

Contribution of the entrepreneur's social capital to entrepreneurial performance through the acquisition of resources: a theoretical framework

ELMAYMOUNI M'hamed¹, ENNESRAOUI Driss², ABOUSSAAD Mohamed³

¹ PhD researcher, Chouaib Doukkali University, EL Jadida, Morocco, mhamed.elmaymouni@gmail.com

² Professor researcher, Chouaib Doukkali University, EL Jadida, Morocco, atia005@hotmail.com

³ Professor researcher, Chouaib Doukkali University, EL Jadida, Morocco, aboussaadmohamed@yahoo.fr

Received .. / .. /

Accepted .. / .. /

Abstract: Currently, research is trying to go beyond the debate between traditional approaches to entrepreneurship (economic, psychological, etc.) and to show that social capital is a provider of useful resources for the entrepreneur and a performance lever for his business (Burt, 1992, Granovetter, 1995; Swedberg, 2000; Julien, 2003 and al.).

The aim here is to present a valid theoretical framework for subsequent empirical studies. Based on a theoretical approach, we have come to the fact that the entrepreneurial literature, particularly in Morocco, does not address the indirect effect of the entrepreneur's social capital on performance through the acquisition of resources.

Keywords: Social capital of the entrepreneur, acquisition of resources, Entrepreneurial performance, mediating effect, theoretical framework.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a socio-economic process rooted in the social context. Entrepreneurs are generally, conditioned by their social environments which influence the way they perceive business opportunities (Anderson and

Miller, 2003). The social dimension has highlighted social capital as a fundamental concept in the field of entrepreneurship (Neergaard et al., 2005). Social capital is based on a sociological vision of human action and considers individuals as actors influenced by social factors (Dakhli and De Clercq, 2004). The presence, absence and form of social capital are likely to influence the nature of the activity to be undertaken.

As a result, researchers are increasingly recognizing that entrepreneurial activity is embedded in network relationships that direct resource flows to entrepreneurs who are somehow better connected (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Hoang and Antoncic, 2003). The literature clearly indicates that the social capital or resources that entrepreneurs can access through their personal networks (Adler and Kwon, 2002), allow entrepreneurs to identify opportunities (Bhagavatula et al., 2010), mobilize resources (Batjargal, 2003), and build legitimacy for their businesses (Elfring and Hulsink, 2003).

However, despite the importance of social capital, which constitutes a provider of necessary resources for the entrepreneur, we note in the Moroccan context the embryonic state of empirical research, which studies its direct effect on the performance of the company. Similarly, the literature reviewed did not address the indirect effect of the entrepreneur's social capital on performance through the acquisition of resources.

Thus, the concept of performance was assessed by mixed and subjective measures. Nevertheless, the review of the literature allowed us to see the great breadth of this concept, which encourages us to work for its conceptualization for the purposes of this research. Indeed, performance covers two fundamental characteristics. On the one hand, the polysemous character of the word performance in the field of management was very early noted by Bourguignon (1995, 1997), who identified multiple “signified” to the same “signifier” which is performance. On the other hand, performance is therefore a complex and multidimensional concept that integrates different dimensions to define it and different measurement indicators. As a result, some researchers considered that performance remains a matter of actors' perception, and not all actors have the same perception of performance (Jaouen, 2010; St Pierre & Cadieux, 2011; Salgado, 2013; Bahyaoui and Radi, 2019). Based on this, entrepreneurial performance is in fact the retained conceptualization of performance and which refers to the personal perceptions of entrepreneurs.

In this context, we propose to understand the direct and indirect impact of the social capital of

the entrepreneur on the entrepreneurial performance. Thus, our problem is articulated around the following question: to what extent does the social capital of the entrepreneur contribute to his access to resources on the one hand, and to entrepreneurial performance on the other hand?

To address this issue, this paper will be divided into two paragraphs. The first is to present the basic theoretical framework relating to the central concepts of the research object: social capital and entrepreneurial performance; while in a second paragraph, it is a question of evoking the importance of the mediating role of the acquisition of resources between the social capital of the entrepreneur and entrepreneurial performance.

1. Social capital in the entrepreneurial literature

In this paragraph, the aim is to analyze the concept of social capital by presenting the founding definition approaches of this concept as well as its identified dimensions (1.1). Next, specify the application of the concept to the field of entrepreneurship and the underlying theoretical framework mobilized (1.2). Finally, bounce back on the concept of entrepreneurial performance (1.3).

1.1.The social capital : definition and dimensions of the concept

The review of the literature on social capital shows that research mainly refers to three founding approaches to define the concept (1.1.1). Some authors like Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) have extended the concept to

management. Moreover, social capital is broken down into three interconnected dimensions: structural, relational and cognitive (1.1.2).

1.1.1. Definition of the concept

The founding works most often associated with the concept of social capital are those of Pierre Bourdieu, Robert Putnam and James Coleman. In the following lines, we will briefly review the approaches of these three authors before specifying the perspective from which we approach this concept in the context of our research.

Pierre Bourdieu was the first to give a definition of social capital. He defines it as "the set of actual or potential resources linked to the possession of a lasting network of more or less institutionalized relations of inter-knowledge or inter-recognition, or in other words, to belonging to a group as a set of agents who are not only endowed with common properties, capable of being perceived by the observer, by others and by themselves) but are united by permanent and useful links" (Bourdieu, 1980 p.2). Thus understood, social capital encompasses both relationships and resources. Bourdieu adopts a rather instrumental view of social capital since he sees it as a voluntary investment with the prospect of making a profit. Social capital is considered as an instrument mobilized by a social group to establish its domination over others (Baret & Soto-maciel, 2004).

This instrumental vision is generally opposed to the functionalist vision that predominates in the North American conception of social capital. Indeed, in James Coleman, social capital

corresponds to "certain aspects of a social structure that facilitate certain actions of individuals in the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain goals that could not be achieved in its absence" (Coleman, 1990). The concept is defined here by its function: to facilitate the actions of individuals within the structure.

Like Coleman, Putnam subscribes to a functionalist vision. For him, social capital covers "characteristics of social organization such as networks, norms and trust, which facilitate coordination and cooperation, for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1993). The function of social capital here is to promote collective action and in particular cooperation. Its vision is more centered on the quality of social relations and in particular on trust. Indeed, Putnam defines three components of social capital: network, trust and reciprocity. Contrary to the work of Coleman, Putnam places himself at a more "macro social" level of analysis, social capital being characterized according to him on the scale of a nation. Table I below highlights the main elements of convergence and divergence between the three authors.

Table I: Summary of the founding approaches of the concept of social capital

Author	Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)	James Coleman (1926-1995)	Robert Putnam (1941-)
Definition	“Total of actual or potential resources linked to the possession of a lasting network of relationships [...]” (1980)	“These are certain aspects of the social structure that facilitate the actions of individuals in the Structure” (1990)	“Characteristics of organization such as networks, norms, trust, which facilitate coordination and cooperation” (1993)
Conception	Instrumental	Functionalist (productive function)	
Components	Network Resources	Network Nature of relationships (norms, trust, etc.)	

Source : Adapted and translated from (Benedic et al., 2009), p : 8.

Thus, the review of the literature aimed at defining social capital highlights that the authors give an individual and collective perspective of the concept. According to Dupuy (2017), the distinctions between the social capital of the individual and the collective social capital are discussed by a few authors (Lin, 2001, 2008; Portes 2000), who try to combine the individual and collective perspectives of the share capital. According to Lin (2008), individual social capital can be extended to collective social capital and in

particular to that of an organization to which members contribute their social capital. It is in this perspective that our research work takes place. Thus, we are particularly interested in the effects of the entrepreneur's social capital on entrepreneurial performance.

1.1.2. Dimensions of social capital (Model of Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1988)

The concept of social capital and more broadly the theories of social networks are meeting with growing success in management. Indeed, social capital is not devoid of interest for the company if we consider that it is above all a facilitator of individual and collective action (Baret and Soto Maciel, 2004). In this, social capital can be seen as an organizational principle that brings two types of benefits: it promotes cooperation and the achievement of collective objectives and facilitates the sharing and creation of intellectual capital. In this perspective, we mobilize the work of Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998). These authors are interested in the role of social capital in the process of exchange and combination of knowledge, they define social capital as "the sum of the current and potential resources embedded in the network, available through and derived from the network of relationships owned by an individual or social unit. Social capital thus includes both the network and the assets that can be mobilized through this network" (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). We find here the Bourdieusian conception of a social capital composed of a network of social relations and of resources inherent to this network. This definition is also part of a functionalist conception of social capital in accordance with the work of the North

American approach. The function of social capital from an organizational perspective is to facilitate the sharing and creation of new knowledge. Furthermore, social capital breaks down into three interdependent dimensions: structural, relational and cognitive, which we summarize in Table II below.

Table II: Dimensions and components of social capital according to Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998)

Structural dimension	Relational dimension	Cognitive dimension
Links within the network Configuration of the network Organizational ownership	Trust Norms Obligations Identification	Common language Shared representations

Source : (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998)

1.2. Entrepreneurship from a Social Capital Perspective: Theoretical Framework of Reference

In fields of entrepreneurship studies that treat the entrepreneur more as the unit of analysis, researchers (Hills and al., 1997; Singh, 2000) give importance to the social networks of the entrepreneur, suddenly; they refer to the social network approach and its underlying theories. However, some researchers go beyond the traditional image conveyed by individualistic approaches on the entrepreneur as a "self-made man" to show the importance of the social approach of the entrepreneur (through social networks) which considers that the entrepreneur creates meaning (Weick, 1979) and organization from his social relations. These categories of work are part of an embedded entrepreneur trend (Burt, 1992, Granovetter,

1995; Swedberg, 2000, Julien, 2003, Sarasvathy (2003) and al.).

1.2.1. Social network approach

Through its ability to analyze the relational context to better explain individual action, the social network approach has positioned itself as a true theory of action (Huault, 1998). It is mainly based on the theory of the strength of weak ties by Granovetter (1973), which was later supplemented by the theory of structural holes by Burt (1995), and the theory of social resources (Lin, 1982).

1.2.1.1. The weak tie strength theory (Granovetter, 1973)

According to Granovetter's theory, strong ties unite individuals within a group such as friends or family. In general, this type of link characterizes the relations between people belonging to the same closed network and requires a significant investment in terms of time and energy. Strong ties would serve primarily for emotional support, however they can be used to meet economic needs, such as finding a job, when other resources are not available or when they are deemed less relevant. Conversely, weak ties are more likely to bind people that are more distant. This type of relationship would thus be more conducive to the creation of bridges favoring a person's access to new networks. Weak ties would therefore allow access to new resources that are not necessarily available through strong ties. Moreover, individuals tend to invest less time and energy in weak ties than they do in their strong tie relationships (Granovetter, 1973). In other words, more distant

acquaintances (weak ties) would thus be more effective in job search than close friends or relatives (strong ties), hence the strength of weak ties (Granovetter, 1973, 1983 and 1995; Béji and Pellerin, 2010; Borgatti and Lopez-Kidwell, 2011).

1.2.1.2.The Structural hole theory (Burt, 1995)

Granovetter's observation of the strength of weak ties is reinforced by Burt's structural hole theory (1995). According to this theory, a person who has a network in which several of his acquaintances do not know each other would then have a greater diversity of information since his relations would be less redundant. In a competitive situation, such as for job search, these structural holes would provide an advantage since they would improve the probability that a person obtains privileged information (Burt, 1995; Degenne and Forsé, 2004).

The theory of structural holes introduced by Burt (1995, 1997) is centered on the network of a given individual, therefore called ego network. The latter constitutes the main unit of analysis in his network, in our case the entrepreneur. In short, Burt's theory of structural holes posits that the non-redundancy of links between two individuals makes it possible to bring out opportunities to access new information in the network.

1.2.1.3.Lin's social resource theory (1982)

The theory focuses on the resources that a social network contains, how individual action benefits from accessing and using these resources (Lin,

1982). Resources are defined as goods whose value is socially determined and whose possession allows the individual to survive or preserve assets. These resources can be acquired (education, prestige or authority) or inherited (ethnicity, sex, religion or parental resources). They can be classified into two categories: personal resources and social resources. The individual who can dispose of them with great freedom, while the latter are inserted into his network. These are not goods that the individual owns, but resources accessible through his direct and indirect links. Access to these resources and their use are temporary and conditional since they are not the possession of the actor. In short, the theory identifies the actions taken to conserve or acquire such resources.

In short, the different theories of social networks developed above are used in the structural analysis of social capital. Thus, Table III, below, illustrates the association of each structural component of the personal network with each of the theories.

Table III: Components of the structural dimension of social capital

Component of the dimension	Reference theory	Examples of indicators
Network structure	Structural hole theory (Burt, 1995)	Size (number of contacts), density, etc.
Content of links	Weak tie strength theory (Granovetter, 1973)	Frequency of interaction, emotional closeness, etc.
Alters Attributes	Social Resource Theory (Lin, 1982)	Hierarchical level of alters, organization, location, demographics, etc.

Source: Adapted and translated from Barthélemy Chollet (2006: 6)

According to Barthélemy Chollet (2006), the study of the structural dimension of social capital refers to the description of the three levels of the personal network. First, on the overall structure of the network: how many alters is the ego portfolio made up of (network size)? Do these alters have relations (density) between them? Then, the measurements relate to the content of the links that connect ego to the alters, for example: are the interactions frequent (strength of the link)? Are the ties characterized by emotional closeness (another approach to the strength of a tie)? Finally, the description can relate to the attributes of the alters: do the alters belong to the same organization? Do they have similar or different areas of expertise? Are they geographically dispersed or concentrated? etc.

1.2.2. The Embedded Entrepreneur Current

This current of the embedded entrepreneur developed in the light of the work on embeddedness by Granovetter (1985). This current sees the entrepreneur no longer as a heroic loner (economic approach) or the fruit of a cultural determination (socio-cultural approach) but as “embedded”. Indeed, the analysis is therefore done neither from his personal attributes, nor from contextual variables, but rather from the form of the relationships mobilized by the entrepreneur. This entrepreneur consults several and different people to support him in his entrepreneurial approach. These people, more or less close, constitute his relational network (Bruyat, 1993). This current of embedding maintains that each action carried out by the entrepreneur, each decision taken depends totally or partially on the characteristics of the networks of relations that he maintains with his

environment. These networks can have a decisive impact on their choices and actions.

The introduction of this embeddedness thesis in the field of entrepreneurship is based on the work of several authors (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Dubini and Aldrich, 1990; Burt, 1992; Larson, 1992; Swedberg and Granovetter, 1994; Boutillier and Uzunidis, 1998; Plociniczak, 2004; Saleilles, 2007; McGee, 2000). According to Aldrich and Zimmer (1986), the embeddedness thesis emphasizes the interplay between social structure and economic action: “As alternatives to under-socialized or over-socialized models of entrepreneurship, we offer a perspective which sees entrepreneurship as embedded in networks of continuous social relations”. Far from being fragmented, entrepreneurs weave bonds of friendship and loyalty, and these bonds will both facilitate and limit their action. This action cannot be explained by referring to individual motivations, in that it is embedded in networks of relationships more than it emanates from atomized actors (Plociniczak, 2004). Based on an analysis in terms of networks of relationships, the embeddedness thesis explains that individual action is created, sustained and transmitted across time and space and shows how “behaviour is embedded in systems stable social relationships” (Granovetter, 1994, p. 85).

In the sense of Swedberg and Granovetter (1994), embeddedness is defined as a relational concept, where the network represents “a regular set of contacts or continuous social relations, between individuals or groups of individuals”. It is therefore the resources and the structure of these networks, within which the actors are registered, which facilitate and limit the actions they

undertake. Any economic actor is no longer, therefore, "only guided by his personal interest, but also by other relational reasons such as trust, status, reputation, approval, the search for prestige, norms and power whose origin is to be found in the social context" (Plociniczak, 2004: p. 107).

Plociniczak (2004: 108) adds that "the embeddedness thesis suggests that the action of the entrepreneur is shaped and constrained by the structure of social relations in which he is embedded". Since they are the product of a specific economic, social and cultural environment, entrepreneurs' perception of market opportunities, their ability to detect and exploit these opportunities is influenced and shaped by their networks of relationships. Thus, the creation of a new business is no longer seen as an individual and isolated act but rather as a fundamentally relational activity in the sense that family, friends, customers and suppliers form part of the relational network at the within which economic decisions are made. According to Boutillier and Uzunidis (1998), one is not born an entrepreneur but one becomes one by mobilizing one's social capital made up of capital, knowledge and relationships.

According to Saleilles (2007: 144), "the current of the embedded entrepreneur is based on two basic assumptions. First, entrepreneurs succeed because they are able to identify opportunities and obtain limited resources from their environment. Secondly, these resources are obtained through exchanges between entrepreneurs and their social networks". Similarly, some authors consider entrepreneurship to be essentially a networking

activity: "Mobilizing resources to pursue opportunities requires contacts, knowledge and trust. Mobilizing resources also involves asking others to provide financial means and efforts for an enterprise whose future is uncertain" (Dubini and Aldrich, 1991: 306). For Larson (1992), the social network of the entrepreneur shapes his behavior and allows him to access a variety of tangible and intangible resources. McGee (2000) also considers that entrepreneurs are embedded in a complex set of social ties that facilitate or constrain their ability to obtain opportunities and resources for their businesses. Consequently, the central proposition of the network-based approach is that personal relationships constitute a valuable resource for the conduct of business because they facilitate economic action.

1.3. Entrepreneurial performance: the conception of performance according to entrepreneurs

Performance as a "subjective social construct" cannot have a single meaning. It will have as many facets as there are observers (internal and/or external): its perception changes depending on whether we are on the side of managers, customers, employees, competitors, etc. (Salgado, 2013). In the context of SMEs, performance is a "particularly complex construct" (Oriot and Bergeron, 2012). Indeed, the status of the omnipresent owner-manager translates into a strong influence of his personal objectives on his conception of performance.

Given the multidimensional nature of performance, which is more accentuated in SMEs than in large companies, performance remains a matter of the perception of owner-managers

influenced by the specifications of each context of investigation. It is clear that there is a scarcity – at least to our knowledge – of work dealing with the problem of perception of performance from the point of view of managers of Moroccan SMEs. It is until 2019 that an introductory study of an exploratory nature carried out on the question. In this case, this exploration of the perception of performance among SMEs was carried out thanks to an empirical study with a sample of 174 Moroccan SMEs of different sizes, belonging to various sectors of activity and to several regions of Morocco.

The exploratory analysis carried out by the authors of this study made it possible to identify, in addition to the three categories of performance identified in the literature by ST-Pierre and Cadieux (2011), namely "personal", "economic" and "sustainable" performance. », a fourth category called « socio-organizational ». For the purposes of our research, we use the performance measurement indicators validated by this study conducted in the Moroccan context.

2. Social capital at the service of the entrepreneur: What role for the acquisition of resources?

The entrepreneurial context is not an environment that determines the entrepreneurs, neither are the entrepreneurs who alone form this environment. The environment originates in the network that entrepreneurs help to form (Sverre Raffnsøe, 2008) . According to Latour (1999), the entrepreneur is part of the context at the same time as he shapes it.

In other words, research in entrepreneurship used to understand the entrepreneur, models from social and cognitive psychology in a behaviorist perspective that refers to the knowledge of character traits. (Ajzen, 1991; Bandura, 1982; Learned, 1992; Krueger, 1993; Boyd and Vozikis, 1994). Indeed, research on traits is often representative of a desire to highlight the masculine qualities of the presumed superhero that is the entrepreneur (Ogbor, 2000). The starting point of this postulate is the image of the entrepreneur as a "self-made man", that is to say an individualist. According to this approach, only the entrepreneur is considered. However, this representation of entrepreneurship is only one of its expressions. Bringing it back to the individual refers to two main characteristics: uniqueness and isolation, which have been widely reinforced by the media to translate the success of certain exceptional entrepreneurs who are erected into real heroes (Schmitt C, Janssen F; 2012). However, the traditional image of a single person going into business negates the idea of an entrepreneurial team and neglects interaction with its environment.

However, in recent years, many studies have emphasized the collective nature that entrepreneurship can take on (Steyaert and Hjorth, 2003). Another image has spread widely through this vision of entrepreneurship: the isolation of the entrepreneur. He owes his success to himself. However, many studies have highlighted the importance of networks (Johannisson, 1995; Gulati, 1998). Although the relevance of the individualist entrepreneur is not to be called into question, it is nevertheless essential to put its importance into perspective

with regard to the different forms that entrepreneurship can take. Moreover, the entrepreneur is often reduced to an economic function of optimization. It is envisaged in a homogeneous way as being guided by its economic rationality.

It is in this sense that the social approach (through social networks) has come to complement the liberal economic approach to entrepreneurship and the managerial approach (particularly through behaviorist and contingent approaches to entrepreneurship). Authors attempt to propose an alternative and more human paradigm through the concept of social capital (Burt, 1992; Granovetter, 1995; Swedberg, 2000; Julien, 2003; Sarasvathy 2003 et al.). In this perspective, the entrepreneur creates meaning (Weick, 1979) and organization from information and his social relations. Aldrich and Zimmer (1986) make the same point and show how entrepreneurship is channeled and facilitated or constrained by the position of the entrepreneur in a social network. As Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) put it, the central proposition of social capital theory is that networks of relationships are a valuable resource for conducting business.

At the end of the literature devoted to the study of networks in entrepreneurship, researchers agree to recognize the importance of the social capital of the entrepreneur on the performance of their company. To this end, some works present meta-analyses carried out by reference authors in this field (Sarah Jack, 2010; Stam, Arzlanian and Elfring, 2014) as well as other contributions (Mayegle & Ngo Omam, 2015). The results of this work and other more recent ones demonstrate the significant effect of the social capital of the

entrepreneur on the performance of their company (*see Table IV below*).

Table IV. Some works establishing the link between the social capital of the entrepreneur and the performance

Authors /Year	Social capital - indicators	Performance-indicators
Hansen (1995)	Network size, strong links, structural holes	Growth
Jensen and Greve (2002)	Acquaintances, friends, network redundancy	Sales volume
Batjargal (2003)	Size of the network and its heterogeneity, strong and weak ties, resourcefulness	Revenue Growth, Profit margin, Asset profitability
Davidsson and Honig (2003)	Business relatives/friends, support, marital status, office contacts, corporate network	Benefits
Oh and al. (2004)	Network intermediation and nature of the network	Net profit
Zhao (2005)	The whole of Guanxi (network), weak and strong ties	Sales Growth, Profit growth
Lin and al. (2006)	Social capital	Company performance
Amine Chelly (2007)	The nature of social ties	Access to information Access to new opportunities
Stam and Elfring (2008)	Network centrality (some individuals have more connections than others), Links and structural holes	Start-up performance, Sales growth
Mickaël Geraudel (2008)	Strong links Structural holes Distance in terms of attributes	Relational resources: Strategic information, Market, Corporate visibility

Revue de l'Entrepreneuriat et de l'Innovation

Ge and al. (2009)	Networking intensity, levels of networking	Company performance
Bhagavatula and al. (2010)	Network size, network constraint, link strength	Recognition of opportunities, mobilization of resources
Zou and al. (2010)	Strong ties and weak ties	Benefits, competitive advantage
Yang and al. (2011)	Network size and network strength	Start-up performance
Ghassen Aydi (2010)	Size of the relational network The nature of social ties Quality of social ties	Organizational performance: profitability, turnover, reputation of the company compared to the competition
Bradley and al. (2012)	Strong ties, weak ties	Company performance
Omran Amina (2013)	The social network - Size of the relational network - Nature of weak/strong ties - Structural diversity of the network	Access to essential external resources (useful information, required funding, human resources, material resources, support and social support)
Fatima Ezzahra Rachdi (2016)	Strong links Structural holes Distance in terms of attributes	Relational resources: financing, strategic information, visibility
Jean-Michel Sahut (2017)	Moderating variable: the strength of social capital ties (strong ties and weak ties)	The volume of sales, the number of staff, the profits made, profitability and investments made
Obeitoh Ozigi (2017)	Network structure, interaction, information flow, information sharing and honest communication, trust, shared common goal, common vision and identity	Source of revenue, competitive advantage, cost advantage

Valérie François and Christophe Lafaye (2019)	Internal social capital (the degree of usefulness of the aid received from customers, suppliers, lawyers, accountants, entrepreneur clubs and support structures) External social capital ((the perceived usefulness of helpers from family members, friends, former colleagues and associates)	The growth in employees business lifespan
Menike L.M.C.S. (2020)	Network size, network density, network strength, credibility, benevolence, shared vision, shared language, shared knowledge, shared resources, shared opportunities.	Number of workers, total assets, total product volume, average number of customers, average sales volume and profitability
Wang and al., (2021)	Relational networks (presence or absence), strength of ties, trust, common language, common goal, knowledge platform	Innovation performance: quantity of new products, number of patents, speed of launching new products, proportion of the output value of new products, improvement and optimization of planning and control methods
Minh-Tri Ha (2021)	Link configurations, social interaction, trust, common goals, shared vision	Responsiveness, cost management, quality development, customer satisfaction

Source: Adapted from Stam and al. (2014: 159-160); Mayegle and al. (2015: 8) and more recent literature

It should be noted that in this table, this work highlights the influence of the entrepreneur's social capital on entrepreneurial performance.

2.1.The social capital of the entrepreneur facilitates the acquisition of resources

Many empirical studies have attempted to analyze the contributions of social capital in the company. We thus have studies, which have focused on the job market (M. Granovetter, 1974; N. Lin 1995), some have focused more on the social aspects (B. Wellman and S. Wortley, 1990) and still others have focused on the production of external resources such as access to credit (M. Fafchamps and B. Minten, 1998; M. Gharsalli, 2013). Burt (1997) considers that a leader must bring three categories of resources to his company: they are financial, human and social resources (social capital). He believes, regarding social capital, that it is through contacts with friends, colleagues, customers, etc., that opportunities arise to transform human and financial resources into profit. Indeed, social capital through its effects can allow the company to access external resources (Aydi, 2003 ; Arrègle, Durand, & Very, 2004 ; Bah, 2008 ; Gharsalli, 2013 ; Omrane, 2013). These resources include both the financing required for the development of the project (cash, loans granted, bank deposits, investment from venture capitalists, aid and subsidies, etc.), as well as the information advocated from suppliers, customers, capitalists of risks, advisers, etc., in order to reduce the uncertainty surrounding the project (Omrane, 2013, 2015).

Thus, other studies have identified two important resources from the personal network of the SME manager: strategic information on the markets and the visibility of the company (Granovetter, 1973; Burt, 1992; Freeman, 1999; Hansen, 1999; Ahuja, 2000; Hansen, 2002; Obstfeld, 2002;

Baret, Géraudel and Mothe, 2005; Jack, 2005; Uzzi and Dunlap, 2005; Géraudel, 2008)).

2.2.The acquisition of resources factor of entrepreneurial performance

Resources are generally defined as the set of internal factors likely to increase the economic performance of the company (Amit and Schoemaker, 1993; Galbreath, 2005). They are thus defined by an enumeration of the means which are available to the entrepreneur and which are likely to participate in the creation of value for his company. In the process of creating a business, for example, the entrepreneur mainly mobilizes three categories of resources: human, financial and social (Aldrich and Martinez, 2001; Bruch et al., 2008; Hansen, 1995). In particular, social resources essentially come from the entrenchment of the entrepreneur in different social networks. The latter can be a personal network (family and friends), a professional network (lawyers, bankers, chartered accountants, coaches, consultants, etc.), they are generally considered to be a valuable source of information (Aldrich and Martinez, 2001; Bosma et al., 2004; Papadaki and Chami, 2002) for almost all aspects of entrepreneurial creation (Ouedraogo, 1999, p. 174). They also make it possible to increase the credibility and legitimacy of the nascent company vis-à-vis stakeholders, in particular donors (Eisenhardt and Schoonven, 1990), thus facilitating access to basic resources (Cooper et al. ., 1994, (Aydi, 2003; Omrane, 2013), in particular financial resources (Bruton and Rubanik, 2002).

Thus, the researchers have identified various resources that seem relevant and that the SME

manager or entrepreneur will seek to obtain via his personal network. In this research, we retained the informational resources, the financial resources and the visibility of the company as the three relevant relational resources (Granovetter, 1973; Burt, 1992; Freeman, 1999; Hansen, 1999; Ahuja, 2000; Hansen, 2002; Obstfeld, 2002; Baret, Géraudel and Mothe, 2005; Jack, 2005; Uzzi and Dunlap, 2005; Géraudel, 2008; Omrane, 2013, 2015).

2.3. The mediating role of resource acquisition between social capital and entrepreneurial performance

According to the theory, social capital is a set of resources that actors can use to achieve their personal goals (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), which become organizational goals that benefit companies (Gabbay and Leenders, 1999). Empirical studies have shown that these resource modes can have positive or negative impacts on organizational performance. For example, the results of the study by (Guan, 2016; Khelil & Jemaa, 2018) demonstrate that entrepreneurial resources could have a positive and significant influence on entrepreneurial performance and an indirect influence on entrepreneur satisfaction via the performance.

Based on this, we consider that the social capital of the entrepreneur can have an indirect impact on the performance of the company through the acquisition of relational resources. According to (Hoang et al., 2018), when researchers test the structural model, they often focus only on measuring direct relationships between constructs. Thus, to strengthen the measurement of causal effect relationships between constructs,

an indirect effect test should be performed. Measuring indirect effects involves testing how an independent variable (X) affects a dependent variable (Y) through one or more potential intervening variables or mediators (M). Furthermore, the key condition for establishing mediation is that the indirect effect ($a \times b$) must be significant, and the need for a direct effect X on Y is not required. Complete mediation is established when an indirect effect ($a \times b$) exists and a direct effect (c) does not exist (*see Fig.1 below*). Partial mediation exists when the indirect effect and the direct effect are both significant and point in the same direction (Zhao et al., 2010).

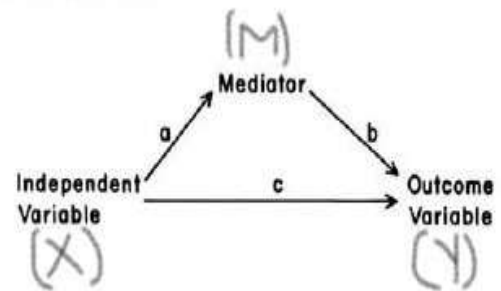


Fig.1 : The nature of mediating variables

Source: Inspired by the work of (Baron and Kenny, 1986; Hoang and al., 2018)

In this research, companies can therefore take advantage of the resources provided (M) by the social capital of the entrepreneur (X) and fully exploit its advantages to ensure performance (Y). It turns out that the mediation of access to resources can be established between the social capital of the entrepreneur and the performance of the company. The establishment of this mediation in our research responds to what the authors stipulated (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Hoang et al., 2018; Laghaie & Otter, 2020; Zhao et al.,

2010). In this sense, the mediation is then partial since the two effects (direct and indirect) are significant between the social capital of the entrepreneur and the performance as indicated above.

CONCLUSION

Through this paper, we conducted a literature review on the role of the social capital of the entrepreneur in achieving entrepreneurial performance through the acquisition of resources. This led us to draw up the theoretical research framework that integrates the social capital of the entrepreneur with entrepreneurial performance, using an analysis of its central concepts. It also provided the theoretical foundations of the impact of social capital on performance through the mediating role of resource acquisition. To this end, we have developed a conceptual model explaining the interrelationships between the dimensions of social capital (structural, cognitive and relational) and entrepreneurial performance through the acquisition of resources. In addition, hypotheses relating to each relationship are presented in an attempt to find answers to our research questions. Such hypotheses will be subject to verification at the level of fieldwork in our future research in order to provide empirical answers to our problem.

REFERENCES

- [1] Arrègle, J. L., Durand, R., & Very, P. (2004). Origines du capital social et avantages concurrentiels des firmes familiales. *AIMS « M@n@gement »*, 7(2), 13–36. <https://doi.org/10.3917/mana.072.0013>
- [2] Aydi, G. (2003). Capital social entrepreneurial, performance de l'entreprise et accès aux ressources externes Capital social entrepreneurial, performance de l'entreprise et accès aux ressources externes, Les Côtes de Carthage. XIIème Conférence de l'Association Internationale de Management Stratégique Capital, 1–22.
- [3] Bah, R.-D. (2008). Capital social des dirigeants et performance des entreprises. *La Revue Des Sciences de Gestion*, 231–232, 131–135.
- [4] Baret, C., & Soto-maciel, A. (2004). Apports et limites de la mesure du capital social en recherche en gestion des ressources humaines. *Communication Au XVème Congrès AGRH*, Montréal 1er au 4 septembre.
- [5] Baron, R.-M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The Moderator-Mediator Variable Distinction in Social Psychological Research: Conceptual, Strategic, and Statistical Considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173–1182. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02512353>
- [6] Benedic, M., Valoggia, P., Rousseau, A., & Schmitt, C. (2009). Gestion des connaissances et capital social : quelles interrelations ? *Management & Avenir*, 27(7), 152. <https://doi.org/10.3917/mav.027.0152>
- [7] Chollet, B. (2006). Defining good personal networks. The case of R&D engineers. *Revue Française de Gestion*, 163(4), 107–125. <https://doi.org/10.3166/rfg.163.107-126>
- [8] Dupuy, S. R. (2017). « Le capital social: un déterminant des coopérations inter-organisationnelles territorialisées : Le thermalisme dans les Landes », Thèse de Doctorat en Sciences de Gestion. Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, École doctorale ED481 « Sciences sociales et Humanités ».
- [9] Gharsalli, M. (2013). Le rôle des liens sociaux et de la confiance sur le financement bancaire des PME : une étude exploratoire. Thèse de Doctorat en Sciences de Gestion. Université de Bretagne occidentale - Brest.
- [10] Guan, H. G. (2016). Social Networks and Organisational Performance : The Mediating Effects of Social Capital and Resource Acquisition, Doctor of Philosophy. School of Management Royal Holloway, University of London.
- [11] Hoang, T. N., Bui, Q. T., & Nguyen, V. P. (2018). The impact of intellectual capital dimensions on Vietnamese information communication, technology firm performance: A mediation analysis of human and social capital. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 17(1), 1–15.

- [12] Khelil, N., & Jemaa, A. (2018). Investigation des déterminants de la persistance entrepreneuriale à partir de la discrepancy theory. XXVIIe Conférence Internationale de Management Stratégique, June, 1–28.
- [13] Laghaie, A., & Otter, T. (2020). Measuring Evidence for Mediation in the Presence of Measurement Error. SSRN Electronic Journal. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3593176>
- [14] Mayegle, F.-X., & Ngo Omam, F. D. (2015). Capital social du dirigeant et performance des entreprises : une étude quantitative auprès des PME du Cameroun. *Management & Avenir*, 75, 35–54.
- [15] Nahapiet, J., & Ghoshal, S. (1998). Social capital, intellectual capital, and the organizational advantage. *The Academy of Management Review*, 23(2), 242–266. <https://doi.org/10.2307/259373>
- [16] Omrane, A. (2013). Les réseaux sociaux de l'entrepreneur et son accès aux ressources externes : le rôle des compétences sociales. *Management & Avenir*, 65(7), 73–93. <https://doi.org/10.3917/mav.065.0073>
- [17] Omrane, A. (2015). L'accès aux ressources en création d'entreprise : vers une reconsidération des facteurs sociaux. *La Revue Gestion et Organisation*, 7(1), 9–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rgo.2015.03.002>
- [18] Rachdi, F. E. (2016). L'Entrepreneuriat Feminin Au Maroc : Une Approche Par Le Reseau Personnel, Thèse du Doctorat en Sciences de Gestion. In *Laboratoire de Recherche en Management (LAREM)*, ISCAE.
- [19] Zhao, X., Lynch Jr, J. G., & Chen, Q. (2010). Reconsidering Baron and Kenny: Myths and truths about mediation analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(2), 197–206. <https://doi.org/10.1086/651257>.