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HOW ENTREPRENEURIAL TRIALS SHAPE ENABLING NETWORK DYNAMICS? (SUMMARY)

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HOW ENTREPRENEURIAL TRIALS SHAPE ENABLING NETWORK DYNAMICS?

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Principal Topic

With the recent increase in the application of network theory in social sciences it has been shown that social networks (SN) not only influence individuals, but also the way, in which organizations emerge and grow over time. This implies that the knowledge of SN dynamics can enhance our understanding of the entrepreneurial process. Despite the fact that various researchers have shown the relevance of SN in the field, few efforts seemed to have focused on the important role played by entrepreneurial trials during this social networking process. This research is intended to address this gap by answering the question: How entrepreneurial trials shape enabling network dynamics? In our study, we employ the Actor-Network Theory approach, which reveals a fine-grained analytical grid of entrepreneurial networking dynamics (Korsgaard, 2011).

Method

In this paper, we have opted for a multiple-case study design. To obtain better understanding of the role of entrepreneurial trials we employ a systematic process of gathering data from multiple sources; analyze and reexamine this data with the help of the actor-network theoretical framework. In order to minimize problems resulting from retrospective biases due to selective recall, we favored a longitudinal perspective. We have examined six NTBF projects. The study was conducted over a period of four years. Pursuing a triangulation approach we gathered data using three information sources.

Results and Implications

Through this study we developed a theoretical model which illustrated how and why a nascent entrepreneur (NA) creates and develops a SN, and how various entrepreneurial trials shape enabling network dynamics. Our findings indicate that through the various trials the NA seeks to highlight his/her proofs in four domains: the eligibility for the NA; the technological-economic validation; the implementation of the innovative concept as a finalized product; and finally the market validation. Our evidence also indicates that each previous trial defines when and which type of key actor's network the NA should mobilize and enroll. Finally, our results show that the various entrepreneurial trials arise against a background of barriers, sources of dysfunctions and problems. In order to overcome these barriers, NA must exhibit a distinctive set of social skills.

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