

A Case Study of a Microenterprise: The Factors Responsible for its Growth and Outcomes: Indian Perspective

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Abstract: This a field-researched case about a micro enterprise in health sector, the Extra Care Physiotherapy Private Ltd. (ECPPL), dedicated to providing quality physiotherapy with extra care to the patients. Does the passion for work and clarity in vision strong enough to give birth to a successful enterprise and route it to its development? The case is based on research Primary and secondary information. The validation of information has been tested several times with several sources like protagonist, the organization, the employees, and the customers. Entrepreneurship is a journey around passion. However behavior is aptly responsible towards an organizational growth, especially for a startup. The case reflects the positivity in the behavior of the entrepreneurial couple who induce growth of their startup by carefully implementing their plans, combining skills, capabilities, resources, and people management. The findings are restricted to one organization, which may not strongly assists towards theory building. Learning outcomes of the case reflect that people management becomes a primary weapon for entrepreneur to steer their startup. As a result of discussing this case, students should be able to: first, examine strategic entrepreneurial strengths, analyse opportunities for the creation of business, market and environmental factors, and strategize to minimize weaknesses and to address threats and identify an organization's strategic focus. They should able understand the imperatives of critical thinking, and clarity of vision and mission for personal success and connotation of hard work, team work and employee orientation in the growth of the enterprise.

Keywords: Microenterprise, Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship, behavioral aspects, startup,

Introduction

Entrepreneurship involves special kinds of decision-making processes. Decision making process is connected to an individual, because of this; it is argued that the success of a business depends on the entrepreneur's personality. The decision to become an entrepreneur might open up a great chance to fulfil your dreams but the risk associated and the psychological costs of failure for the persons involved is very high. The success

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and failure of an enterprise can be to some extent predicted based on the personality of the person.

This case study aims to explore the professional journey by a couple in the medical profession. The case talks how the threats were encountered, how the entrepreneur coped with stresses in professional front and how their vision and planning along with their interpersonal skills and other personality traits successfully started and is continuing their the success story of their microenterprise. These are reflective of patterns in behavioral success.

The behavioral sciences began to do research in the area of entrepreneurs after McClelland (1961) presented his observations on the entrepreneurial skills stating importance of high need for achievement than non-entrepreneurs for moderate risk taking. Several different characteristics became prominent in the attempts to define an entrepreneur: need for achievement, internal locus of control, high propensity for risk taking, the need for independence, and deviant and innovative behavior. Timmons' (1994) analysis of more than 50 studies found a consensus around six general characteristics of entrepreneurs: commitment and determination; leadership; opportunity obsession; tolerance of risk, ambiguity and uncertainty; creativity, self-reliance and ability to adapt; and motivation to excel.

Beginning of the Journey: ECCPL

This case elaborates on a Physiotherapist couple. The research aimed to explore the professional journey of Dr. Santosh Kumar, a physiotherapist and his wife Dr. Akanksha Upadhyay. Dr. Santosh Kumar completed his Bachelor of Physiotherapy and a distant learning course of Bachelor of Imaging Technology (BMIT) from Mahe to support his knowledge. Dr. Akanksha did diploma in Physiotherapy, and also Masters in Business Administration from IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University). Starting from a one-room set they have now developed a well-equipped Physiotherapy centre.

The couple started working independently 8 years back with educational background in physiotherapy, no financial backing, little market experience and minimal or no family involvement. They always had a high aim for self-identity and for social service. Having reality orientation and practical exposure of the societal demands of the patients and keeping the business perspective in mind, they expanded their profession of Physiotherapy in Lucknow at a young age while most of the doctors in Physiotherapy usually worked under a Orthopedic Surgeons, this went ahead to start an enterprise in the field of Physiotherapy.

Theoretical Framework

Several psychologists and economists proposed that the personality of the entrepreneur has an important impact on the success of entrepreneurs. Psychologists have identified several variables that appear to have a major influence on entrepreneurial success.

These variables deal either with the human capital, that is, entrepreneurial knowledge, or with personality characteristics that are imperative towards developing entrepreneurial

skills, such as 'need for achievement', 'locus of control', 'problem-solving orientation', 'interpersonal reactivity' and 'assertiveness'. These personality characteristics together with entrepreneurial knowledge super impose on the character-based approach. Most psychologists assume that the personality of human beings consists of given traits that are stable over time, it is expected that in particular the personality characteristics has an impact over future success.

Several studies have investigated the issues and factors responsible for organizational, personal success and failure. Walker and Brown (2004), in their survey of 290 small business owner-managers in Western Australia, aimed at finding out the most appropriate factor for business success especially in small business owners. They observed that out of financial lifestyle factors and non-financial lifestyle factors, the latter, that is, non-financial lifestyle factors are more important in measuring business success. Non-financial personal/lifestyle factors like satisfaction, achievement, pride in the job and a flexible lifestyle are generally valued higher than wealth creation.

Another survey conducted by EEO Trust (2004) focuses on interpersonal relationship component in enhancing the productivity. It was found that 81% of respondents think that they are more productive at work if they have good personal relationships because they feel better.

According to Toropov (1997), there are three main types of interpersonal relations at work or three main areas of dealing with co-workers: with subordinates, peers, superiors. Hunt, & Baruch (2003) proposed a framework with five groupings of managerial skills, which they argue are essential for a manager to be successful. As many as four out of the five groupings of managerial skills are skills needed for dealing with subordinates: administrative, communication, interpersonal, leadership and motivation skills. They further elaborates that managers should possess the following interpersonal skills, in order to successfully deal with their subordinates: relationship building – ability to develop and maintain conversation and interaction; listening to others; empathy – understanding others' needs and feelings; encouraging others to present their ideas, expose feelings and express opinions; giving feedback.

In addition to this, Goleman (1998) highlights several competencies that are especially valuable when dealing with peers: building bonds – nurturing instrumental relationships; collaboration and cooperation – working with others toward shared goals; team capabilities – creating synergy in working toward a group. He also focuses on the importance of conflict management in establishing good interpersonal relations among colleagues at work. Conflict management is particularly useful for negotiating and resolving disagreements among peers, superiors and subordinates. People with this competence handle difficult people and tense situations with diplomacy and tact, spot potential conflict, bring disagreements into the open, encourage debate and open discussion, and orchestrate win-win solutions. Focusing on the need and importance of interpersonal skills, Walter (1997) discussed that bosses prefer dealing with employees who can effectively communicate, can rely and who can support them. In addition, they prefer dealing with employees who are not overly aggressive with them, focusing on the tranquilizing persona of the employees.

Goals are a form of motivation that sets the standard for self-satisfaction with performance. Achieving the goal that one has set for oneself is a measure of success and being able to meet job challenges is a way one measures success in the workplace. Latham & Yukl (1975) noted that goal setting theory, which has strongly influenced organizational behaviour, ideology and practice and how goal clarity and goal difficulty positively affects job performance.

There also have been researches discussing the factors effective for productivity along with performance. Steenburgh et al (2010) carried out a research that aims to gain insight into the most effective way to design a compensation plan, concentrating on whether bonuses boost sales productivity and whether they should be awarded quarterly or annually. Key concepts include: bonuses do increase productivity; quarterly bonuses increase sales force productivity more than annual bonuses and sales people tend to give up when far away from reaching a quota, but they don't slow down once a quota is reached-especially if a firm offers commissions for overachievement.

Studies have shown the importance of management skills. Stringfellow (1994), developed a strategy 'to ensure that employees and prospective employees are matched against specific competence-based specifications for each job'. The twelve 'management dimensions' identified were later termed 'competences': problem analysis, problem solving, planning and organization, delegation, management control, leadership, human relations skills, personal effectiveness, verbal communication, oral communication, stress tolerance.

Gasse (1997) identified five fundamental management competency domains or dimensions: vision; people management; operations; resources; strategies. This is called Gasse Model. Newton (2001) had broken down various "entrepreneurial/managerial competencies" into the following: interpersonal skills, leadership, communication, delegation, and coaching; financial management; technical capability; organizational competency; strategic planning; entrepreneurship and innovation.

Thus, personality of an entrepreneur can be interpreted to have visual impact on any entrepreneur's success. This personality affects the interpersonal relationship which also contributes towards organizational growth. Competencies add to shared goals towards building the enterprise.

This is evident in our research study, which is based on dialogues, conversation, actions, incidences etc. these transcript/ narration portray the behavioral aspect as embedded within an entrepreneur.

The dialogues and incidences have been Transcribed from interviews and observations. They have been segregated as follows:

Dialogues and Incidences:

The analysis has been done in two aspects

- 1) The impact of personal attributes on the growth of new venture :
 - Personal Attributes
 - Attitude
- 2) The factors responsible for the growth of venture

The characteristics have been demonstrated via dialogues and interpretations

- Decision to Seed the Organization
- Organizational environment
- People management

Following observations emerged after content analysis of the data received from the physiotherapist couple.

1) Personal Attributes factor - Personal attributes are the inherent characteristics shaping the identity of an individual. There have been several studies trying to enumerate various traits possessed by an individual for becoming an entrepreneur. Timmons' (1994) analysis of more than 50 studies found a consensus around six general characteristics of entrepreneurs: commitment and determination; leadership; opportunity obsession; tolerance of risk, ambiguity, and uncertainty; creativity, self-reliance and ability to adapt; and motivation to excel.

However we were able to identify and have demonstrated few of these traits through the conversation below: (the dialogues in inverted commas have been translated from the Hindi transcript, the National language of India)

A) Self-reliance and ability to adapt

- 1) **Self Awareness** - It is very important to be aware of ones strengths and weaknesses. Dr. SK and Dr. AU both were very well aware of their potential and they worked towards developing a profession together in physiotherapy.

Dr SK: "That's why I feel that I can reach the top in this field and this field requires hard workers gradually"

He had full confidence in himself that he will be able to establish himself in this profession.

Dr SK: "At that time in the starting I know that I will not be able to clear the medical entrance examination, but I knew I am a laborious worker and shall do well"

- 2) **Passion for work**– It is said that if you want to achieve something you will have to be passionate about it. Dr. AU reports that Dr. SK was very passionate about his profession.

Dr AU: "As far as I know him, he is enthusiastically passionate towards this work, he doesn't think anything else"

B) Leadership

- 1) **Self Efficient**– A very strong need for self-efficacy lead her to make her own identity.

Dr SK: “Actually I have earned my pocket money from very beginning”

- 2) **High Values**– It is important to have good morals and high values in order to develop and grow holistically. Dr. SK and Dr. AU did practice high values with professional attitude.

Dr SK: “I think if the case is too complicated and beyond my capacity I refer them to Delhi to better physiotherapist. I do not recommend them to orthopedic; I do not experiment with the patients”

C) Opportunity obsession

Having reality orientation and practical exposure of the societal demands of the patients and keeping the business perspective in mind, they expanded their profession of Physiotherapy in Lucknow at a young age while most of the doctors in Physiotherapy usually worked under a Orthopedic Surgeons, this went ahead to start an enterprise in the field of Physiotherapy.

D) Commitment and determination

Hard Work and Perseverance– As mentioned by Dr. AU, they credit hard work as one of the important factors for growth and success.

Dr AU: “Apart from hardwork the destiny also favored that the patients who were treated here we cured”

- i) **Dedication**– This trait helps in achieving what is aimed for. Dr. SK is very dedicated and this along with other personal attributes he was able to achieve what he aimed for.

Dr SK: “I was keen in physiotherapy from the beginning”

- b) **Faith**– It is Dr. AK’s belief in god and her work dedication and commitment which lead to her business expansion.

Dr SK: “God has been kind and blessed us in all the steps we took. Dr AK believes only in work, I feel that blessings are equally important”

- c) **Devotion**– Dr. AU mentions that her husband Dr. SK is devoted to his profession.

Dr AU: “No no, he(Dr SK) is completely devoted to this only”.

E) Motivation to excel.

- i) **Experiential Inspiration**– Dr. AU learnt management because she observed that management plays a very important role in the functioning of any entrepreneurial venture. She observed a contrast in the functioning of different school due to the difference in the management style.

Dr AU: “I learnt about Office management in the job I did for a year. The appreciation I got at work place motivated me to do something of my own”

- ii) **Continuous Change Management**– It is one of the very upcoming factors responsible for placing one’s position in the society.

Dr AU: “To clarify and to enhance knowledge he(Dr SK)continuously persuaded other courses in Physiotherapy”

- iii) **Belief**– Dr. SK has a strong belief that no work is part time. With this belief he took decisions about not taking up further small projects in order to earn more.

Dr SK: “ I always believed that every task requires full effort”

Dr. AK reports that Dr. SU had always aimed for being counted amongst the top ten physiotherapists in the city, he is satisfied now. This shows that the couple sets small short-term goals for himself and plans for longer-term goals. This self-satisfaction acts as a reward and helps the couple to perform better every time.

Dr AU: “His dream was to be amongst the top 10 Physiotherapist in the town. Now he is satisfied”

Social Work: It is an important trait within entrepreneur especially in medical entrepreneurship.

Dr AU: “But because of our nature we always wanted to do something for the society”

- 2) **Attitude** is how you look at the world around you. The Attitude of the couples played an important role not only in developing their enterprise but also in its growth.

- i) **Positive Work Attitude** — Dr. SK mentions that he works for the betterment of his patients. This attitude clearly shows that he has a positive work attitude.

Dr AK: “We work for the betterment of my patients. Business is second”

- ii) **Non-Monetary Attitude**– Dr. SK reports that he never ran after money. He was after strong networking and client building.

Dr SK: “ People said that keep personal front strong so that you get the support from Bank etc.”

- iii) **Challenges handling**–To handle a challenge, it is important to have a correct attitude. The couple faced a lot of challenges together. All they always kept was a positive attitude.

Dr SK: “We used to hang the bill boards ourselves because we did not have many employees. And the sad part is that people used to take away our boards or broke them”

- iv) **Experiential Learning Attitude**– Dr. AU mentioned about her interest in management. She reports that she had compared two atmospheres differently during her studies with the difference in management styles. One of the schools she studied in was a convent and the other was a government school. It was then when she realized the importance of management for a smooth functioning.

Dr AU” “I was always fond of practicing management. My schooling in two different school clearly indicated the difference administration can bring into the working of the organization”

- v) **Technically Updated**– The couple was keeping themselves technically updated. They were up to date about the new researches being done; new techniques in the market, new problems, and people are facing all that can be treated under physiotherapy.

Dr SK: “We are treating patients of 14 years of age also. They suffer because of their long working hours, study hours, coaching and all. We are also looking forward for taking trainings in that field also but we are not getting a chance. We have done it in HAL and all the patients come to us and they say that it is not possible for us to follow the body posture you suggested me because of our job profiling. So, we have to go there to see the furniture and all so that we can suggest them exercises enough that they follow in the sitting postures in their offices. All these things come under physical ergonomic.

1) Seeding of the Organization: (Decision Making)

- A) **Planning** being another factor responsible for success and growth, there are several factors under it: Clarity of goals, Decision making and Strategic planning.

- i) **Vision**– Dr. SK and Dr. AU both had a very clear vision of their career. They had a step by step plan for the next five years. They were both very open in discussing their short term goals. The following verbatim clearly explains the detailed vision the couple had.

Dr SK: “This was our dream to create such a hospital where all the specialty facilities in physiotherapy are available”.

ii) Clarity of goals& Self Analysis

Dr SK: “I was not good in studies and knew that I cannot do BTech so then itself I decided to pursue physiotherapy”

Dr SK: "There are many streams in physiotherapy like *ortho-physiotherapist, neuro-physiotherapist, gyncoa and off physiotherapy, sports- physiotherapy, plastics and burn unit, muscular and skeleton unit. I wanted to have a specialized centre in physiotherapy and do special counseling for specific requirement.* "

Dr SK: "*I always wanted to do something and this was an upcoming field. But people made fun that you want to become a massage man*"

iii) Goal Setting

Dr SK: "*By nature I am a disciplined person so I was inclined towards defense. But I was always*"

iv) Achievement

Dr SK: "*I was creative and laborious and got the Best Employee award also. My contribution in their new project was immensely appreciated*"

v) Failure

Dr AU: "*Sir was more into home visits with the senior doctors and did not favour clinical practice much. After we started our work in partnership, the partners left and changed the line. We were depressed as there were lots of negative factors from all sides.* "

vi) Competition in the Market

Dr SK: "*99% of our patients are referral through other patients. We do not get Doctors support. Because doctors prefer those physiotherapist who can do home visits. If doctors give our reference then their patients get reduced.* "

vii) Proper facilities

Dr SK: "*There is a proper arrangement of slippers for the ones who have taken it out*".

viii) Strategic Planning

Dr SK: "*I believe that if a new centre has to be opened the functional team here will take care of this centre. Because if I will take care of this center then who will operate the new centre. Since I cannot be everywhere and expansion is required I have planned that Dr AU will look after the administration with the expert team.*

viii) Future Planning

Dr SK: "*My new constructed home is being built in a manner that it can be converted to house for paralysis patients in future. We will have a team of clinical psychologist, occupational therapist, speech therapist etc, i.e. a complete paramedical team. It is as if you pay and leave the patient here for recovery and then take them when they are fit. We have long term plans*"

ix) Practical Planning

Dr AU: "I told him that you continue with your home practice and I shall start the centre parallel. If it works then good if not then we shall close it. Self-identity is a good thing. Now we feel happy that people recognize us that these are people from Extra care"

x) Financial Management

Dr SK: "these 4 are my employees and not my students. We are getting free manpower from 3 years. We have given them insurance of Rs 10,000 along with medical, health and accidental insurance."

xi) Documentation

Dr SK: "We started at a very low level from one room set and few medicines that we purchased from Mams savings. We invested that money and gradually grew. We still have the records of the patients we treated in our early days."

- 2) People Management** is one the most important part in an organizational set up or wherever management is required. It seems easy but managing people is one of the toughest skills in managing the organization. This skill facilitates healthy interactions and communications among people in a social setting.

Professional Skills of the doctor - Rapport building skills, Good interpersonal skills, Healthy Interpersonal Interaction with Patients, Strong Interpersonal Bond with Employees, are some of the common factors clubbed under interpersonal skills.

In other words, workplaces benefit if workers have good relationships. According to Toropov (1997), there are three main types of interpersonal relations at work or three main areas of dealing with co-workers: with subordinates, peers, superiors. In addition to this, Goleman (1998) highlights several competencies that are especially valuable when dealing with peers: building bonds – nurturing instrumental relationships; collaboration and cooperation – working with others toward shared goals; team capabilities – creating synergy in working toward a group. He also focuses on the importance of conflict management in establishing good interpersonal relations among colleagues at work. Conflict management is particularly useful for negotiating and resolving disagreements among peers, superiors and subordinates. People with this competence handle difficult people and tense situations with diplomacy and tact, spot potential conflict, bring disagreements into the open, encourage debate and open discussion, and orchestrate win-win solutions. Focusing on the need and importance of interpersonal skills, Walter (1997) discussed that bosses prefer dealing with employees who can effectively communicate, can rely and who can support them. In addition, they prefer dealing with employees who are not overly aggressive with them, focusing on the tranquilizing persona of the employees.

- i) **Good interpersonal skills**– Dr. SK and Dr. AU both had very effective interpersonal skills. It is evident from the clientele the couple had as physiotherapists. The staff interviewed also mentioned about the relationship among the workers in the clinic.
 - a) An employee: *“We are not treated as an employee here but as a team member. Sir and Mam support us in handling the case and also in studies. They are very good towards us and makes us feel important.”*
- ii) **Rapport building skills**– Both the couples had very good rapport building skills.
 - a) *“As the researcher entered, she was greeted by the doctor himself”.*
- iii) **Healthy Interpersonal Interaction with Patients**– As enquired from the patients, they reported that the interactions amongst the doctors and themselves are very healthy.

“The staff member along with the doctor enquires about each patient’s health twice, when they enter and when get the treatment of that day.”
- iv) **Strong Interpersonal Bond with Employees**– The employees were personally interviewed and they reported family like relations with the doctors.
 - a) *Dr SK: “The employees here are for name sake, we are actually a family and we feel like a family. We all work as a team. We share the happiness and pain as we do for our family members”*

Good Interpersonal Relationships– The employees reported that the employees had good relations with the doctor couple.
 - b) *Dr SK: “During job I learnt a lot from seniors also. Theory is different from practical. My seniors taught me what has to be done and what not”*
- v) **Networking**- it is one the most important components of entrepreneurship.
 - a) **Positive Word of Mouth Good Network**– The network of the centre was very good. The clients and employees themselves reported that the patients who come for treatment are all through mouth publicity. The doctor couples reported that 99% of the couples who visited their clinic came through word of mouth.

An Employee: “I shall complete one year here. I did my internship from Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia hospital. Then I joined here”
 - b) **Strong Social Network**– The doctors had strong network in the professional social club as well.

“The researcher observed a poster certificate which showed the membership of the doctor with ‘Indian Red Cross Society”.
 - c) **Good teamwork skills**– Teamwork become extremely important when a team of experts is required for a profession. It is also important to realize that a good team

functions only when there is wise direction. The employees report that the teamwork skills of the doctor is very good.

Dr SK: “ All employees are equally important and integral part of our team”

- vi) Staff Support**– The doctors reported the importance of supportive staff members. Then they even mentioned that the staff members were very supportive.

Dr SK: “We recently had our performance comparative charts. We ensure that our staff wears apron. We have AC facility. But our strength is our staff. They are very supportive”

- 3) Organizational Environment** is the environment which effects the overall functioning of the workplace. There are a few factors clubbed together under organizational environment.

- i) **Discipline:** The environment of the clinic was disciplined. The staff reported that he felt really comfortable working in such a disciplined environment. He would always prefer such a conducive environment suitable for growth and development.

An Employee: “then I thought that I should start my career from a sincere place of work so that I gain for my future”

- ii) **Cordial Relations amongst Top management & Staff**– As observed and as reported by the employees of the clinic, there was comfortable environment in the clinic. The couple had very cordial relations with the staff members of the clinic.

a) *An Employee: “Job switching is only good if the new job is offering more than the present one”*

b) *An Employee: “We feel at home working in this organization”*

c) *An Employee: “The good feedback, the positive environment and the support we get from this organization motivates us to work here”*

Good working environment, positive feedback from others and support from doctors are few of the important factors necessary for staff retention.

- iii) **Growth and learning**– The employees reported the environment of the clinic to be supportive for further studies and learning.

An Employee: “The environment here promotes learning and growth. For our career the exposure and the environment we get is very positive”

An Employee: “We get the support of study, experience, any everything”

The atmosphere of the clinic was democratic which means that the doctors were very supportive in terms of experience and study. The employees work freely and have a right to say and act

An Employee: “After last year Sir convinced me to pursue the diploma, I fell the future is bright now. When I see Sir and Mams efforts it motivates me”

The couple also gave counseling and motivating sessions to their employees for working hard and achieving their goals. They helped their employees beyond expectations.

- iv) **State of the Art Clinic and Cooperative staff:** A patient reported a positive feedback for the staff being very supportive, up to date machines and proper arrangements for the patients.

- a) A patient: "She mentioned that she likes the staff, machines, and arrangements of the clinic."

Dr SK: "We always do follow up with the patients. And provide knee, back etc services together to the patients' as required. We even write and give the prescription"

The atmosphere of the clinic is such that the patients are properly taken care of and there are different varieties of patients. There is no manipulation of data as far as patients are concerned.

- v) **Reward System**– The centre uses various techniques for employee satisfaction and better productivity.

Dr SK: "Actually we have point system here. We write the points daily. The work has also been properly allocated. Every year we give best employee award"

- vi) **Challenges at Workplace**– The couple had faced a lot of challenges when they started their profession in physiotherapy.

Dr AU: "These changes have taken place in the last 3 years. The patients we cured reffered other patients to visit us. Otherwise we got patients only afterOrtho referral. This was a major challenge"

- vii) **Continuous Change Management**– It is one of the very upcoming factors responsible for placing one's position in the society.

Dr AU: "He pursued other courses also which we thought were relevant for physiotherapy"

- viii) **Foot In The Door Management Style** - Using this technique as one the management styles where a short-term goal is set, when it is achieved, a longer term goal is set further.

Dr SK: "We have initially thought of 5 branches, we want to ensure that they are successful then only we shall plan to expand for 50 branches"

It is amazing to see that in a span of 5 years the couples recently inaugurated their second branch in Lucknow.

Conclusion and Interpretation

The case is reflective of the importance of behavioural aspects while starting a business. It is irrespective of area of expertise and the vertical in which business operates. It is the

individual skill sets and the behavioural aspects that helps in nurturing a entrepreneurial enterprise. The case addresses how a physiotherapist couple found an opportunity and capitalized upon to their advantage. However since the case addresses one particular area that is physiotherapy grand conclusions might not be applicable with other business verticals and this might pose vas an opportunity for future research and discussions.

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