

The Creation of Social Capital Across Different Types of Business Incubators

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Bird's Eye View of a Business Incubator

<https://vimeo.com/130254089>

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to further our understanding of business incubation, in particular how social capital is created within the business incubator ecosystem. Presently there is no complete evaluation framework that could appropriately capture business incubators' performance, particularly a framework that can account for intangible measures of success (Hackett & Dilts, 2004; Mian, 1991; Phan, Siegel, & Wright, 2005).

Social capital is “uniquely situated to address the integrative theoretical needs of entrepreneurship scholars because it helps explain processes and outcomes of social interactions at multiple levels of analysis and across a diverse set of situations and contexts” (Gedajlovic, Honig, Moore, Payne, and Wright, 2013)

Statement of the Problem

To date, much of the research has taken a descriptive approach focusing mainly on the documentation of services provided (Bøllingtoft & Ulhøi, 2005) and we do not have a complete picture of how business incubators support the process of nurturing and accelerating start-ups.

Research Question

How is social capital created within different types of business incubators?
Does the incubator type have any bearing on the creation of social capital?

Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory is based on the premise that a network provides value to its members by allowing them to access the social resources embedded within the network (Bourdieu, 1985; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001)

Nahapiet and Goshal (1998) framework:

- Structural
- Relational
- Cognitive

Methodology

The research approach I will utilize is a multiple case study design.

Quantitative component

- Survey

Qualitative component

- Unstructured interviews

Desired Outcomes

This will be one of the first studies in North America to examine business incubators through the lens of social capital. From an academic standpoint, to date there has been limited research comparing how different types of business incubators create social capital and the impact that may have on the performance of the firms located in the incubators.

From a practical perspective, my research will provide a better understanding of the activities and environment that best support business incubator clients. The research will also be extremely useful for policy makers that are focusing on business incubation to drive innovation and job creation in Canada.

References

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