



Investigating the relationship between entrepreneurship and social networks

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurship and social networks among entrepreneurs in Abha province using descriptive correlational method. The statistical population of this study included 313 entrepreneurs in Abha province who were selected by random sampling. Information was obtained using a questionnaire. The content and face validity of the questionnaires were confirmed by the views of the supervisor, several experts and a number of individuals of statistical population. Analysis was performed using SPSS 23 software at two levels of descriptive and inferential statistics; the statistical characteristics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation and in inferential section, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were used to investigate normality and Pearson's correlation coefficient. The findings indicated that according to the first hypothesis of the research: There is a relationship between social sources of entrepreneurs' information in entrepreneurial opportunity recognition with correlation coefficient (0.867) and significance level (0.000). There is also a relationship between the structure of entrepreneurs' social relationships in entrepreneurial opportunity recognition with the correlation coefficient (0.777) and significance level (0.000). Findings of hypothesis of social relationship and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition show that there is a significant and direct relationship in amount of ($r = +0.808$). Also the results of the last hypothesis test show that the correlation coefficient between social network and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition is significant and there is a significant relationship between these two variables. i.e, there is a significant and direct relationship between social network and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition in amount of ($r = 0.903$).

1. Introduction

Nowadays that the economy of our country is suffering from shortcomings that led to the anomalous status of unemployment, especially unemployment of academic graduates, weakness in non-oil exports and such diseases, a glance at the global status of economy forces us to believe that the growth of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial culture is one of the ways to improve the disease of today's economy and to prevent the deterioration of tomorrow's state, that is why it is considered by macro decision-makers. (Hosseini Lorgani et al., 2008) In this regard, as experience has shown, the high power of information and communication technology (ICT) and its facilities have been effective in making fundamental changes in industry and business and transformed the foundations of manufacturing and business. (Paya, 2005, citing from Malekdar & Comfor, 2013); it is essential to study the ways of expanding the domain and strength students' entrepreneurial capabilities by taking a look at the new technologies and the possibilities of active communication and exchange of experiences available to users through virtual social networks.

Networks provide a basis for social cohesion because they enable individuals to communicate with people other than those who communicate directly. A main advantage of entrepreneurial networks is the accessibility that they create for information and link between entrepreneur and social sources of information in the entrepreneurial network. At the recognition and opportunity stage, entrepreneurs enjoy the benefits of diverse information flows through their social network, and the use of relationships on the networks increases the number of opportunities identified. Entrepreneurial networks provide different kinds of resources to entrepreneurs to start and improve their entrepreneurial projects.

Nowadays, in different countries in the management and economics knowledge, special attention is paid to the economic-centered entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs. Strengthening entrepreneurship and creating a proper context for its development is one of the tools of economic development of countries,

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especially developing countries. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Declaration, there is a strong correlation between the growth of the national economy and the level of national entrepreneurial activity and social networks (Archibong, 2004: 4).

Given that proposing alive social networks, increasing ICTs and greater participation of people in social network decisions, at the same time with increasing the expertise of staff, issues related to participatory management have been proposed again in recent years (Parnell, 2001: 225-223). Among the indicators of proper context for developing social entrepreneurship are, including leadership style, teamwork, managers' support for creative and innovative people, reward system and appropriate encouragement of creative and risky employees, therefore, appropriate conditions should be in social networks for promoting entrepreneurship spirit of social networks (Zare et al., 2007: 72).

According to Yamada (2004), entrepreneurship is a set of activities that help to sustain and stimulate economic and social development by effective using resources and opportunities to be led to create new values and provide new employment opportunities. Also among the stimuli introduced in entrepreneurship texts for idea creation are social networks and social media, access to idea storage sites and brainstorming. The importance of social networks in entrepreneurship and business is in sharing information, so that small and medium-sized businesses are increasingly interested in different social networks. The e-commerce and online businesses has made the economical aspect of virtual social networks important. (Aghajani & Mojadad, 2013)

New technologies with features and capabilities such as the possibility of remote cooperation, the exchange of experiences, etc. have been able to show a considerable flexibility in the field of entrepreneurship. It means that information technology has an essential role in advancing brainstorming, modeling, analyzing and collecting ideas and developing ideas, and the brainstorming through cyberspace allows for easy observing and tracking of new ideas to people. It seems that virtual social networks to be a perfect example in this field. Communities are ways that form groups of people and thus promote learning and innovation by the exchange of knowledge.

Brown in a study titled "Entrepreneurship and its Relation with Technology," writes: "Today, entrepreneurship is strongly dependent on the contexts of information technology and benefits it. It may not be an exaggeration to consider modern entrepreneurship without information technology as an impossible issue. On the other hand, the development of information and communication technology is dependent on entrepreneurship itself. Entrepreneurial activities cause to identify needs, create ideas, and emerge technologies. Entrepreneurship is the engine of technology development and the creation of new technologies. Developed countries are the leaders of using entrepreneurship and technology development. Global developments show that information and communication technology has become the most important field of activity of these countries in the last century. Developing countries are rapidly moving towards access to and use of information technology.

Ronaghi and Jafari Sayyadi (2014) in a study entitled "Investigating the Factors Affecting Business Development and Entrepreneurship in Gilan Province" write: Due to the large gap between the status quo and desirable status for strengthening the entrepreneurial skill of human resources which is the most important component of organizations, a wide training is needed. The existence of many problems at the rural community level led to entrepreneurship development to be performed slowly. Therefore, understanding the problems at the rural community level can be helpful and constructive in understanding the various and different aspects related to rural entrepreneurship and barriers to employment in villages. The results indicate that entrepreneurs in Gilan receive network support only through the primary network (close, experienced and trusted friends) and the relation with the secondary network (relation with business associations and specialized consultants) is very low, which It indicates that other network factors considered for entrepreneurship in Gilan have not found their real existence. The results show that the environmental factors of the country are not considered leading and proper conditions for their business development. Entrepreneurs face serious environmental barriers in developing entrepreneurship.

Azarbakhsh (2012) in his study stated that young people using virtual networks can have one of the roles of emerging production and business space and strengthening production and business space in the process of creating job and production and business. And each of these roles is an opportunity for this stratum.

Eliasi et al.'s (2011) is a research titled the role of social networks in entrepreneurial opportunity recognition in the entrepreneurial community based in science and technology parks in Tehran has shown that the four dimensions of social network include social resources of information, structure of relations, content of relations and ways of transferring information affect the entrepreneurial opportunity recognition.

Asefi (2008) has written a study titled "Investigating Participatory Management and Employees' Resistance against Change in the Social Networks of Physical Education of the Ministry of Education". The findings show that there is a negative and inverse significant relationship between participatory management and resistance against change in both social networks studied. Also, there is a significant negative and inverse relationship between participation in planning and targetting, participation in decision making and problem solving, participation in control and supervision, and participation in implementation with resistance against change.

Khenifar and Vakili (2008), in a study entitled "The Relationship between the Type of Social Network Structure and Entrepreneurship of Social and Economic Networks in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises" investigates the relationship between the type of social-economic network structure and entrepreneurship of social networks in small and medium-sized enterprises. The results show that there is a significant relationship between the type of social network structure and economic entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises. There is an inverse relationship between mechanical and organic structures and entrepreneurship in social networks and a direct relationship between knowledge structure and entrepreneurship of social networks. There is a direct and significant relationship between trust and entrepreneurship of social networks, but there is no significant relationship between pervasive emotional relation and entrepreneurship of social and economic networks.

Yadollahi Farsi et al. (2008) In a study entitled "Investigation of Entrepreneurship within Social Networks in Governmental Social Networks, Case Study of Social Networks of Agricultural Jihad in Abha Province" have announced the purpose of this study to investigate entrepreneurship within social networks in status quo and also investigating the views of middle managers in this field in the social networks of Agricultural Jihad of Abha province. The findings indicate that among all the variables of social networks studied (control system, decision making, communication, risk taking, change, innovation, education and research, group formation, social network goals and rewards), there is a significant and positive correlation between the status

quo and the managers' views. The results of the correlation coefficient also indicate a negative correlation between the level of entrepreneurship within social networks with age and management experience.

Rasekh (2007) in his research "Investigating the Relationship between Participatory Management and Entrepreneurship in the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences of Tehran University", sought to determine the Relationship between Participatory Management and Entrepreneurship of Social Networks in the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences of Tehran University, the findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between the two variables of participatory management and the variables of targeting, incentives, attitude towards change and adoption of coordination methods and techniques in the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences of Tehran University.

Zare et al. (2007) in a study "Investigating the Relationship between Psychological Factors and Empowerment of Social Networks' Experts and Entrepreneurship in Social Networks of Physical Education in the Country" investigated and determined the relationship between two psychological factors and empowerment of social networks' experts and social entrepreneurs of social networks of physical education in the country, the results of this study show that there is a significant relationship between psychological factors of empowerment (feeling of job meaningfulness, feeling of competence, feeling of self-determination, feeling of influence and feeling of trust) and entrepreneurship of social networks (Zare et al., 2007).

Kazemi and Maharati (2007) in a study entitled "Measuring Entrepreneurship Level of Managers of the Industry, Case Study: Khorasan Province" sought to determine the level of having sample managers of Khorasan province's industry and other managers from entrepreneurial characteristics; the results show that sample managers of Khorasan province industry and other potential managers are entrepreneurs and there is no significant difference between these two types of managers.

Raise in a research titled the impact of participation in acceptance and technical developments by creating the context of active participation of employees in structural and technical changes and by emphasizing the cooperation and collaboration of employees proved that participation can reduce negative resistance against changes in addition to increasing productivity and improving product quality. (citing from Labaf & Ranjbar, 2002).

Boyd and Ellison (2007) found in their research that social software helps learners to acquire essential skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving through support for interaction, support for providing and receiving feedback, and communication among individuals.

Michael Stull G (2005) in a study entitled "Entrepreneurship of Social Networks in Nonprofit Social Networks: Exploring Factors Affecting the Facilitating of Entrepreneurial Behavior among Employees" found that there is a direct and significant relationship between employees' abilities and management support and employees' entrepreneurial behavior in eighteen nonprofit social networks in the US and Canada.

Howard (2004), in a study entitled "The Impact of Developing Entrepreneurship Capacities (Independence, Risk-taking, Motivation of Progress, Internal Control, Self-Confidence, and Creativity) on Entrepreneurship, sought to determine the impact these capabilities on entrepreneurship among students. The research method was survey and the statistical population consisted of 450 students and the data collection tool was a questionnaire. The results indicate that there is a relationship between independence, risk taking, motivation of progress, internal control, self-confidence and creativity of students and entrepreneurship. (Citing from Ropke, 2004).

Heinonen (2003) in a study entitled "Entrepreneurship in Governmental Social Networks" concluded that traditional methods of control such as monthly and annual reports, audit of consumed budgets, and lack of attention to performance causes the employees not to achieve the possibility of performing entrepreneurial activities because these activities are in conflict with the spirit of entrepreneurship. He has focused the growth and profitability of social networks, customer satisfaction, and clients of social media from the main dimensions of entrepreneurial outcomes. The researcher stated that the external environment as a determining factor in all entrepreneurial activities should be considered at the individual levels and social networks.

Ardichville's (2003) research is consistent with this research, and he considered virtual social network along with other factors such as personality traits to be effective in entrepreneurial opportunity recognition.

Pinchot (2000) in a paper entitled "Entrepreneurship of Social Networks", describes the differences between traditional managers and entrepreneurs of social networks regarding the impact of decision making system of social networks on and considers traditional managers to be compatible with power centers and considers the decision making of these managers according to the wishes of bosses, while considers entrepreneurs of social networks to be those who are willing to make decision with compatibility and collaboration with others. He has stated that entrepreneurship within social networks is not an inherent art and virtue. It can be developed through proper education.

Sink (1998) analyzed the relationship between membership in network and setting up business and networks of opportunity discovery. In this study, social factor research has been identified as an influential factor in entrepreneurial opportunity recognition.

Van Mierlo (1996) in a study entitled "Governmental Entrepreneurship as an Innovation in Management Strategy" on the communication system of social networks states that for creativity in social networks and creating innovation, members must be allowed to interact with each other and establish close relationships between different groups. These interactions cause the useful information to be exchanged between members of the social network and new ideas and views about issues of social networks to be transferred to other members.

The results of Katz and Khen's research indicate that participatory management responds to the psychological dimensions and needs of work, thereby increases the freedom of action and meaningfulness of the work, strengthens interpersonal relationships among employees, and reduces social isolation. Participation plays an important role in adopting individual goals with social network goals, a person who is consulted in social networks and involved in decision making considers social networks belonging to self, and considers social network goals as his goals (Cook, 1997).

Jackson (1983) in a study titled Participation in Decision Making as a Strategy for Reducing Job-Related Stresses Using Two Post-Tests examined the impact of participation on office workers and nurses. And the results of his studies have shown that participation has a negative effect on conflict and duality of perceived role and influence and participation of individuals in decision making is a determining factor in reducing job stress (Jackson, 1983 citing from Kuhestani, 1998).

There are many mechanisms for human resource development that the development of career path is one of the main components (Sajjadihah and Salajegah, 2016). The path of career advancement causes the one's progress over the years of his service and career development (Safarzadeh, Ahmadi

Sharif, Zakeri, 2010). One of the tools that develop career development ports is social networks, defined as Internet networks that provide an online connection for users to interact quickly and easily (Ahmed, 2011). Therefore employees find that managing an inconsistent environment in a transitional economy is possible through communication networks, because the interconnections allow access to resources and information, and shows the concept of entrepreneurial capacities according to increase resources and information through social networks.

Shumpeter considered entrepreneurship as a major driving force in economic development and considered its role as innovation or "the creation of new combination of materials." Kerzner has defined entrepreneurship as being aware of the profitable opportunities undiscovered. (Hooman et al., 2006: 268: 26).

Pincott (1985) believes that the term entrepreneurship of social networks is invented to describe innovative activities in a social network context, thus this term reflects efforts made individuals of social networks to improve existing businesses. (Rasekh, 2007: 63). Shumpeter believes that entrepreneurship of social networks is a word that emerges from the business world and is able to utilize resources with new ways that lead to the creation of new products and services in the environment of social networks (Ewal & Inbar, 2003: 222). Entrepreneurship of social networks is a process that directs activities of social networks towards creativity, innovation, risk-taking and leading. Entrepreneur of social networks takes step to advance social networks by disrupting existing balance of social networks and operating his ideas and others in creating process and improving method (Nahid, 44: 2009).

In the context of the relation of social networks and entrepreneurship, it can be said that entrepreneurship is a process that is placed in a variable network of social relationships. These social relationships can limit or facilitate the entrepreneur's relationship with resources and opportunities; so networks not only stimulate entrepreneurial activity, but also they can influence the economic performance and entrepreneurial outcomes. (Jack et al., 2010)

Entrepreneurship of social networks is a process in which innovative products or processes emerge through the induction and creation of entrepreneurial culture in a pre-established social network, or in other words, a set of activities that have social network resources and support to achieve the results of innovators (Samad Aghaei, 1999).

Entrepreneurship of social networks is an attempt to create entrepreneurial mentality and skills and, of course, to enter these characteristics and mentalities into the culture and activities of social networks (Hagh Shenasi et al., 2007: 23).

Entrepreneurship of social networks is the way to arouse and then utilize people within a social network, a way that people think they can do works in a different and better way. Barriers of flexibility, growth and innovation can be overcome by developing entrepreneurial spirit in social networks. Fostering entrepreneurs within social networks requires providing a proper context and promoting entrepreneurial spirit. (Zare et al., 2007: 72).

In the study of Febernoel site in 2007 which is performed to classify sites of social networks, it is found that businesses based on social network have economical savings and some of the factors are reducing operating costs, focus and independence of site users, and so on. Many of virtual online social networks operate on the scale of free networks. This study provides a safe and simple environment, understanding the market propriety of each group, creating a pleasant environment, increasing user-base capabilities, and integrating the site in other factor systems to increase influence are some of the best experiences of groups in this study. (Citing from Amiri et al., 2011)

Entrepreneurship of social networks means implementing the process of entrepreneurship within social networks using characteristics such as perseverance, risk-taking, creativity and innovation, that a group of individuals within the social networks become the engine of development. In other words, corporate entrepreneurship is in the concept of the commitment of a social network to the creation and consumption of new products, new processes and system of new social networks (Karbassi et al., 2002: 31).

In general, it can be said that the main features of entrepreneurial social networks equip these social networks with capabilities to be able to better use of available opportunities and more adaptability with the environment around them while promoting efficiency (Haq Shenasi et al., 2007: 32).

2. Research method

This study is applied objectively and its method is descriptive and correlational. The statistical population of this study is 8962 entrepreneurs in Abha province. Of these, 313 entrepreneurs were selected based on the Cochran sample size by the simple random sampling.

The information was collected through library and field research. The data collection tool was a questionnaire and since the method of this research was survey and field, the questionnaire was asked the sample size along with interview. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient according to the formula, which is one of the internal consistency methods, was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. For this purpose, using the data obtained from 313 questionnaires, the trust coefficient was calculated with SPSS 23 statistical by Cronbach's alpha method.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of questionnaire of entrepreneurship relationship and social networks

Dimensions	Cronbach's alpha coefficient	Number of questions
social sources of information	830/0	8
structure of social relations	847/0	11
content of social relations	783/0	7
social network	781/0	5
Entrepreneurship	812/0	4
Total dimensions	928/0	35

2.1. Hypotheses

There is a relationship between social sources of entrepreneurs' information and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition.

There is a relationship between the structure of entrepreneurs' social relations and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition.

There is a relationship between the content of entrepreneurs' social relations and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition.

There is a relationship between social network and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition.

3. Findings

The results of the descriptive analysis of the variables in the research are shown in Table (2). In this table, for each of the research variables and their dimensions, descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values of each of these variables and their components are states.

Table 2. The mean of the main variables of research and their dimensions

Variables	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
social sources of information	21.3	0.896	33.1	00.5
structure of social relations	95.2	0.763	33.1	00.5
content of social relations	33.3	0.940	00.1	00.5
social network	00.3	0.898	25.1	00.5
Entrepreneurship	60.3	0.883	00.1	00.5

Table (3) Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for investigating the normality of the research data

Variables	Static	Significant level	Normal distribution
social sources of information	0.186	0.186	Yes
structure of social relations	0.104	0.076	Yes
content of social relations	0.067	0.200	Yes
social network	0.182	0.145	Yes
Entrepreneurship	0.171	0.189	Yes

As the results of Table (3) show that the significance level in the main variables of the research including social resources of information, structure of social relations, content of social relations, social network and entrepreneurship is higher than 0.05 and thus the null hypothesis in these variables is confirmed at significant level of 95% and the distribution of data in the research variables follows the normal distribution.

3.1. Test of hypotheses

In this section, the inferential findings of the research are set based on the research hypotheses.

According to the first hypothesis of the research:

There is a relationship between social sources of entrepreneurs' information in entrepreneurial opportunity recognition.

Pearson correlation coefficient was obtained to investigate the significant relationship between the main variables of the study.

Table 4. Pearson correlation matrix between social resource variables and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition

Variable	coefficient	entrepreneurial opportunity recognition
social sources	correlation coefficient	867/0
	Significant level	000/0

The findings of Table 4 show that the correlation coefficient between social resources and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition is significant and there is a significant relationship between these two variables. i.e, there is a significant and direct relationship between social resources and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition ($r = +0.867$).

According to the second hypothesis of research:

There is a relationship between the structure of entrepreneurs' social relations in entrepreneurial opportunity recognition.

Pearson correlation coefficient was obtained to investigate the significant relationship between the main variables of the study.

Table 5. Pearson correlation matrix between variables of structure of social relations and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition

Variable	coefficient	entrepreneurial opportunity recognition
structure of social relations	correlation coefficient	777/0
	Significant level	000/0

The findings of Table 5 show that the correlation coefficient between the structure of social relations and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition is significant and there is a significant relationship between these two variables. i.e, there is a significant and direct relationship between the structure of social relations and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition ($r=+0.777$).

Table 6. Pearson correlation matrix between variables of content of entrepreneurs' social relations and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition

Variable	coefficient	entrepreneurial opportunity recognition
content of social relations	correlation coefficient	808/0
	Significant level	000/0

The findings of Table 6 show that the correlation coefficient between the content of social relations and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition is significant and there is a significant relationship between these two variables. i.e, there is a significant and direct relationship between the content of social relations and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition ($r=+0.808$).

Table 7. Pearson correlation matrix between variables of entrepreneurs' social network and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition

Variable	coefficient	entrepreneurial opportunity recognition
social network	correlation coefficient	903/0
	Significant level	000/0

The findings of Table 7 show that the correlation coefficient between the social network and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition is significant and there is a significant relationship between these two variables. i.e, there is a significant and direct relationship between the social network and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition ($r=+0.903$).

4. Conclusion

Today, a world has been emerged with the features of computer and internet communications. Networking society caused the comprehensiveness, complexity, and technological networking influence the diverse areas of life and education. In this context, they have been faced with popularity of virtual social networks and with unprecedented global acceptance as a Web technology services in recent years.

Entrepreneurship as a type of management behaviors that its characteristic is attention to resources, use of new resources, use of new methods for combining resources, exploring and searching, discovering and identifying and following opportunities.

Regarding the results of the Azarbaksh research (2012), entrepreneurs using virtual networks can play a role in the emerging production and business environment, strengthening production and business environment in the process of job creation, production and business and each of these roles is considered an opportunity for this stratum.

The results of the present study show that: In this section, the inferential findings of the research are set based on the research hypotheses.

According to the first hypothesis: There is a relationship between social sources of entrepreneurs' information and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition with correlation coefficient (0.867) and significance level (0.000). There is also a relationship between the structure of entrepreneurs' social relations and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition with the correlation coefficient (0.777) and the significance level (0.000). Findings of hypothesis of content of social relations and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition show that there is a significant and direct relationship in amount of ($r=0.808$). The results of the last hypothesis test show that the correlation coefficient between social network and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition is significant and there is a significant relationship between these two variables. I.e, there is a significant and direct relationship between social network and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition ($r=+0.903$).

Regarding the results of Eliasi et al. (2011), Khenifer and Vakili (2008); Yadollahi Farsi et al. (2008), four dimensions of social network including social sources of information, relations structure, content of relations, and methods of information transfer influence the entrepreneurial opportunity recognition. The results are consistent with the studies of Sink (1998); Van Mirlow (1996) and Katz & Kahn & Jackson (1983) in the context of decision making of social networks and entrepreneurs of social network.

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