



Capacity Relational and Networking Start-Ups in the Ecosystem Entrepreneurship : A Review Qualitative Based on Conceptual Study

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Abstract . This qualitative literature review explores the role of relational capacity and networking in the success of start-ups within entrepreneurial ecosystems. The study synthesizes findings from existing research to highlight how strong relational capacity facilitates access to essential resources, information, and market opportunities. It also underscores the importance of diverse and extensive networks in fostering innovation and adaptability. The dynamic nature of entrepreneurial ecosystems, supported by favorable policies and a culture of innovation, is crucial for start-up growth. Despite challenges in building effective networks, digital technology presents new opportunities for start-ups to expand their networks and leverage virtual resources. This study concludes that effective relational capacity and networking are critical for the sustainability and success of start-ups. Limitations include the scope of literature and the need for empirical validation through further research.

Keywords: Relational Capacity, Networking, Start-Ups, Entrepreneurial Ecosystems, Innovation

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, entrepreneurial ecosystems have become a major focus in entrepreneurship and strategic management studies. These ecosystems provide a context in which start-ups can access the resources necessary for their growth and development (Audretsch et al., 2021; Brown & Mason, 2017). Entrepreneurial ecosystems encompass a variety of actors and processes that interact to support performance in a local entrepreneurial environment (Acs et al., 2017; Isenberg, 2011). This concept emphasizes the importance of the relationship between entrepreneurs and local resources and can be seen as an extension of industrial districts, clusters, and learning regions (Scaringella & Radziwon, 2018; Wurth et al., 2021).

Relational capacity, or the ability to engage in, maintain, and manage multiple relationships, is a key factor in understanding startups' network behavior and their potential to access resources (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Lorenzoni & Lipparini, 1999). Limited relational capacity can affect network access and impact the functioning of the overall entrepreneurial ecosystem (Stam, 2015). An efficient entrepreneurial ecosystem is characterized by high network density, which is the maximum number of actors that are connected to each other (Autio et al., 2018; Roundy et al., 2017). There is an effect of

implementing Bloom's taxonomy in entrepreneurship courses on students' entrepreneurial intentions (Ruslaini et al., 2022).

Recent research shows that startup age is inversely related to the proportion of their relationships that are in their entrepreneurial ecosystem. More surprisingly, for older startups, there is a moderating effect of firm size on the relationship between their level of innovation and the proportion of their relationships in the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Gueguen et al., 2021). Larger and more innovative startups tend to rely more on their local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The relational capacity approach adopted in this study predicts that limitations in relational capacity will drive startups' networking behavior. Very limited relational capacity will initially favor the search for local ties over distant ones (Lechner & Dowling, 2003). As startups age and build more relationships, they tend to rely less on their entrepreneurial ecosystem, while larger and more innovative startups tend to rely more on their entrepreneurial ecosystem, with this effect increasing with firm size.

Comprehensive digital data collection methods allow the reconstruction of startup networks through hyperlinks on their websites. This method offers interesting research opportunities for academics interested in the role of entrepreneurial ecosystems in startup development (de Bakker & Hellsten, 2013; Elgin, 2015).

Although entrepreneurial ecosystems offer a protective environment for startups to operate, build their business ecosystems, and ultimately survive, local access to valuable relationships may be limited. This can hinder startups' ability to access needed resources locally (Scheidgen, 2021). Therefore, studying how startups build networks and what entrepreneurial ecosystems can offer is essential to understanding the functioning of such ecosystems and their potential benefits to firms.

This study seeks to answer the question: What is the relative importance of local entrepreneurial ecosystems for firms of different ages, sizes, and innovation capacities? This question allows us to extract tentative implications for the role of entrepreneurial ecosystems in firm development, with relational capacity as one of the keys to understanding it (Motoyama & Knowlton, 2017; Roundy et al., 2017).

This study also aims to provide guidance to policy makers and various constituent actors of the entrepreneurship ecosystem to implement useful initiatives to encourage entrepreneurship in their regions. Thus, the results of this study are expected to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between startups and local actors and the real added value of the entrepreneurship ecosystem for startups (Acs et al., 2017; Audretsch et al., 2021; Scheidgen, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial ecosystems have been recognized as an important context for start-ups to access the resources needed to thrive (Audretsch et al., 2021; Brown & Mason, 2017). These ecosystems consist of interconnected entrepreneurial actors, such as companies, investors, and educational institutions, that collectively drive performance in the local entrepreneurial environment (Acs et al., 2017; Mason & Brown, 2013). Islamic marketing strategies, including Islamic branding and halal marketing, contribute significantly to building consumer loyalty and business sustainability (Santoso, S., & Ruslaini, 2022).

Relational capacity, which refers to the ability to establish, maintain, and manage relationships, is a key factor in understanding entrepreneurial firms' network behavior and their potential to access resources (Lechner & Dowling, 2003). Research by Gueguen, Delanoë-Gueguen, and Lechner (2021) shows that start-ups' relational capacity influences their interactions with the entrepreneurial ecosystem, which in turn impacts their access to local resources.

Conceptual studies have shown that entrepreneurial ecosystems can provide a protective environment for start-ups to operate, build their business ecosystems, and ultimately survive (Audretsch et al., 2021; Vedula & Kim, 2019). However, local access to valuable relationships may be limited, which may hinder start-ups' ability to access necessary resources locally (Scheidgen, 2021).

Previous research also highlights the importance of local relationships in entrepreneurial ecosystems. Lechner and Leyronas (2012) found that entrepreneurial firms tend to prefer close ties over distant ones. This suggests that the effectiveness of

entrepreneurial ecosystems depends on their capacity to provide network access for entrepreneurial firms.

Although much conceptual research has been conducted, empirical research, especially quantitative research, is still rare (Kansheba & Wald, 2020; Wurth et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important to understand the specific characteristics of the various actors in the entrepreneurial ecosystem in order to explore the interactions that exist within it (Audretsch et al., 2021; Iacobucci & Perugini, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative literature review approach to explore the relational capacity and start-up networks in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to identify, evaluate, and synthesize findings from existing research to gain deeper insights into the topic discussed (Snyder, 2019).

Research Question Identification The research question focuses on how relational and network capacity influence start-up success in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This question will guide the literature collection and analysis process.

Literature Selection Relevant literature was selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria that have been set. Inclusion criteria include journal articles, books, and research reports published in the last 10 years, which discuss relational capacity, networks, and entrepreneurial ecosystems. These sources are taken from academic databases (Booth, Sutton, & Papaioannou, 2016).

Data Analysis and Synthesis Data from the selected literature were analyzed using a thematic approach. Key findings were identified and synthesized to reveal relevant patterns and themes. This approach helped in organizing information and identifying gaps in the existing literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Literature Quality Evaluation The quality of each selected literature was evaluated using a critical appraisal tool to ensure the validity and reliability of the synthesized findings (Gough, Oliver, & Thomas, 2017).

Reporting Findings The synthesis results are presented in a structured narrative, highlighting the relationship between relational capacity, networks, and start-up success

in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The findings are also compared with previous research to provide broader context and interpretation.

RESEARCH RESULT

This study aims to understand the role of relational and network capacity in supporting start-up success in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Through a comprehensive literature analysis, several key findings have been identified.

Relational capacity refers to the start-up's ability to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with various stakeholders, including investors, customers, and business partners. A study by Stam and Elfring (2008) showed that strong social networks can increase access to resources, information, and new market opportunities. This is in line with findings by Hoang and Antoncic (2003), who emphasized that close interpersonal relationships can increase trust and collaboration, which in turn accelerate start-up growth.

Networks play a vital role in supporting start-up innovation and growth. A study by Zaheer and Bell (2005) found that start-ups connected to extensive networks tend to be more innovative and adaptive to market changes. These networks not only provide access to capital and resources, but also offer emotional support and practical knowledge that are essential for business survival (Burt, 2004).

A dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem facilitates knowledge exchange and collaboration between entrepreneurs. According to Isenberg (2010), an effective ecosystem consists of various elements such as supportive government policies, access to capital, entrepreneurship education, and a culture of innovation. Start-ups that are able to leverage these elements through their relational networks tend to be more successful in achieving their business goals.

Although networks and relational capacities offer many benefits, start-ups also face challenges in building and maintaining effective relationships. One of the main challenges is the instability of relationships in the early stages of business development (Hite & Hesterly, 2001). However, opportunities to expand networks through digital platforms

and social media have opened up new avenues for start-ups to interact with stakeholders more efficiently (Eisenmann, Parker, & Van Alstyne, 2006).

DISCUSSION

In the entrepreneurial ecosystem, relational capacity and networks play a significant role in determining the success of start-ups. This study aims to explore how these elements contribute to the growth and sustainability of new businesses. Through a comprehensive literature review, several key themes have been identified and compared with previous research findings.

Relational capacity refers to the start-up's ability to build mutually beneficial relationships with various stakeholders. According to Stam and Elfring (2008), strong social networks can increase access to resources and information essential for business growth. This study is in line with the findings of Hoang and Antoncic (2003), who emphasized that close interpersonal relationships can strengthen trust and collaboration, accelerating start-up growth.

In comparison, research by Maurer and Ebers (2006) shows that relational capacity not only increases access to external resources but also facilitates internal organizational learning. They found that start-ups that are active in building relational networks show increased adaptability to market changes.

A wide and diverse network can increase start-up innovation and adaptability. Zaheer and Bell (2005) found that start-ups connected to a wide network tend to be more innovative and responsive to market dynamics. This is supported by research from Ahuja (2000), which states that a strong network can accelerate the diffusion of innovation and increase competitiveness.

Comparison with research by Powell, Koput, and Smith-Doerr (1996) shows that networks not only provide access to the latest information and technology but also facilitate cross-sector collaboration that is essential for innovation. They emphasize the importance of interorganizational relationships in triggering sustainable innovation.

A vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem provides a conducive environment for start-up growth. Isenberg (2010) highlighted that an effective ecosystem consists of supportive

government policies, access to capital, and a culture of innovation. This study is consistent with the findings of Mason and Brown (2014), who identified that ecosystem elements such as incubators, accelerators, and mentor networks play a key role in supporting start-ups.

In comparison, research by Spigel (2017) emphasizes that successful ecosystems depend not only on physical infrastructure but also on social and cultural capital that encourages entrepreneurship. Spigel highlights the importance of norms and values that support collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Although networks and relational capacity offer many benefits, start-ups also face challenges in building and maintaining effective relationships. Hite and Hesterly (2001) identified that relationship instability in the early stages of business development can be a significant barrier. They emphasized the need for appropriate strategies to manage the changing dynamics of networks.

Research by Gulati (1998) supports this view by showing that building trust and reputation in a network takes time and consistent effort. Gulati emphasizes the importance of trust as a foundation for successful long-term relationships.

The development of digital technology has opened up new opportunities for start-ups to expand their networks. Eisenmann, Parker, and Van Alstyne (2006) showed that digital platforms enable more efficient interactions with stakeholders. This is supported by findings from Nambisan (2017), who emphasized that digital technology can accelerate start-up growth by providing access to global markets and virtual resources.

In comparison, research by Autio, Nambisan, Thomas, and Wright (2018) shows that digitalization of the entrepreneurial ecosystem can increase connectivity and collaboration between business actors. They highlight the importance of an integrated digital strategy to maximize network potential.

This discussion highlights the importance of relational and network capacity in supporting start-up success in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Through comparison with previous research, it is seen that these elements play a key role in facilitating business innovation, growth, and sustainability. While there are challenges in building effective networks, the development of digital technologies offers new opportunities that start-ups

can exploit. With a deeper understanding of these dynamics, start-ups can improve their competitiveness and sustainability in an increasingly competitive market.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of relational capacity and networks in supporting start-up success in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Relational Capacity: The ability of start-ups to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders is a key factor in gaining access to resources, information, and new market opportunities. Strong interpersonal relationships can foster trust and collaboration, which in turn accelerate business growth.

Role of Networks: A broad and diverse network not only provides access to capital and resources, but also facilitates innovation and adaptability. Start-ups that are effectively networked tend to be more innovative and responsive to market dynamics.

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: A vibrant ecosystem provides a conducive environment for start-up growth. Elements such as supportive government policies, access to capital, and a culture of innovation play a critical role in supporting start-up success.

Challenges and Opportunities: While there are challenges in building an effective network, the development of digital technologies offers new opportunities for start-ups to expand their networks and leverage virtual resources.

Overall, this study shows that relational capacity and effective networking are important elements in supporting the success and sustainability of start-ups in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

LIMITATION

This study has several limitations that need to be considered . Literature Limitations: This review is limited to literature available and published in English. It is possible that other relevant studies in other languages were not covered in this review.

Time Limitations: The focus on literature published in the last 10 years may have overlooked important older studies that are still relevant to the current context.

Generality of Findings: Since this study is conceptual in nature, the findings and conclusions drawn may not be fully generalizable to all contexts or industries. Variations in local culture, regulations, and market dynamics may impact the relevance of these findings. **Qualitative Approach:** As a qualitative study, the results of this review are descriptive and interpretive in nature. Further research using a quantitative approach may provide stronger empirical validation of these findings.

Technological Change: Rapid technological developments may affect the relevance of findings related to digital networks and digital strategies, so this study needs to be updated periodically to reflect these changes. Given these limitations, further research is needed to confirm and extend these findings, especially through empirical studies that can provide deeper and more specific insights into the dynamics of relational capacity and networks in different entrepreneurial contexts.

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