

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Departmental Research Seminar



Learning-by-advising? Startup Learning as an Advice-giver in Accelerators

By

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Date : 27 Oct 2023 (FRI)

Time : 10:30 am – 12 noon

Venue : M802

Abstract

How do entrepreneurs learn from peer advising and enhance business idea development? Prior research views peer relationships as symmetric and discusses advice-receivers' benefits assuming they will return the same favors to advice-givers. In this study, we question the assumption of symmetry and investigate whether peer advising itself can enhance the advice-givers' business ideas in accelerators. We conducted a randomized controlled trial with 119 startups, in which founders in a treatment group were asked to review peers' pitch decks and give advice. After three rounds of peer advising, we find that entrepreneurs who advised peers improved the idea usefulness in their pitch decks by about one-third of a standard deviation. Furthermore, advice-givers' prior work experience further enhanced idea usefulness, whereas their MBA training is associated with lower novelty of the venture idea. Our findings suggest a novel mechanism of peer learning from an advice-giver's perspective and emphasize the necessity of distinguishing idea domains in studying entrepreneurs' business ideas as an important element of firm success.

Dr Charles (Chuck) Eesley is an Associate Professor and W.M. Keck Foundation Faculty Scholar in the Department of Management Science and Engineering at Stanford University. As part of the Stanford Technology Ventures Program, his research focuses on the role of the institutional and university environment in high-growth, technology entrepreneurship. His research focuses on rethinking how the educational and policy environment shapes the economic and entrepreneurial impact of university alumni. His field research spans China, Japan, Chile, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Thailand and Silicon Valley and has received awards from the Schulze Foundation, the Technical University of Munich, and the Kauffman Foundation. He is a faculty affiliate at the Stanford Center for International Development, the Woods Institute for the Environment and the Stanford King Center on Global Development. He is also a member of the Editorial Board for the *Strategic Management Journal*. Before coming to Stanford, Dr Eesley completed his Ph.D. at the M.I.T. Sloan School of Management. His work has been published among other places in *Organization Science*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Research Policy*, and *Biological Psychiatry*. He has also been an advocate and mentor for immigrants and historically under-represented groups in STEM, academia and the tech sector via programs such as Diversifying Academia, Recognizing Excellence (DARE), AAAS - Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST), and SURF among others.

All interested are welcome.



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