

The impact of social networks and their influence on business performance.

HAMOUR Hasnae ^{#1},

#1 PhD student National School of Business and Management (ENCG) Université Chouaïb Doukkali
– EL JADIDA, Morocco

- Laboratory for Studies and Research in Economic and Management Sciences
Email 1 – hasnae.hamour@gmail.com

1: Introduction

The idea that social capital constitutes a resource in itself, facilitating access to other resources, is now widely accepted in academic literature. For example, Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) emphasize that social capital plays a fundamental role in the creation and sharing of knowledge within organizations, thus contributing to improved performance.

Bourdieu (1980) was among the first to conceptualize this notion, defining social capital as “the sum of actual or potential resources linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition — in other words, to membership in a group” (p. 2). While Bourdieu emphasizes belonging and mutual recognition, Coleman (1988) focuses more on the role of social structures in generating social capital. According to him, social capital “does not reside in the actors themselves nor in the means of production,” but in the links that unite members of a community (p. 99). Burt (1992), in turn, highlights that entrepreneurs occupying strategic positions within social networks benefit from privileged access to resources and opportunities, thereby enhancing their competitiveness.

Several studies, notably by Aldrich and Zimmer (1986), Johannisson (2000), Chabaud et al. (2004, 2006, 2010), and Jack et al. (2008, 2010), have demonstrated the role of social networks in improving business performance. In an entrepreneurial context, a well-structured social network is not just a tool for connection: it becomes a strategic lever enabling access to material, immaterial, and human resources (funding, infrastructure, clients), thereby supporting the competitiveness and sustainability of businesses.

It is from this perspective that we explore the relationship between social capital, access to resources, and entrepreneurial performance.

Research Question: To what extent does social capital constitute a determining factor in access to resources and the improvement of entrepreneurial performance?

2:Methodology

Method Choice

To study the relationship between social capital, access to resources, and business performance, we adopted a qualitative approach. This method is particularly suited to exploring the perceptions and experiences of entrepreneurs and allows for the collection of rich and detailed data. Semi-structured interviews are the most appropriate tool in this context, as they offer flexibility while keeping participants focused on key research themes.

Conclusion

Le capital social apparaît comme un déterminant majeur de la performance entrepreneuriale. L'étude confirme que la capacité à activer des relations pertinentes permet aux entrepreneurs d'accéder à des ressources stratégiques (Aydi, 2003 ; Traboulsi, 2020), renforçant ainsi leur compétitivité, leur résilience et la durabilité de leur activité. La gestion active du réseau relationnel devient alors une compétence entrepreneuriale à part entière.

References

- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood.
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(S1), S95-S120.
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), 1360–1380.
- Burt, R. S. (1992). *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition*. Harvard University Press.

Nahapiet, J., & Ghoshal, S. (1998). Social Capital, Intellectual Capital, and the Organizational Advantage. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(2), 242–266.