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ENTREPRENEURIAL INNOVATION IN STARTUPS: THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN SHAPING EMPOWERMENT, ADAPTABILITY, AND GROWTH OUTCOMES

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of democratic leadership on startup success, highlighting its potential to inspire and motivate employees towards achieving a shared vision. By fostering an environment of innovation, risk-taking, and adaptability, democratic leadership empowers teams to drive creativity, collaboration, and growth. Through a review of existing literature, this research examines the role of democratic leadership in promoting entrepreneurial success, particularly in startups where agility and innovation are crucial. The findings suggest that democratic leadership can be a key driver of startup success, enabling organizations to respond effectively to changing market conditions and capitalize on emerging opportunities. Democratic leadership encourages employee participation and idea-sharing, leading to innovative solutions. This leadership style promotes a culture of openness, trust, and collaboration. Ultimately, democratic leadership can lead to increased job satisfaction, productivity, and startup success.

Keywords: *Democratic Leadership, Startup Success, Innovation, Risk-taking, Adaptability, Entrepreneurial Leadership, Collaborative Management, Employee Motivation, Shared Vision, Organizational Growth.*

1.0 Background

In the current dynamic and fast moving business environment, the start- ups have several challenges in pursuing success (Silva, 2016). Meaningful leadership is important in promoting innovation, expansion, and sustainability. Democratic leadership, which gives much prominence to employee participation, collaboration, and a shared decision-making process, has been of much interest in recent years. This type of leadership style promotes creativity and risk taking and is thus most appropriate for start-ups. Through empowering employees and creating a culture

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of openness and trust, democratic leadership may encourage and encourage teams to reach the common goal, which ultimately contributes to a startup success (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005).

Startups need leadership that is innovative and flexible to survive. Democratic style of leadership that promotes teamwork, innovativeness, and joint decision making is appropriate for startups. This style involves workers in the process, makes them innovative and encourages them to take risks so that startups can be able to compete and actualize their vision (Gonos & Gallo, 2013). With democratic leadership the startups can unblock growth, better decision-making among many other benefits and success rates.

Startups are entities that function in highly dynamic settings where innovation, flexibility are vital for not only the survival but also the growth. In such situations, the leadership styles that promote creativity, cooperation, and resilience are especially beneficial (Devi & Subiyantoro, 2021). Democratic leadership, which emphasizes on inclusivity, humanity participation, shared decision making, has come out strongly as a powerful approach for startups. Empowering team members and creating an environment of open communication, democratic leaders can exploit various viewpoints in order to achieve startup growth in terms of innovation and sacrifices. The effect of this leadership style is not only making the employees engaged and motivated but also makes startups ready to react appropriately to changes in the market and take advantage of emerging opportunities. Consequently, reasoning behind and effects of democratic leadership in startups may facilitate conclusions for entrepreneurs and leaders of organizations who want to create successful and sustainable ventures (Odumegwu, 2019).

Innovation, creativity, as well as adaptability are the chief characteristics of startups, and successful leadership is essential for the success of a startup. With a startup, the type of leadership that is most conducive is democratic leadership which allows for employee participation, team work and is equipped with shared decision-making (Raupu, Maharani, Mahmud, & Alauddin, 2021). This approach creates a culture of openness, trust, inclusivity, that allows teams to drive innovation, manage risk, and adapt to a shifting market. By involving employees and creating a sense of ownership from the workers, the democratic leadership can drive motivation, job satisfaction, and performance as a whole. Democratic leadership, in the context of a startup, where agility and responsiveness are important, can become a decisive element in gaining growth, sustainability and competitive edge.

The democratic leadership with its focus on participative decision-making, teamwork and employees' empowerment, has received recognition as a potentially effective leadership style in this case. The purpose of this study is to understand the connection of democratic leadership with success of a startup, with special emphasis on innovation, risk-taking, and adaptability (Hughes, Lee, Tian, Newman, & Legood, 2018). Through determining the effect of democratic leadership on startup performance, this research seeks to add to knowledge regarding the dynamics of such leadership that lead to entrepreneurial success.

is marked by fluctuation, uncertainty and fierce rivalry, requiring a sort of leadership that can nurture innovation, flexibility and robustness. Developmental leadership that focuses on participative decision, team work as well as employee empowerment has received relevance as a viable leadership style in this scenario (Foels, Driskell, Mullen, & Salas, 2000). The aim of this study was to analyze the relationship between democratic leadership and success of start-ups, and particularly the importance of innovation, risk-taking, and adaptability. Through exploring the effect of democratic leadership on the performance of startups, this study intends to make a contribution to the exploration of leadership dynamics that promote the success of entrepreneurs.

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There has been a recent increased interest from researchers in finding out the most effective leadership styles in startup settings. More specifically, democratic leadership has been singled out as a viable option, which can make use possible through the support of creativity and experiments as well as the development of the environment of permanent learning. Democratic leaders can create the potential of teams and push the boundaries of innovation by empowering the employees to take ownership and participate in decision-making processes (Motoyama & Knowlton, 2017).

This research will explore a correlation between democratic leadership and startup success, emphasizing an intermediary role of innovation, risk-taking, and adaptability (Kwanya & Stilwell, 2018). Through clarification on the mechanisms through which democratic leadership impacts startup performance, this research hopes to offer useful guides to entrepreneurs, leaders, and policymakers envisioning to drive entrepreneurial success and economic growth (Vasilescu, 2019).

Although the role of democratic leadership in startup settings through its potential benefits have started receiving recognition, there exists a great deal of research gap to how the democratic leadership actually impacts the startup success (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). Studies on literature have indicated that innovation, risk-taking, and adaptability are important in a startup's success, but little research has been carried out on the influence of democratic leadership on these factors. This study is aimed at filling this research void by focusing on how democratic leadership influences startup success and sheds special light on the role played by innovation, risk-taking, and adaptability. In an attempt to throw light on the leadership dynamics that underpin entrepreneurial success, this research explores this relationship (Pantouvakis & Patsiouras, 2016).

Startups have to undergo a lot in order to make it on the top, and effective leadership is essential to allow for innovation, growth, and sustainability (Alvesson, 2020). In spite of its possible advantages, the effect of democratic leadership on success of the startup is under researched. In particular, there is something not understood here about how democratic leadership affects important aspects such as innovation, risk taking, and flexibility in the startup contexts. This knowledge gap prevents entrepreneurs and the leaders from fully exploiting democratic leadership, which may, in turn, curtail the startup's performance and success. The purpose of this work is to solve this problem and study the connection between democratic leadership and the success of startups (Raup, 2008).

Although democratic leadership has been gaining more recognition as a source of potential benefits, many startups fail to implement the leadership styles that promote creativity, cooperation and adaptability. The fact that there is little understanding of how democratic leadership affects the success of startups especially with regards to innovation, risk-taking, and adaptability – prevents entrepreneurs and leaders from making informed decisions about leadership styles. This research attempts to solve this problem by examining the relationship between democratic leadership and startup success by paying special attention to the underlying aspects that determine the performance of entrepreneurship.(Busari, Khan, Abdullah, & Mughal, 2020)

This study is important because it helps understand how democratic leadership influences the success of startups, thereby filling the gap left in the literature. The results can teach entrepreneurs and leaders how they can successfully lead toward innovations, growth, and sustainability (Zhang & Aumeboonsuke, 2022) . This research reveals insights into the way

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leadership styles could affect such important factors as innovation, risk-taking, and adaptability. As a result, this research will provide the startups with the insight on the leadership choices that will ensure that entrepreneurship succeeds and accelerate the country's economy (Storey & Tibshirani, 2003).

This study has a great importance for the entrepreneurial ecosystem, as it reveals the influence of democratic leadership on the success of the startups. Through examining the relationship between democratic leadership and startup performance's most important drivers, like innovation, risk-taking, and adaptability, this paper offers useful insights to entrepreneurs and leaders (Terzi & Derin, 2016). The findings of this research may help develop various effective leadership strategies to empower startups and maximize the potential of teams and ensure sustainable growth. Moreover, this study builds the base for the existing body of knowledge on leadership and entrepreneurship, providing the subtle view of the democratic leadership in start-up environment. This research can have permanent influences on the startup ecosystem, which in turn would bring in the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship leading to economic development by filling the gap between theory and practice.

2.0Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Leadership is extremely important in the rapidly and rapidly changing world of startups, where a startup may make or break because of leadership performance. Many traditional styles of leadership focus on authority, control, and hierarchy, and these may not be the best styles for the dynamic and innovative spaces that usually surround startups (Johnson & Smith, 1953). Democratic leadership whose focus is on participation, collaboration and empowerment, has taken shape as a viable alternative. Democratic leadership can unleash the potential of startup teams through the inclusion of team members in decision-making processes and development of an open culture of trust (Fullan, Azorín, Harris, & Jones, 2024). This study investigates the connection between democratic leadership and startup success and looks at the effect of this leadership style on innovation, risk taking, and flexibility. This research seeks to inform entrepreneurs, leaders, and organisations on how beneficial, as well as hard it can be to lead democratically in startups through the illumination of the benefits and challenges (Shal, Ghamrawi, & Naccache, 2024).

Empowerment

Empowerment is a complex notion covering the psychological, social, economic, political perspectives, basically revolved around increasing people's or group's capability of making independent decisions and producing real changes(Zhou, Xu, & Zhang, 2024) . The idea has been widely discussed in different fields, while psychology has highlighted self-efficacy and agency, sociology has been discussing collective action against systemic inequality, and organizational studies have been studying workplace autonomy and leadership delegation. Some of the theoretical foundations like Freire's critical pedagogy and feminist theories bring out the necessity of awareness and participatory methods to overcome power disparities. Empowerment takes place at personal, community, economic and political level, each of which demands the nuance of approaches such as skills-building programs, grass-root movements, financial inclusion effort and policy push (Dushkova & Ivlieva, 2024). However, critics note that shallow interventions tend not to tear down deep-rooted structural obstacles but ask for more sustainable, intersectional solutions. Digital platforms further complicate empowerment dynamics, being both an opportunity and risk. The next focus for the research should be context-oriented

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strategies and measurable milestones to guarantee authentic equal empowerment over various populations (Mboutchouang Kountchou, Haruna, Tekam Oumbé, & Wirajing, 2025).

Adaptability

Adaptability is a key competence in the dynamic world that allows individuals, organisations and even societies to respond to new challenges, situations and uncertainty levels. Of note, the concept has received a wide scope of study in psychology, organizational behavior, education and evolutional biology among other disciplines demonstrating its significance in survival, growth and innovation (Ahmed, Asif, Alhelou, & Khalid, 2024). At the personal level, adaptability is associated with cognitive flexibility, emotional resilience, and learning agility. Psychologists focus on the fact that adaptable individuals can transform challenges, learn new skills effectively, and sustain performance when stressed. Openness to experience and the growth mindset are closely related to increased adaptability. In learning environments, adaptability entails developing problem-solving, creativity, and openness to change attributes, more and more projected in dynamic labor pools (Lee, Xu, & Yang, 2021).

Organizational adaptability is important in the maintenance of the competitiveness in volatile industries. Ambitious companies that succeed in challenging circumstances tend to have flexible organizational structures, fast decision making processes, and the culture of constant learning. Leadership is very important in this case as it facilitates adaptability through experimenting, tolerating calculated risks and immediate reaction to market changes. Still, strict hierarchies and reluctance to change come as a common difficulty evoking the necessity of active change management strategies (Nurimansjah, 2023).

In a broader perspective, adaptability of the society manifests itself in the way people in communities react to technological disruptions, economic crises, and environmental fluctuations. The recent as well as past examples prove that those societies are recovering faster from shocks that have strong social networks, inclusive governance and flexibility of policies. However, systemic inequalities and institutional inertia may undermine collective adaptability, increasing susceptibilities of marginalized groups (Sarmento & Riana, 2024). New studies examine adaptability under the circumstances of artificial intelligence and automation, where human-machine collaboration requires the new set of skills and mindsets. Furthermore, the adaptability as a survival mechanism also came to be a title of COVID-19 pandemic which brought remote work, digital transformation, and resilient supply chains into the forefront.

In spite of its acknowledged worth, it is still difficult to measure the notion of adaptability since it is context-specific. Future studies can examine cultural differences in adaptability and the sustained impact of adaptive behaviors and ways to promote adaptability throughout early-education to professional development. Finally, being adaptable does not only require one to respond but to proactively engage in the circumstances to flourish in uncertainty (Qatawneh, 2023).

Startup growth is a multidimensional process that is contingent on innovation, dynamics in the market, getting funding, and organizational flexibility. Popular startups effectively exhibit the good product-market fit, employing the disruptive technology or new business model to the unserved needs in scalable manners (Bessen, Impink, Reichensperger, & Seamans, 2022). The trajectory of growth is highly reliant on the financing mechanisms, but with the venture capital acting as a key enabler of accelerated growth, the long-term success frequently relies on the balance between the external financing, viable unit economics and cash flow control. Leadership quality and team composition becomes so important that at the decision-making and execution

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levels, the founder resilience and complementary team skill set within the founding team matters a lot. As startups grow, they often run into operational issues driven by the need to pivot strategically or restructure organizationally, further advancing the need for the ability to be agile when addressing the market feedback (Ehsan, 2021).

The greater entrepreneurial ecosystem availability of talent pools, mentorship networks, and favorable regulatory environment provides critical enabling conditions for expansion. Performance metrics are crucial and they change in growing stages from user acquisition and market penetration to retention economics and operational efficiency. However, the contradiction between the velocity of growth and sustainable scaling continues to be a challenge, and many start-ups fail to keep the quality of a product and reproduce the company's culture successfully in the growth process (Day, Shah, Kaganoff, Powelson, & Mathews, 2022). The importance of data-driven decision making and AI-enabled operational tools in current startup scaling is well highlighted in the emerging research, yet with acknowledgment of endurance of human creativity and leadership in embracing uncertainty. The most robust growth strategies seem to reconcile big dreams with practical operations, meaning innovation intersects with a strict execution of ideas to create long-term businesses and not just a temporary scale.

Risk Taking

Future research may continue exploring the long-term results of different types of growth strategies, with specific emphasis on how various scaling strategies influence the survival rates and competitive standing of startups as the market environment changes (Judijanto, 2024).(Wen, Li, Sha, & Shao, 2021)A venture into risk-taking is a fundamental principle of a successful venture, but it is a double-edged sword that can propel a startup into rapid growth or gut it to oblivion. Involvement in risk-taking is an inherent activity for entrepreneurs when they venture into a business, because they invest the scarce resources in uncertain payouts for the sake of innovation and market opportunities. Successful founders are said to have a unique gift in the art of evaluating and handling risks instead of avoiding them, the bold vision has a pragmatic side partner. The type of risk involved in startup differs depending on different growth stages – early stage ventures usually experience product development and market validation risk-factors while scaling startups are faced with operational and financial risks of rapid expansion.

Cognitive factors are strong determinants of entrepreneurial risk-taking, as they highlight optimism bias and overconfidence as common psychological drivers of entrepreneurial decisions, which can both be a boon and the bane. Environmental forces also determine risk behavior since founders in the supportive ecosystem with access to funding and mentorship networks exhibit high risk tolerance. Possibly, the most successful entrepreneurs seem to make "smart risks": they gain enough information for reducing uncertainty while keeping the courage to take big bets where such opportunities arise. Risk mitigation strategies used in high-growth startups are often iterative testing, scenario planning, and development of adaptable structures within an organization (Ritala, Baiyere, Hughes, & Kraus, 2021).

The link between risk-taking and the performance of start-ups is an inverted U-shaped relationship where extreme prudence, on the one hand, and mad gamble, on the other hand, relate to worse results, while the measured, calculated risk-taking is connected to higher levels of success (Falk, Becker, Dohmen, Huffman, & Sunde, 2023). New studies have focused on the increasing significance of portfolio approaches to risk with the diversification of initiatives of startups between the high-risk innovation projects and more viable revenue sources. As startup ecosystems develop, we notice more institutionalization of risk management, a mix of

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entrepreneurial spirit with professional risk assessment model by which ventures can be optimized for growth while properties for sustainability are insured (Fisher & Ryan, 2021).

Entrepreneurial innovation

Entrepreneurial innovation has been widely researched on as an important aspect of driving economic development, providing competitive advantage and creating a better society. The literature shows that the aspect of innovation in entrepreneurship is different from corporate innovation, which flourishes in a situation of uncertainty, lack of resources and a disequilibrium in the market (Shwedeh et al., 2023). Scholars are putting emphasis that, entrepreneurial innovation is not just bringing about new technologies but involves ne w business models, processes, value propositions that challenge the dominant markets or creates new ones. One of the predominant ideas in the literature is the role played by opportunity recognition, where entrepreneurs search and spot inefficiencies in the market along with developing novel solutions. This is conditioned by cognitive aspects such as creativity, heuristic thinking and risk perception that distinguishes successful innovators from run of the mill business operators. Additionally, this resource-based view expresses the manner in which the entrepreneurial firms utilize the scarce resources by means of bricolage improvisation and recombination of available assets to drive innovation, in spite of constraints (Ianioglo, 2022).

The innovation ecosystem is also important; there has been research stating that networks, incubators, and the government policies are important in creating entrepreneurial ventures. Open innovation and partnership with universities, corporations and other startups have become the main approaches to speeding up innovation (Bradley, Kim, Klein, McMullen, & Wennberg, 2021). In addition, there is digital transformation, which has changed the ground for entrepreneurial innovation as it has reduced entry barriers, allowed for rapid prototyping, and it has been made easy to scale around the world via platforms and cloud technology.

Nevertheless, there are still difficulties, such as high failure rates owing to the market misfit, lack of funds, and the tricks of execution. Scholarship indicates that successful entrepreneurial innovation is successful when there is satisfaction of both experimentation and disciplined execution often leveraging upon lean startup methodologies and iterative customer feedback loops. Future research agendas therefore require further investigation on the effect of artificial intelligence, imperative towards sustainability and cross-cultural differences on entrepreneurial innovation outcomes (Shkabatur, Bar-El, & Schwartz, 2022). Overall, the literature defines entrepreneurial innovation to be a dynamic, multidimensional occurrence, which is the key to the economic resilience and growth amid the complexification of the global context.

Organization culture

Organizational culture has been the subject of much research given its importance as a factor that affects employees in regard to their behaviors and performance as well as the general success of any business (Akpa, Asikhia, & Nneji, 2021). Organizational culture is defined in literature as a system of shared values, beliefs, norms and practices that determine the way the work is done in a company. Schein's (1985) three-level model which embeds the artifacts, the espoused values, and the underlying assumptions is significantly fundamental in explaining the ways in which culture works on the surface and in the unconscious minds. Research shows powerful organizational cultures promote employee's engagement and orientation to company goals as well as adaptability to change (Bijalwan, Gupta, Johri, & Asif, 2024). Cameron and Quinn's Competing Values Framework places these four culture types clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy which share various strategic objectives, from internal cooperation to external

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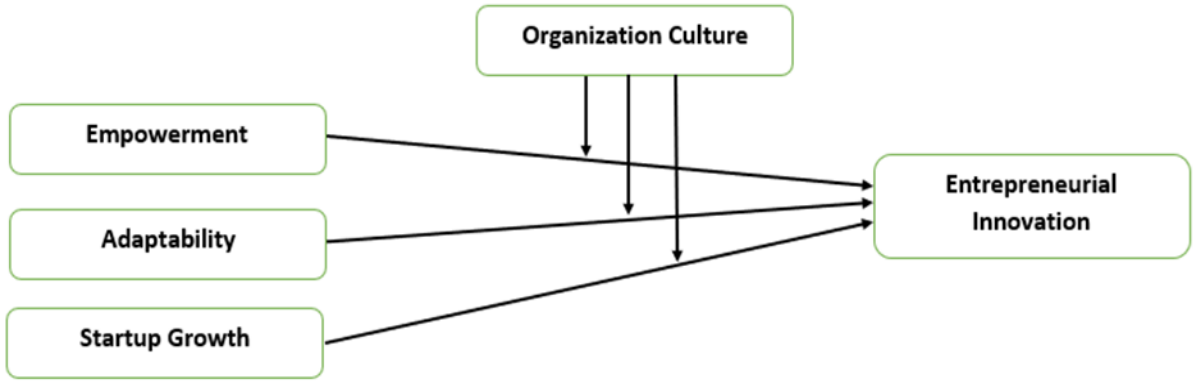
competitiveness. Research shows that coherence of organizational culture and values of employees drives the level of job satisfaction and retention whereas its lack can bring disengagement and turnover (Lam, Nguyen, Le, & Tran, 2021).

The role that culture plays in the shaping and preserving of culture is another main idea. Specifically, transformational leaders are among those who develop cultures of innovation and psychological safety, while authoritarian leadership can strengthen rigid, risk-adverse cultures. Google's Project Aristotle and similar studies stress upon psychological safety as a cultural element through which employees feel safe to take risks as essential for team effectiveness. Emergence of performance metrics also depends on the organizational culture. Innovative cultures, for example, are related to a greater success rate of R&D efforts, whereas customer-centric cultures enhance service quality. However, fear, silos, unethical norms can cause scandals (Volkswagen's emission case) and financial decline for cultures that are toxic (Melnyk, Hsieh, & Mu, 2022).

Some of the issues in managing culture include reluctance in change during merging or digital transformation. According to Kotter and Hackett, agile cultures, which achieve a balance between stability and agility, are more successful in volatile markets as compared to rigid cultures. Recent research examines hybrid cultures in the remote working environment and the impact of AI on the cultural forces (Warrick & Gardner, 2021). Future works might explore the topic of cross-cultural leadership in the global firms and the measurement of culture through advanced analytics. All in all, the organizational culture is still a lever for competitive advantage that needs to be consciously created and kept fostering (Chennattuserry, 2022).

1.7 Theoretical Framework



Hypothesis Development

H1: Democratic leadership is positively related to startup success.
H2: Democratic leadership has a positive impact on innovation in startups.
H3: Democratic leadership increases risk-taking behavior in startup environments.
H4: Democratic leadership enhances adaptability and responsiveness to change in startups.
H5: The relationship between democratic leadership and startup success is mediated by innovation and adaptability.

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H6: Startups with democratic leadership styles experience higher levels of employee satisfaction and engagement compared to those with more autocratic leadership styles.
H7: Startups with democratic leadership styles experience higher levels of employee satisfaction and engagement compared to those with more autocratic leadership styles.

Research Methodology

The research approach selected for the present study is quantitative in nature to examine the impact of selected independent variables i.e. Business model innovation, Technological innovation, Product Innovation in determination of innovation in Entrepreneurial Success of Entrepreneurs (Taherdoost, 2022). The selection of quantitative approach is based on review of existing body of literature and quantitative approach also found useful to apply collected responses, after application of statistical techniques, to come up with testing of constructed hypotheses. Furthermore, quantitative approaches found with better assessment of area of study with empirical findings to get applied in other studies. Quantitative assessment also found useful its role in understanding different dimension of problem statement during an investigation. Quantitative approach also found useful in understanding nature and strength of association among set of variables (Muzari, Shava, & Shonhiwa, 2022). The study also found useful in interpretation of explored relations during the investigation to come up with elaboration of underlying relations with use of quantitative approach. Quantitative approach also found useful in understanding relative strength of each variable on dependent variable. Quantitative approaches also explained with role of it in its further application and use in further studies (Sharma & Choubey, 2022).

The selected variables, as opted for the current research investigation, are not observed with any valid source of published source of information hence adopted with primary approach to collect with required number of responses to perform the analysis. The primary responses are also found useful in studying selected area of study with consideration of variable like Business model innovation, Technological innovation, Product Innovation in determination of innovation in Entrepreneurial Success with moderating role of Entrepreneurial Ideas in innovation in Entrepreneurial Success of Entrepreneurs (Krishnan, Kasim, Hamid, & Ghazali, 2021). This primary approach also found useful with ground information in understanding the focused area of study. The primary approach also eases the study to perform in a manner with flexibility and bring up with updated information.

There are number of procedures to apply on constructed conceptual framework to understand with the role of innovation in Entrepreneurial Success. With reference to relevant body of literature and procedures, the present study has selected with explanatory research approach to understand and explain the constructed research model. This procedure helps to understand constructed model to understand nature and strength of relation of selected variables not only but identify with significance and non-significance relationship. This procedure also helps to understand relative impact of each variables and its marginal impact on innovation in Entrepreneurial Success.

The targeted population of the present study is Entrepreneurs of the Incubation center in Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar and Multan districts with different Incubation Centers. Those individuals have organizational associations and organizational practices. Furthermore, elements of targeted population also observed with different level of education and experience.

There are different types of sampling techniques i.e. probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling techniques. This research study selected with probabilistic sampling technique i.e. random

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sampling techniques. This sampling method observed commonly used in number of studies in existing literatures. This format of sampling techniques has found with its usefulness to get with required number of responses without confronting to any challenge. This sampling technique has also found common in use in different number of primary investigations. It is also useful for new researchers to adopt and perform research-based investigation. In addition, random sampling technique also not limit in term of response collection element without confronting to any hindrance in performing the investigation in this research study.

The selection of sample size is done based on below formula to come up appropriate size of sample for the present research study at 5 percent level of significance. This formula is extensively used in literature and found useful to come up with sufficient number of responses to come up with valid results to proceed the study.

Cochran's Formula = $((1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)) / (0.05)^2$

Cochran's Formula =320

Sample Size = 623 / (1 + (384 / 800))

Sample Size = 350

The present study selected with survey approach among number of other data collection methods for the present study. The use of survey approach found very useful to get with firsthand information from targeted respondents. There are multiple options selected under survey approach i.e. google form, telephonic communication, email request, physical interaction, social media and social connection for required number of response collection. The development of questionnaire is done based on previously conducted investigations. The questionnaire is inputted with demographic questions to understand with characteristics of respondent along with questions for each study specific variables. The questions are based on closed nature questions. The study variables specific variables are applied with Likert scale ranges from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree).

The present research study has adopted with descriptive statistics, correlation technique and multivariate regression to understand with findings and get with results from statistical software interpret and test constructed hypotheses. Descriptive statistics helps to understand and elaborate characteristics of demographic features of current study. It is added up with reliability test i.e. Cronbach's Alpha to check either collected information fulfill with reliability scale at 0.6 or not. In case any deficiency added with additional responses. The study also applies primary responses with Pearson correlation test. The value of test ranges in between 0 to 1 to determine with strength of linear relationship between two variables at 5 percent level of significance. The primary collected responses also applied with multivariate regression technique including with ANOVA, model summary and coefficient matrix. Each coefficient value is tested with t-statistics at 5 percent level of significance.

4.0 Result Analysis and Findings

In this result of the study on the bases of result the data that are obtained from the women who use cosmetics. There are few steps in this Study; first response rate, non-response bias and popular process bias tests are provided; in second step data screening and preparation of data are highlighted and description of the sample characteristics are described; Finally the effect of the hypothesis analysis, determination of coefficient, effect size and predictive significance are analyzed and stated.

The data that we use in this research is collected from the women that are used cosmetics from the Bahawalpur area. Questionnaires that are personally distributed in this research and

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consultations were given to the further assist in the fulfillment of the questionnaire. With these efforts, out of 470 questionnaires that are directly administrated to the respondents, 405 questionnaires were returned. The response rate of 86%, but out of 405 responses collected, because out of 405 responses that are collected, 65 responses that are not filled properly and refused for the further analysis.

Table 4.1

Response	Frequency rate
No of distributed questionnaire	420
Returned questionnaire	350
Returned and usable questionnaire	90
Returned and excluded questionnaire	420
Questionnaire not returned	70
Response rate %	86%

Table 2 Ages of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Under 18	60	17.3	17.3	17.3
18-21	55	15.7	15.7	33.0
22-25	107	30.5	30.5	63.5
26-30	128	36.5	36.5	100
Total	**350**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Table 3 Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Female	146	41.7	41.7	41.7
Male	204	58.3	58.3	100.0
Total	**350**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Initial Data Examination, Screening and Preparation:

Analysis for Missing Value:

In order to reduce the missing value in the sample, the researcher called for protective steps at the selection stage. Following the result of the returned surveys, the researcher checked if all the questions had been correctly answered. If the questionnaire has been ignored and the questionnaire has been filled correctly, attention was generated toward the respondents. According to (Hair Jr., 2013) when there are less than 5% missing values per object, missing value should be used mean. In this analysis, the lack of value examination exposed that not any of the metrics had 5% of the missing values that has ranging from 0.2% to 1.5%.

Analysis of Outliers:

An outlier is a fact that is not confirmed by other findings that are far from being observed. Outlier could be blame for the variance in the measurement, which may indicate an experimental mistake. Outlier will appear in any random distribution, but they are often representative of a measuring error and hard-tail distribution of the population. Investing the outlier is important step whereas ignoring the original review of outlier will distort the predictive analysis if it happens to be a questionable outlier (Hair and Anderson, 2010).

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Sample characteristic:

Respondents were requested to choose a variety of traits that are relevant to their demographics such as gender, age, marital status, qualification and residence. The findings of the characteristic of the participants are follows.

Descriptive Analysis:

In this study, we describe and identify the characteristics of the data of the current research. Descriptive statistics have been conducted and it was done in order to collect general descriptions of the constructs used in this study. Therefore, Mean, Std. D, minimum and maximum variance values, independent and dependent variables were computed from descriptive statistics. The outcomes of the analysis of descriptive statistics are given in Table 4.3 below. Moreover, by using 05 point Likert scales that has the range from 1= SD to 5= SA, all the variables of this research were measured. Furthermore, the total values of standard deviations fall between the range of (0.64) and (0.85), which established the acceptable variability within the data set. The range of the scale is between 1-5 with N=350.

Table 4.3

Constructs	*No. of item*	*Mean*	*Std.*
Empowerment	12	3.63	0.64
Adaptability	08	3.70	0.62
Startup Growth	12	3.63	0.76
Entrepreneurial Innovation	10	3.52	0.76
Organizational Culture	10	3.68	0.72

Direct Path:

Variables	Path coefficients

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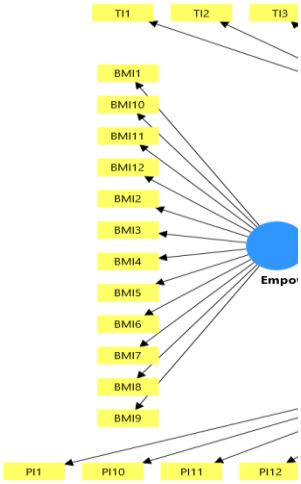

ADP -> EI	**0.291**
EP -> EI	**0.388**
OC -> EI	**0.306**
OC x ADP -> EI	**0.025**
OC x EP -> EI	**0.091**
OC x SG -> EI	**0.042**
SG -> EI	**0.365**

The AVE value of 0.50 implies that Convergent Validity (CV) is sufficient. Latent, in other words, Variables explains half of the variance of its items and demonstrates sufficient convergent validity(Hair Jr., 2013). CV was tested in this analysis by evaluating AVE values. The result shows a range of AVE values between 0.52 and 0.72, so it can be stated that convergent validity is identified.

	Path coefficients
BMI -> ES	0.388
EI -> ES	0.306
EI x BMI -> ES	0.091
EI x PI -> ES	0.042
EI x TI -> ES	0.025
PI -> ES	0.365
TI -> ES	0.291

Indirect Paths:
Moderating Analysis:
Bootstrapping:
To evaluate hypothesis and for finding complete picture of outcome Systematic model analysis of the structural model was performed in this work. Hypotheses that are evaluated from 1 through 7 by using the PLS-SEM technique the size of path coefficients were investigated. In Smart PLS 4.0.0, the PLS-SEM bootstrapping approach was used to check the relationship's value.

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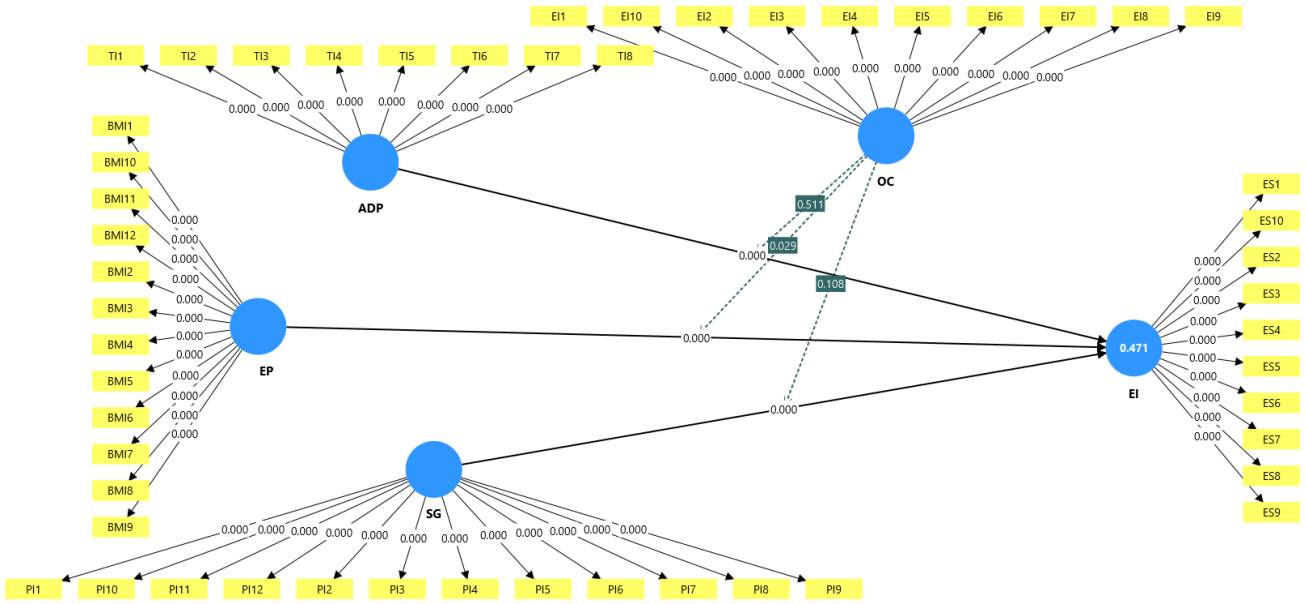

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample	Sample Mean	SD	T value	P value	Results
H1	**ADP -> EI**	0.291	0.293	0.037	7.837	0.000	**SUPPORTED**
H2	**EP -> EI**	0.388	0.386	0.038	10.190	0.000	**SUPPORTED**
H3	**OC -> EI**	0.306	0.311	0.037	8.207	0.000	**SUPPORTED**
H4	**SG -> EI**	0.025	0.028	0.038	0.657	0.511	**NOT SUPPORTED**
H5	**OC x ADP -> EI**	0.091	0.092	0.042	2.186	0.029	**SUPPORTED**
H6	**OC x EP -> EI**	0.042	0.042	0.026	1.607	0.008	**SUPPORTED**
H7	**OC x SG -> EI**	0.365	0.368	0.036	10.017	0.000	**SUPPORTED**

Table 4.6 shows the path of coefficient about dependent or independent variable, and the main path of this figure is to focus of PLS and algorithm. For H1result it is shown that H1 is supported because Business Model Innovation and Entrepreneurial Success has significant positive relationship (t=9.6, p<0.05). In H2 Technological Innovation and Entrepreneurial Success has significant relationship (t=8.4, P<0.05), so H2 is also supported. In H3 Product Innovative and Entrepreneurial Success has direct relationship (t =2.5, P<0.05) so it is supported. as a result hypothesis In H4 in Indirect relationship between the Product Innovative and Entrepreneurial Success through the moderating effect of Entrepreneurial Ideas has significant positive relationship (t=1.5, P= 0.005) So it is also supported.H5 shows that there is indirect positive relationship between Technological Innovation and Entrepreneurial Success relates with moderating effect of Entrepreneurial Ideas (t=0.6, P=0.504) so H5 is not supported. H6 shows

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that there is indirect positive relationship between Business Model Innovation and Entrepreneurial Success relates with moderating effect of Entrepreneurial Ideas (t=9.6, P=0.000) so H6 is supported.

Hypothesis	Statement	Decision
H1	Democratic leadership is positively related to startup success.	**SUPPORTED**
H2	Democratic leadership has a positive impact on innovation in startups.	**SUPPORTED**
H3	Democratic leadership increases risk-taking behavior in startup environments.	**SUPPORTED**
H4	Democratic leadership enhances adaptability and responsiveness to change in startups.	**NOT SUPPORTED**
H5	The relationship between democratic leadership and startup success is mediated by innovation and adaptability.	**SUPPORTED**
H6	Startups with democratic leadership styles experience higher levels of employee satisfaction and engagement compared to those with more autocratic leadership styles.	**SUPPORTED**
H7		**SUPPORTED**

Conclusion:

Democratic leadership is being seen as its hallmark in the world of startups, which is fast-paced, and driven by innovations. Democratic leadership is characterized by collaboration, empowerment and having a shared vision (Makridakis, Spiliotis, & Assimakopoulos, 2022). Creating such a context where workers are encouraged to give ideas, take calculated risks, and adjust in changing circumstances, this leadership model is a perfect fit for the dynamic needs of fledgling ventures. In the course of this discussion, it has been clear that democratic leadership is not like any managerial style but strategic tool that can generate creativity, resilience, and long term growth. Its ability to motivate and mobilize teams but also striking balance in autonomy and accountability makes it the perfect fit for startups challenges and opportunities (Jeblick et al., 2024).

Behind any successful startup is a culture of innovation and the democratic leadership is the one that propels it. Contrary to the hierarchical models that concentrate power, democratic leaders distribute power, thus calling upon various perspectives that could be useful in solving problems. This openness triggers innovation as all employees (up and down the ladder) feel the freedom to experiment and offer nonstandard solutions (Mellos & Paparrigopoulos, 2022). This collective intelligence is the source of competitive advantage in startups, where resource and market uncertainties require agility. For example, tech startups such as GitHub, and Slack succeeded due to the fact that they have embedded democratic principles in their DNA, allowing teams to iterate

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fast, pivot if need be. These companies turned grassroots ideas into groundbreaking product by receiving input from engineers, designers and marketers equally.

Furthermore, democratic leadership makes risk-taking common-place, which is a non-negotiable characteristic in startups. Leaders who adopt this style create psychological safety, and employees are able to express their daring ideas, free from the fear of punishment failures. This openness increases not only the pace of innovation but also organizational resilience (Liggett, 2025). When the setbacks happen, teams with democratic leaders are likely to view them as learning and not catastrophes. With such an ideology, over time, adaptability is generated, and startups can cope confidently with disruptions, ranging from changing consumer tastes to advancements in technology.

The fact that a startup's survival depends on bringing people together onto one purpose is often the key to success. Leaders in the democratic societies are particularly good at this by co-creating a vision with their teams. Instead of pushing top-down goals, they involve employees in developing a mission, values, and strategic objectives for the company (Han & Jung, 2023). This group partnership creates ownership, and passive workers become zealous stakeholders. Companies such as Airbnb and Patagonia credit the success of their enterprise on transparent and inclusive leaders whereby they ensured every team member is aware of his/her contribution towards the progress of the company's ethos (Van Kleef et al., 2021).

This harmony of the individual and the organization objectives support the motivation of the staff in even difficult phases. Startups are often confronted with high pressured situations ranging from the lack of funds to delays of product-launch (Black & Edgecombe). Democratic leaders seek to avoid burnout by keeping the channels open and rewarding accomplishments. Repeated feedback loops and decision-making involving the employees help instill trust, so workers are committed to the shared goal. In addition, the spreading of responsibilities for leadership in democratic models makes it less likely to overuse a visionary leader and as such makes the organizational structure more scalable and resilient (Miklaszewicz, 2023) .

The startup sphere is very volatile in its nature, requiring leaders who can reconcile organization with flexibility. Adaptability is valued in democratic leadership in such surroundings. Startups have to often change their business models as Instagram which was initially a check-in app changed to become a photo-sharing platform and Shopify that evolved from snowboard sales company to offer e-commerce solutions. Leaders who had listened to employee and market feedback were able to make strategic shifts in all cases (Hojeij, 2024).

This flexibility reaches the management of talent. Democratic heads understand that startups need multidisciplinary team that can get into different hats. By nurturing cross-functional teamwork and the culture of lifelong learning, they create both specialized and flexible workforces. Workers in such working environments gain transferable skills from problem-solving to being emotionally intelligent, which will add onto the startup's capacity to face the unanticipated challenges (Karadayı & Akyürek, 2025).

Although democratic leadership comes with immense advantages, they come with challenges. Making of decisions in consensus governed settings could be very slow, and contrary views might leave one in a state of indecision. However, efficient democratic leaders reduce these dangers by establishing boundaries for instance, discretion on key decisions can be retained while minor decisions are left at the disposal of teams (Kachniewska & Para, 2023). Such tools as the agile methodologies and digital collaboration platforms facilitate the processes even more, preventing the inclusivity from hindering efficiency.

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In the scaling of startups, it becomes increasingly difficult to stick to the democratic principles. However, even companies such as Google and Spotify have shown that it is possible to maintain the culture of innovation and autonomy while becoming large global companies. The secret is to instill democratic values into the organizational structures, in flattened hierarchies, innovation labs, or employee resource groups, which keep changing in accordance with the requirements of the company (Carter, 2024).

On conclusion, democratic leadership is not a strategy, but a philosophy, which meets the ethos of startups to the fullest extent. Through encouraging innovation, building a sense of a joint mission, and broadening adaptability, it makes young companies ready to succeed in competitive markets (Schwartz, 2023). Although challenges do exist, the benefits, otherwise the employee engagement, resilience, and sustained growth, significantly outweigh the danger. As the landscape of startups is changing, the role of democratic leadership will be irreplaceable, and hereby stating that the most successful ventures are those where every voice can make the changes to the future (Fouquet & Brummer, 2023).

Limitations:

Although the analysis of democratic leadership in startups entails its revolutionary nature, there are several limitations that can be mentioned in order to present a balanced picture and outline the direction for further research (Woods, 2021).

The study mainly focuses on successful startups in the innovation-driven sector (e.g., tech, e-commerce) and this may bias results towards sectors that are inherently collaborative and adaptable by nature. Startups, which are in industries with a lot of regulations (finance, healthcare), or which have strict hierarchical traditions, may not receive the benefits of democratic leadership (Chakraborty, Edirippulige, & Ilavarasan, 2023). In addition, cultural contexts were not researched in detail; democratic leadership style might encounter push-backs in areas with authoritarian business standards, or collectivist work environments.

The given examples (including GitHub, Airbnb, Shopify) are mostly “success stories”, which may not consider those startups that could not succeed though following democratic principles. This survivorship bias may inflate the effectiveness of the style. For example, democratic decision-making may cause delays or internal frictions in resource-poor startups, thus strengthening failure tendencies, which remain partially uncovered in the analysis (Aminova & Marchi, 2021).

Although democratic leadership is lauded for encouraging entrepreneurial innovation in seed start-ups, the study has not critically looked at its feasibility at high-speed scaling. As startups expand, communication is hard to be open and decision-making participatory in nature also becomes logistically challenging (Pricopoaia, Busila, Cristache, Susanu, & Matis, 2024). Bureaucracy tends to arise and leaders will inadvertently revert to top-down methods to satisfy investor demands or operation objectives. The change from a flat-hierarchy to an organized-one is underexplored.

The analysis heavily leans on qualitative case studies and anecdotal evidence, which are suggestive and not empirically robust. Quantitative data – employees’ retention rates, innovation measures/metrics, or financial performance associated with democratic practices, would substantiate the claims. Additionally, the study does not take into consideration confounders such as founder’s experience, market timing, and access to funding which also have an impact on success of the startups (Audretsch, Belitski, Caiazza, & Siegel, 2023).

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Democratic leadership assumes that all employees will always internally want to provide ideas and take responsibility. But all team members do not succeed under such conditions. Some may want clear directives or feel self-repressed and fail to express opinions hence disengagement. The study does not provide information about how democratic leaders respond to such disparities and adjust their style to various personalities (Cavallo, Ghezzi, & Rossi-Lamastra, 2021).

Although democratic leadership allows for inclusivity, the study overlooks the possibilities of inefficiency. Time delays in consensus building in a quick-paced start-up setting may cause adverse decisions to be delayed, giving rivals an advantage (Mota et al., 2022). The analysis does not suggest the frameworks to balance the collaboration and agility, for example, hybrid models (e.g., "bounded autonomy"), or tools to simplify decision-making.

The study emphasizes the short- to medium-term effects with a minimum amount of information as to long-term sustainability. For instance, democratic cultures may not be able to hold themselves together during transitions in leadership (e.g., founder exits) or contracting economies. Besides, startups' dynamism – such as pivots or mergers – may stretch participatory structures, a dynamic that is not well covered (Gómez-Prado et al., 2022) .

To address these limitations, future studies should:

1.Compare principalities of different industries as well as cultures in order to evaluate the universality of democratic leadership's advantages.

2.Examine unsuccessful start-ups to learn situations in which democratic practices can go wrong.

3.Create quantitative frameworks to ascertain the level of correlation existing between democratic leadership and key performance indicators (KPIs).

4.Read about hybrid leadership approaches that integrate democratic foundations with a decisive structure in crunch times.

5.Review the role of technology (such as AI driven cooperation tools) in scaling democratic practices on expanding startups.

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