

MASTER'S THESIS

High tech entrepreneurship: an exploratory study of entrepreneurial network competence in China

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High Tech Entrepreneurship:
An Exploratory Study of Entrepreneurial Network Competence in China

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ABSTRACT

Network approach, focusing on the social context, has emerged as one of the promising contextual approaches to advance entrepreneurship research (Low & MacMillan, 1988). However, the time seems overdue for further developing entrepreneurial network theory since more research in regions other than North America is needed to provide insights into global entrepreneurship (Aldrich, 2000). This thesis examines the entrepreneurial networks in China's high tech industries with a broad question of how Chinese high tech entrepreneurs perceive and interpret their networks and how they actually develop and manage their networks during the entrepreneurial process. Theoretically, the research proposes a framework of entrepreneurial network competence, which addresses the interplay of network relationship, governance, structure and dynamics and the human agency issue of entrepreneurs. Based on the conceptual framework, 16 in-depth interviews were conducted with high tech entrepreneurs in Beijing and Shenzhen. The qualitative long interview analysis method and Categorical Principal Component Analysis in SPSS 12.0 are used jointly in data analysis.

The 12 cases selected for this research shows that the concept of entrepreneurial network competence has two strategic dimensions, network adaptation and external resource dependence. Four types of networkers, namely customer-oriented networker, partnership networker, value-oriented networker and prospecting networker, are further classified in terms of network adaptation and external resource dependence. They exhibit different interplay patterns of network relationship, governance, structure and dynamics. The evidence also illustrates the contextual impacts on Chinese entrepreneurial networking practices. To cope with the technical, competitive and process uncertainty in China's transitional economy, distinctive Chinese socio-cultural values like relational orientation, guanxi and personal trust may affect the entrepreneur to select varied network relationships and build different patterns of networks. These results support and add new knowledge to global network-based entrepreneurship research. As a conclusion, a tentative model of Chinese entrepreneurial network competence is proposed.

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Lord Jesus Christ is the light in my way. Thank You for taking care of the every need in my heart. It is in Christ I find out who I am and what I am living for.

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