurship, the literature on entrepreneurship motivation presents a shared dissimilarity made between opportunity motivation and necessity opportunity (Hessels et al., 2008). Reynolds et al. (2002) state that opportunity-driven individuals are motivated to achieve success through opportunities exploitation for economic gain, while the need for subsistence mainly motivates necessity-driven individuals. Motivation, by definition, is the psychological cause or the purpose of an action (Schacter et al., 2011). According to Carsrud & Brännback (2011), the main theories of entrepreneurial motivation are incentive theories and drive theories. Drive theories advocate that there is an inner need (e.g., achievement or autonomy) that has the power of encouraging the individual to start a new venture to diminish the resulting tension. On the other hand, incentive theories suggest that people are motivated to do things because of external rewards.

Within the field of the study of entrepreneurship, scholars related motivation research to the analysis of an individual’s motives for commencing a business venture, disregarding the necessary cognitive process to make such a decision. The expectancy theory is one of the motivations theories that attempted to clarify the general terms of an individual’s work performance (Chiang & Jang, 2008), but it was applied to the employer and the act of entrepreneurship in few studies (Gatewood et al., 2002; Hsu et al., 2014). However, another extensive line of research appeared to explore the reasons behind starting a company and their impact on entrepreneurial success measured in term of business growth (Edelman et al., 2010). Similarly, some of the studies found that a significant relationship exists between both variables (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011), but others study contrast as to the extent of the existing relationship between the reasons for starting a company and entrepreneurial success. According to Lawler & Suttle (1973), an individual motivation for behavior selection depends on the desirability of the outcome. However, the issue is not the sole determining factors in deciding how to behave (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011). Meanwhile, self-determination theory refers to human motivation under the stimuli of an individual's innate psychological needs for well-being, viability, relatedness, autonomy, and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The notion of needs specifies the constituent of motivation and furnishes a substantial basis for the

energization, activation, and direction of human behavior (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Deci & Ryan, 2000). The integration of self-determination and the hierarchy of human needs theories lead to the inference that the root for an entrepreneur motivation is the desire to fulfill its innate human needs by reaching the positive outcomes of its entrepreneurial career. Scholars in the field of entrepreneurship have explored the human needs that may stimulate an individual entrepreneurial motivation to start a business venture (Lau, Shaffer, & Au 2007; Parasuraman et al., 1996). Thus need for life equilibrium, need for basic finance, need for career achievement and need for social reputation, are the predominant entrepreneurial needs identified in existing entrepreneurship research (Gorgievski, Ascalon, & Stephan, 2011; Lau et al., 2007; Paige & Littrell, 2002).

Entrepreneurial teams

The core entrepreneurial teams (ET) constitutes the foremost human capital resource of the new venture (Criaco et al., 2014; Klotz et al., 2014). Furthermore, research has shown that human capital should be examined about a task (Unger et al., 2011). The relationship to the outcome is then stronger than human capital that is non-related to a specific task. The investigation area of entrepreneurial teams is progressively turning into a focal emphasize and a relevant interdisciplinary field of inquiry (Grichnik and Harms, 2007; Ratinho, Harms, and Walsh, 2015) depending on commitments from the entrepreneurship writing, strategic management, and social psychology. Because entrepreneurial teams launch most of the new businesses (Knapp, Breiteneker, and Khan, 2015; Ulhoi, 2005), they merit extraordinary consideration as the unit of examination. An entrepreneurial team refers to at least two individuals cooperating and mutually dependent, who have come together to accomplish particular goals (Robbins and Judge, 2008). However, an entrepreneurial team means more than any group of people coming together. The members of the entrepreneurial teams must act for the best interest of the new venture and have a shared lens (Cooper and Daily, 1997). Similarly, Klotz and Bolino (2013) describe the new venture team as the leading responsible group of individuals in charge of strategic decision making as well as ongoing operations of the new venture. For this article, and adding to the proposed definition of Schjoedt and Kraus (2009), whenever the term “entrepreneurial team” is mentioned, we mean an entrepreneurial team of people who have started the process of establishing a start-up enterprise and these are nascent entrepreneurs. According to Schjoedt and Kraus (2009), the entrepreneurial team composition, the entrepreneurial team process, and the external environment are the three perspectives of entrepreneurial teams that have been studied by scholars. Stam and Schutjens (2005) claim that external resources eventually influenced the growth of a new venture during the study of

the context of the external environment. Wiklund and Shepherd (2005) discuss the interrelationship between entrepreneurial orientation and external factors.

The concept of entrepreneurial team composition arouses topic such as the role of stabilizing tensions in an entrepreneurial team (Beck, and Travis, 2014), interprofessional teams (Mitchell et al., 2014) and team diversity to enhance entrepreneurial performance (Zhou and Rosini, 2015). In regards to factors that are affecting the way entrepreneurial teams come together and also the process of the new venture creations, several scholars have contributed to it variously. Baum et al. (2001) highlight the importance of differences in the motivation in new venture performance. Pirola-Merlo, Hartel, Mann, and Hirst (2002) argue that the different expectations of a team negatively influence the team's climate. Zaccaro, Rittman and Marks (2001) state the importance of effective leadership as a mainly emotional process. Bell (2007) and Stewart (2006) oriented their researches studies on what is supposed to be the most competent number of individuals per entrepreneurial teams. Teece (2015) states that commitment can considerably increase performance. Entrepreneurship research shows that teams start a significant number of new ventures, or a team is created early in the start-up (Tihula et al., 2009; Watson, Ponthieu, & Critelli, 1995) and that strong links exist between team created ventures and success. Indeed, the quality of such teams is a critical determinant of organizational performance (Hambrick, 1994; Huber & Glick, 1993).

Firms founded by teams may have more diverse skills and broader networks and more financial capital (Cooper & Daily, 1997). As these authors (1997, p. 144) succinctly comment "entrepreneurial teams are at the heart of any new venture." Shaver and Scott (1991) postulated that while team entrepreneurship is essential, a lead entrepreneur is still required to bring together the resources needed for new venture creation. Ensley et al. (2002) show that a leading entrepreneur is often present within the team, creating the vision and gathering others around them. Hansen (1995) sought to understand the relationship between founders, social networks, and team size. Cooper and Daily (1997) noted how teams changed over time, while others scholars investigated how entrepreneurial teams and firm performance related to issues such as friendship (Francis & Sandberg, 2000), member entry/exit (Ucbasaran et al., 2003), cultural diversity (Bouncken, 2004) networking abilities (Witt, 2004), and the impact of new member additions (Forbes et al., 2006). The vision in the entrepreneurial team or the role of the founder has been the focus of scholars that have interest in the formation of the entrepreneurial team (Preller, Breugst, & Patzelt, 2016; Schjoedt et al., 2013) and also evaluate the role diversity of each team members, which is usually gauge by demographic dimensions between the entrepreneurial team.

Hypotheses

H1: entrepreneurial motivation traits have a positive impact on entrepreneurial quality team

H2: work experience will moderate the effect of entrepreneurial motivation traits on entrepreneurial quality team

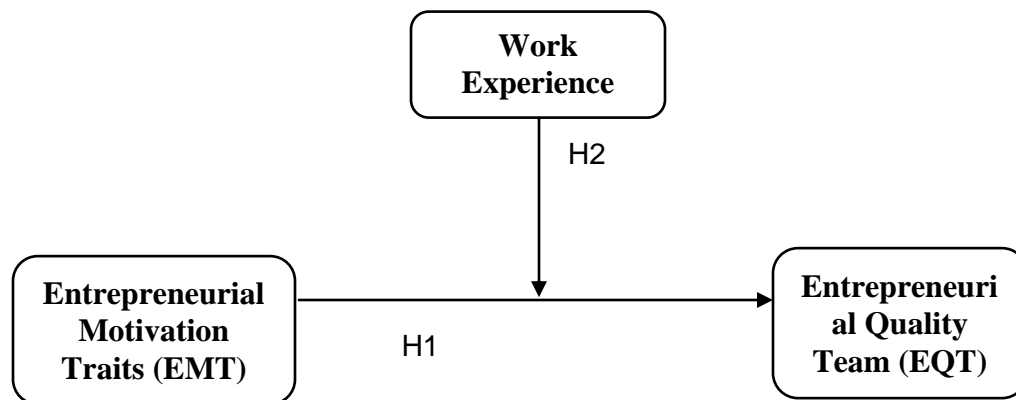


Figure 1: The proposed conceptual model

METHOD

Research design

A quantitative empirical study of the moderating effect of work experience on the relationship between entrepreneurial motivation traits and entrepreneurial quality team was developed to meet the research objectives and also to test the proposed hypotheses. By using cross-sectional survey data, the relationship proposed in the conceptual model were estimated through structure equations model in Smart PLS3 software.

A structured questionnaire was designed and administered to entrepreneurs in Jiangsu province to collect data. The entrepreneurs selected for this research study has been reached out by resources people in different business incubator center in Jiangsu province. With their help, the researchers were able to identify entrepreneurs operating in the selected zone, and then emailed them the questionnaire. These entrepreneurs have been selected randomly to give an equal chance to each entrepreneur willing to participate in this research study.

The targeting sample was 310 entrepreneurs from Jiangsu province. But 262 entrepreneurs were willing to take part in the research study. It implies a participation rate of 84.5% which is actually convenient. The total respondents were composed of 170 males and 92 females which correspond respectively to 64.9% and 35.1%. Then about 61.8% of the respondents have working experience and the remaining 38.2% are without working experience

before starting their business. It implies 162 respondents with work experience and 100 without any work experience. Majority of the respondents fall in between 24 to 28 of age which represents 41.6 % of the total respondents - the sample size N=262. The data were assessed for the extent of missing values.

All the item of the independent variable (entrepreneurial motivations traits) and the dependent variable (entrepreneurial quality team) were measured on a 5 points Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly agree to 5 strongly disagree. Then some of the item from the moderating variable (work experience) was measured differently from the 5 points Likert scale.

Product indicator is the selected method used to calculate the moderating variable of work experience on the relationship between entrepreneurial motivation trait and entrepreneurial quality team.

Table 1: Entrepreneurial motivation traits variables

	Variables
I like challenging career	EMT1
I have always wanted to have my own business kingdom	EMT2
Before starting a business, I have been trying accumulation of entrepreneurial resources	EMT3
As long as you can get the corresponding returns, risk is necessary and worthwhile	EMT4
I like to accept the challenge, in order to succeed I'm willing to take risks	EMT5
Before starting a business, I have accumulated a certain amount of money	EMT6
My surrounding areas (township, town, etc.) have a lot of successful entrepreneurs, great influence on me	EMT7
To create jobs for other people	EMT8

Table 2: Work experience variables

	Variables
Do you have work experience	WE1
I believe that entrepreneurial skills from work experience help to build entrepreneurship career	WE2
Work experience strengthens the quality of the entrepreneurial team	WE3
Year of work experience	WE4
What training do you have before starting up your business	WE5

Table 3: Entrepreneurial quality team variables

	Variables
As one of the entrepreneurs, I take responsibility of our entrepreneurship	EQT1
I think my influence of the team is based on my personal charisma	EQT2
I think my team's influence is based on the professional ability	EQT3
I control the team in the running of key resources (technology, networking, key capital)	EQT4
My partners trust me very much, my words are very influential to them	EQT5
We have a common team goal	EQT6
Team members have important values of that are similar or consistent	EQT7
My personal quality and the team's request is the same	EQT8
My partner appreciates some aspects of my personal qualities	EQT9
I think my team's influence is based on my ability of understanding the market opportunities	EQT10
My contribution to the team is large because I bring occasional indispensable resources for team (key technology of significant, relationship capital, etc.)	EQT11
In order to maintain fair and rational distribution of resources within the team, I have necessary participated in or taken responsibility of the relevant work	EQT12
Trust between our team is substantial, this trust has made us very powerful, I can give relevant examples	EQT13
Due to personal quality and ability, I am always in the backbone of the other members of the team	EQT14

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

We have tested all of the hypotheses together within a single model. All measurements of the constructs are based upon the respondent's perceptions. Because measures for the dependent and independent variables were taken from the same questionnaire, we perform the measurement model and the bootstrapping calculation method for the structural equation model.

The model was analyzed using structural equation model with entrepreneurial motivation traits as the independent variable, work experience as the moderator variable, and entrepreneurial quality team as the dependent variable.

Assumed model and hypothesis testing

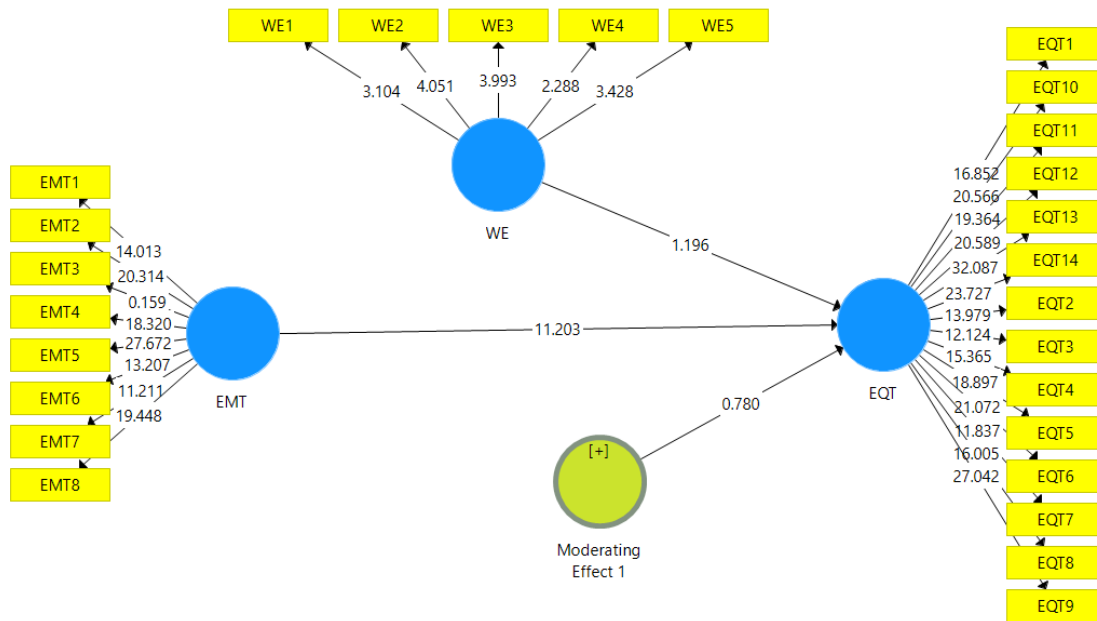


Figure 2: structure equation model with the moderating role of WE of the relationship between EMT and EQT

Table 4: Construct reliability and validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
EMT	0.783	0.837	0.847	0.445
EQT	0.92	0.926	0.931	0.493
Moderating Effect				
1	0.92	1	0.869	0.235
WE	0.902	0.978	0.914	0.681

The indicated Cronbach's Alpha must exceed 0.7 to indicate the reliability for measurement of each construct. All the variables EMT, EQT, moderating effect, and WE have respectively 0.783, 0.92, 0.92, and 0.902, which are above the indicated Cronbach alpha (0.70). It means that all the variables returned Cronbach alphas above 0.7; therefore, these multiple measures are highly reliable for the measurement of each construct. Looking at the above table, we observe that the rho- A and the Composite reliability of each construct satisfied the minimum of 0.7. But the average variance extracted of variables such as EMT, EQT, and moderating effect which are respectively 0.445, 0.493, and 0.235 do not satisfy the minimum of 0.5. Only the average variance extracted of WE, which is 0.681 exceeds the minimum of 0.50. It means that only the construct WE converge validity was considered adequate.

Table 5: Path coefficient analysis

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
EMT -> EQT	0.507	0.512	0.045	11.203	0.000***
Moderating Effect 1 -> EQT	0.117	0.102	0.15	0.78	0.436
WE -> EQT	0.098	0.093	0.082	1.196	0.232

*Note:*** indicates significance at 5%*

The relationship between entrepreneurial motivation traits (EMT) and entrepreneurial quality team (EQT) is characterized by a sample mean (M) of 0.512, a standard deviation (STDEV) of 0.045, T statistic of 11.203 and P-value of 0.000. The P-value is lesser than 0.05 (P-value <0.05) and the T statistic more than 2 (T statistic >2) means that there is a significant relationship between EMT and EQT. Therefore the hypothesis H1 is accepted. The results from the above table show that the Hypothesis (H1) proposed were supported. Therefore EMT has a positive impact on EQT.

Also, the results show that the P-value of the moderating role of work experience (WE) is higher than 0.000 (0.436 >0.05) and the T statistics is lesser than 2 (0.78 < 2). Therefore the moderating role of work experience is insignificant. It means that work experience does not have moderate the relationship between entrepreneurial motivations traits (EMT) and entrepreneurial quality team (EQT). Thus the hypothesis (H2) is rejected and was not supported in this study.

Then the different values of P and T statistic (0.232 and 1.196) of the relationship between WE and EQT show that there is no relationship between those two variables due to their insignificance. It means that work experience (WE) does not have a significant impact on entrepreneurial quality teams (EQT).

Table 6: R-square adjusted and the F-square

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
EQT	0.283	0.324	0.044	6.391	0.000***
EMT -> EQT	0.358	0.385	0.089	4.046	0.000***
Moderating Effect 1 -> EQT	0.02	0.049	0.034	0.569	0.569
WE -> EQT	0.013	0.023	0.019	0.715	0.475

*Note:*** indicates significance at 5%*

The R-square adjusted of the relationship between EMT and EQT is 0.324. It means that this model can explain 32.4% of the relationship between EMT and EQT and the remaining 67.6% cannot be explained. Therefore the variable EMT influences the variable EQT about 32.4%. This implies that EMT has a significant contribution to entrepreneurial quality team (EQT) by about 32.4%.

The F-square test show that the relationship between EMT and EQT have a sample mean of 0.385, a T statistic 4.046, which is greater than 2 and P-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. These values are significant; therefore, there is a positive relationship between EMT and EQT. It obviously means that EMT have a significant influence on EQT. Thus its contribution to EQT is about 38.5%. the remaining variable such as the moderating relationship of WE on the relationship between EMT and EQT is insignificant due to Pvalue 0.569 which is greater than 0.05 and also the Tstatistic 0.569 is which less than 2. It means that WE does not have a moderating effect on EMT and EQT relationship. Looking at table 6 we observe that no significant value comes out from the relationship between WE and EQT with a P-value of $0.475 > 0.05$ and T statistic $0.715 < 2$. So WE have an insignificant effect on EQT.

CONCLUSIONS

In this research study, the results revealed that there is a relationship between entrepreneurial motivation traits and entrepreneurial quality team. It implies that the research study supports the hypothesis H1. In this study, the finding does not find support for a significant moderating effect of work experience. It merely means that work experience does not interact in the relationship between entrepreneurial motivation traits and entrepreneurial quality team. In brief work experience does not determine the quality of the entrepreneurial team. However, the results provide support for the previous studies confirming the critical role played by entrepreneurial motivations traits in any entrepreneurship career.

We also found that without work experience entrepreneurs are willing to embrace an entrepreneurship career by forming an entrepreneurial team of quality. The quality of the entrepreneurial team is determined by the individual motivation to succeed or achieve their personal goals. Future research may be based on a longitudinal study instead of cross-sectional data to improve the results of this research study. For further research on the same topic, the level of education can be used as a moderating variable to investigate whether the level of education of entrepreneurs may influence the entrepreneurial quality of the team. Gender and equity in the formation of an entrepreneurial team or best in the field of entrepreneurship is a phenomenon that should considerably take place in entrepreneurship career.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, we recommend that:

- 1) Entrepreneurial teams must be composed of people highly motivated. The degree of motivation will play a significant role in the quality of the entrepreneurial team.
- 2) Each individual should pay attention to the push or pull factors that guide him to carry out an entrepreneurship career and be successful.
- 3) Work experience can be considered as an additional factor in the composition of an entrepreneurial team but should not belong to the main criteria to ensure the entrepreneur quality team.

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- [3] Perception of fairness in self-organized mass Entrepreneurship (No.4061160023).

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