

Resource Transfer in Virtual Business Incubators

Research Relevance & Research Gap

The focus of business incubators has been shifting from the provision of physical resources to value creation¹, which lead to the rise of virtual business incubators (VBI). As before, resources and their effective transfer remain crucial success factors for business incubators². Scholars investigated that internal processes of VBIs differ significantly from those in physical business incubators³. However, VBI literature neglects research on resource transfer processes in VBIs, leaving a relevant gap in this research field.

Research Aim and Research Questions

The research aim is to provide an understanding of resource transfer processes in virtual incubators by the factors which influence them and to understand directions and outcomes of these impact factors:

- What characterizes resource transfer from the incubator to incubatees in the context of virtual business incubators?
- How do these factors influence the resource transfer?

Methodology

Research Design

- Qualitative single case study
 - Social constructivism
 - Case: Bridge for Billions, VBI based in Madrid

Data Collection

- Semi-structured interviews: incubator management, incubatees, mentors
- Secondary Data: annual reports, social media, blogs, webiste

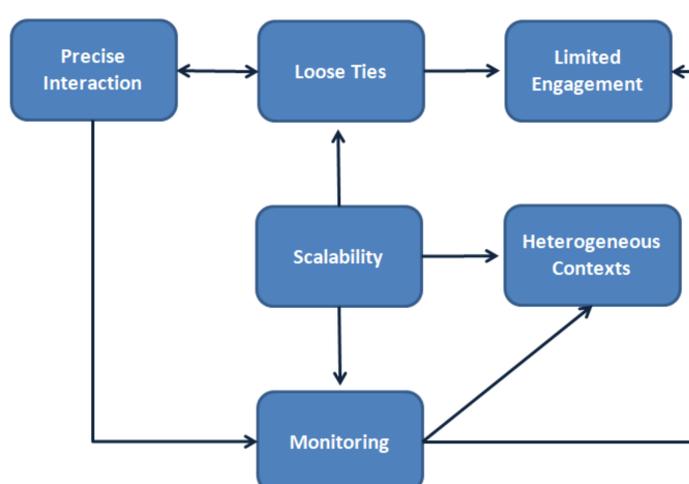
Data Analysis

- Systematic inductive approach according to Gioia⁴
 - Coding with MAXQDA with the aim of creating a data structure

Qualitative Rigor

- Triangulation: Method and data triangulation
- Peer Debriefing: seminars and discussions
- Member Checking

First Results



Precise communication can complicate resource sharing, but also benefit resource matching amongst experts and incubatees through the exact communication of needs. Loose ties are likely to impede effective resource transfer in general, as they keep incubatees from sharing their concerns. However, in some cases they seem to have the opposite effect, as anonymity helped incubatees to open up. Scalability benefits exact resource matching due to high reach and a large base of human resources, but can impede it when tracking is not advanced. Difficult monitoring hinders the VBI to transfer relevant resources, as it has difficulties to track where the incubatees face emotional problems. It benefits in case of programm difficulties. Limited engagement complicates exact research matching and resource passing such as the provision of business trainings. Heterogeneous contexts can either benefit the resource matching by bringing together different perspectives or impede them by resulting in a lack of understanding amongst incubator members.

References

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