**Public Interest Statement**

This study aims to identify the factors that must be present when founders develop start-ups and why these factors affect the success of start-ups. Despite the importance of founders’ involvement in start-up success, few studies have specifically and comprehensively focused on founders as the main factor in start-up success. This study presents an integrative literature review of start-up success studies published between 2010 and 2020 on the Web of Science. Our review indicates that previous studies have put more emphasis on the cognitive (rational) characteristics of the founder. Based on the Trilogy of Mind Theory, we add the emotional and motivational characteristics of the founder that contribute to the success of a start-up. Our proposed framework, the ERM Model, also enriches the upper echelons theory.