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A SHORT REVIEW

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1 Introduction

Gately and Cunningham attempted to understand how the entrepreneurs construct the intellectual capital in social setting in their 2014 journal article(2014). This research topic was feasible under the conditions where the study was processed. The intellectual capital, which is a significant support for entrepreneurs to start a new venture has been took into consideration by researchers and become a popular subject recently (Peña, 2002). However, few people know the process of starting a new business or how a new company is formed(Liao and Welsch, 2008). Therefore, Gately and Cunningham conducted a qualitative research, presenting data through content analysis and in-depth interview to explore the activity of technologic entrepreneurs to construct relational capital in the higher education institution when they start their own company.

2 Research question and Research objective

The research question of Gately and Cunningham was how technology entrepreneurs build social capital of start-up period of company. This research question explained the phenomenon of the relational capital construction activity of technologic entrepreneur rather than testifying a certain assumption. On one hand, the authors really did understand this issue, and wished to have a depth discussion through research as they discussed in the theoretical background section. On the other hand, the location (society), people (entrepreneur) and event (relational capital construction) involved in this research question did exist in real life. As Chen indicated that it was necessary for a good research question to closely relate to the research content, the presupposition implied in the statement, and the expected results of the research(Chen, 1999). Therefore, this research question were authors' real concerns, making sense to technologic entrepreneurs. Following that, the research objective of Gately and Cunningham was to examine the activity of technologic entrepreneurs to construct relational capital in the university and college when they form a new venture.

3 Data collection

A multi-method approach, including content analysis and the qualitative interviewing

was used in the research of Gately and Cunningham.

Content analysis is a kind of unobtrusive research approach(Li, 2007). It is not necessary to directly observe the behavior of the research objects, nor directly communicate and interact with them using content analysis. Also, research activity do not cause the reaction of the research participants and nor the interfere with their behaviors(Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). However, the data used in the research of Gately and Cunningham was not excellently collected according to the theme of this research. All existing business plans were inseparable from the objective environment they faced with, subjective knowledge structure they hold and writing purpose of the owners(Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Therefore, the difference of the context and the purpose between the researcher and the applicant might lead to the deviation in the understanding and application of the text.

In-depth interview is a one-to-one data collection method, in which the specific topics can be discussed between interviewers and interviewees. Generally, researchers usually follow the semi-structured or non-structured interview guideline, which is conducive to understanding personal life and the subjectivity of interviewees(Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2010). The interviewers and participants create knowledge and meaning together in the qualitative interviewing, constructing the common reality. Therefore, in-depth interviews can reveal important, hidden aspects of human behavior and organizational activities(Qu and Dumay, 2011). However, as the in-depth interview is one to one or one to two method, researcher can't get feedback from others in an in-depth interview(Creswell, 2007). In addition, researchers also need to apply special techniques to build rapport with the participants. In the process of in-depth interviews, researchers also need to be flexible to avoid missing important information through adjusting the outline according to the participants(Chen, 1999).

Considering that every approaches of data collection has benefits and drawbacks(Gill *et al.*, 2008), the method of content analysis and in-depth interviewing could

complement each other as discussed above. Therefore, the multi-method of data collection is appropriate for Gately and Cunningham' qualitative research.

4 Sample selection and Limitation

In the research of Gately and Cunningham, they designed a three-step approach to select data. Following that, 40 business plans from The South East Enterprise Platform Program were chosen through the special filtering procedure. All the 40 business plans were transcribed into 909 pages of content and then they were coded using the software of NVivo. In addition, 25 participants who submitted business plans in the SEEPP were selected as primary data sample. These technology graduates were divided into five different types of technology entrepreneur(Jones-Evans, 1995), and were in-depth interviewed to understand how they construct relational capital when build a new venture formation.

However, the data is not sufficient. First of all, as all the business plans for content analysis was selected from the South East Enterprise Platform Programme, as well as the participants were these technology graduates in the South East of Ireland, which applied for CORD-funded, therefore, the information disclosure was not perfect, and existed problems as lack of data. Moreover, the business plans were selected for analysis only covered a short period from year 2013 to year 2017, so its regularity could not be fully reflected in this study. In addition, 20 qualified entrepreneurs who was funded by CORD refused to participate in the in-depth interviewing. As the result, only 25 technology entrepreneurs were interviewed in this study. The sample size was small, and the data was insufficient, which may not fully represent all the activities of relational capital construction and the research findings may not be applied in all kind of incubated technology companies.

5 Validity, Reliability and Bias

In the research of Gately and Cunningham, the traditional criteria and the alternative criteria proposed by Guba and Lincoln(1994) including trustworthiness and

authenticity were mixed used to make the the research process rigorous. Although the authors took some circumvention measurement to limit interference, the text was not purely fair. The reliability issue is that of the research of Gately and Cunningham was that the author only selected the sample from the SEEPP platform and could only base on the existing materials. However, existing materials (text or data) did not fully reflect the assumptions and concepts that Gately and Cunningham attempted to demonstrate in their research. The applicants of these business plans as the sample for context analysis in Gately and Cunningham's research all were selected from these technology graduates in the South East of Ireland. Although these business plans were selected through three filtering process, the 40 business plans were most in line with the authors' expectations, it was still bias in content. In addition, the text always records what the owns want to record. Therefore, the business plans may be 'untrue' due to utilitarian purpose and technical problems of the applicants, which arose a reliability issue.

6 Finding, Contribution and Limitation

Gately and Cunningham found that technology students of university and college build the relation capital at the beginning of the company through 4 kinds of activities. According to the research question of Gately and Cunningham, therefore, this main finding interpreted the issue appropriately. Except this, the other finding of authors from the research also indicated that at the start point of the new venture (1) The network, which is based on customers is more essential than other forms to construct relation capital. (2) Entrepreneurs regard that public relationship is one of most useful and low-priced approaches of self-promotion. (3) Entrepreneurs took their alma mater and incubated company as the source and beginning line for relation capital construction. (4) The type and nature of the activities undertaken varied greatly across companies. With the strengthening of the new enterprise formation process, the field of activities was getting smaller but more targeted. (5) Some entrepreneurs were eager for non-real networks, because they list who to establish network relationships with and how to do it in their business plans, but did not activate the process of relationship capital construction. (6) The primary purpose for these technologic entrepreneurs to

establish a social relationship was to build credibility with others, which was essential to their entrepreneurial activities. (7) Entrepreneurs make more use of external expertise rather than internal information.

Gately and Cunningham made an original contribution to identify 4 kinds of relational capital construction activities. They also analyzed difference types of relational capital construction applying the classification of entrepreneurs of Jones-Evans(1995), including users, producers, opportunists and non-technical entrepreneurs. Although they suggested from their findings that incubator program is necessary to support relational capital construction of technology entrepreneurs. The intellectual property and network of higher education institutes play a significant role in promoting the entrepreneurial plan of the new ventures. However, they did not explain the reason why the incubator program could promote the construction of relationship capital for new entrepreneurs, nor provide the specific methods in detail for these technologic entrepreneurs to implement.

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