BUSINESS NETWORKING AS AN INFLUENTIAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY FOR THAI START-UPS

YAVAPORN WONGCONGSAWAT

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..…………………………………
Miss Yavaporn Wongcongsawat
Candidate

……………………….......
Assoc. Prof. Vichita Ractham
Ph.D.
Advior

…………………………........
Asst. Prof. Randall Shannon
Ph.D.
Committee member

……………………………….

Dean
College of Management
Mahidol University

…………………………........
Dr. Worapong Janyangyuen
Ph.D.
Committee member

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BUSINESS NETWORKING AS AN INFLUENTIAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY FOR THAI START-UPS

YAVAPORN WONGCONGSAWAT   5749148

M.M. (ENTREPRENEURSHIP MANAGEMENT)

THEMATIC PAPER ADVISORY COMMITTEE: ASSOC. PROF. VICHITA RACTHAM, Ph.D., ASST. PROF. RANDALL SHANNON, Ph.D., WORAPONG JANYANGYEUN, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

This research paper aims to initially explore the influences of business connections from attending entrepreneurial related business seminars, respecting the sake of early-stage entrepreneurs or start-ups and strengthening a more effective entrepreneur performance. The study will merely bring up and cover the influences on the early-stage entrepreneurs who are here sometimes called start-up and whose businesses are newly emerged to the marketplace and their business plans are modeled to new creative ideas accordingly. The study also points the aims to the understanding of business networking accumulated from the business seminars in which facilitators in the programs can give some impacts on start-ups in Thailand.

The study's results revealed that there are three dimensions derived by a business community which includes business direction, competitiveness and benchmarking. Attending seminars more or less provide a benefit to the start-ups. Yet, in order to gain those three dimensions, the start-ups need to embed themselves into a healthy business community where they are able to present their business's highlighted resources and ideas. As well as, the final results show that the start-ups need to continuously build their interesting entrepreneurial profile and social existence in order to be able to call more attention from other talented start-ups and being in a healthy business community.

KEYWORDS: start-ups / business networking / entrepreneurial community

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

On the path of business success, entrepreneurs will have to go through different tasks uniquely on the basis of each business type requirement. When it comes, especially, to new entrepreneurs whom dynamic economic system keeps mastering business trends, business connections and networking contribute a significant role in business growth. Healthy business community and connections ease young startup entrepreneurs to have a shortcut step of business building and enhance their business growth. Hence, business networking can be an integral toolkit of resource sharing (Stephens, 2013.). The entrepreneurs then can be each other's business resources, creating a business connection where they can accumulate each one's business network.

According to GEM (The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor), recently Thailand has been reaching a lead trend of new entrepreneurs which reflect higher expectation of market gaps and business opportunities. Plus, the trend shows the highest rate of business activities, mentoring by early-stage entrepreneurs, so called start-ups, in Asia Pacific regions (Guelich, 2013). Specifically, in Thailand, there are an increasing number of facilitators launched to support and promote entrepreneurships. These facilitators aim to enhance the fundamental knowledge and essential skills for entrepreneurs, strengthening their competitiveness and business path. Participating these programs, specially designed for new startup, provides the early-established entrepreneurs an integration of business essential kits, including exclusive seminars, workshops and trainings, subjected to different business areas and topics. These seminars are designed to promote the start-ups a package of extensive business related lessons and creativity (M, 2014).

Accelerating the business growth, entering the programs leads the entrepreneurs can each other share the business idea and new creative way of business

management. Since they have known each other from the programs, the connection is built and become an entrepreneurship network. Thus, this network can be a community where the start-ups simply develop a strong network of entrepreneurship. They simply themselves create a share of business related key attributes, becoming a new business culture where they are giving back some of what they have received from the group, helping one another.

During the programs, entrepreneurial scenes, where new creative business related attributes are created, possibly yield some different entrepreneurial schemes which are action, cooperation and mutual assistance. It is where entrepreneurs are in the position to help each other, stimulating from the real business case lessons. Some best secrets which help accelerate the start-up process are to be derived from experienced entrepreneurs. Moreover, the workshops are basically observed by successful experienced entrepreneurs who are willing to give their time as part of mentoring activities in the programs. Therefore, the programs lead the entrepreneurs to be gathered to exchange and share ideas and creativity in a casual atmosphere rather than what other academic courses could generate. It is an entrepreneurship community is built without actually involved a mentoring-type of forced relationship. It is rather a culture of exchange and mutual assistance among a group of young entrepreneurs.

Additionally, after the programs, the entrepreneurs can find more business circumstances where they could somehow take advantages of the derived connection and network which can be part of their business movement, supporting young entrepreneurs through events and campaigns, establishing faster-growing businesses in a healthier start-up ecosystem.

As mentioned, business networking which integrated business connections from different young entrepreneurs, who being a part of short business entrepreneurial programs, seems to more or less play some critical roles in a healthy business community building. Then, this research paper will mainly question the influences of this networking, building from attending short business entrepreneurial seminars. Also, it can be one of significant keys for young start-up entrepreneurs to have a faster entrepreneur development. As well as, building up and fostering a good supported business network are influential for young entrepreneurs or not. Plus, whether the young entrepreneurs need to surround themselves with other peer entrepreneurs who

are believed can help push their business path, through advisory, feedback, and business connection exchanges. Importantly, this study also questions to which extent the entrepreneurship programs could create a truly entrepreneurial network and connection that are being an influential business community for young entrepreneurs. As well as, to what extent the implication or facilitators embedded in the programs could actually provide some effects on entrepreneur community development.

1.2 The Aim and Purpose

The aim of the research paper is initially to explore the influences of business connections from attending business programs for the sake of early-stage entrepreneurs, strengthening a faster entrepreneur development. The researcher will merely bring up the influences on the early-stage entrepreneurs who are here sometimes called start-up. The study also aims to understand business networking accumulating from the programs and which facilitators in the programs can give some impacts on early-stage entrepreneurs. Additionally, the objective of this paper primary pitch the focus to entrepreneurship related to business programs and executive-education courses to which extent their impacts play some essential roles on entrepreneurial business connections and networking, respecting early-stage entrepreneurs.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Definition of Entrepreneurship

As previous chapter, GEM revealed that the trend of entrepreneurs has been rising (Guelich, 2013). Also, given an entrepreneurial stage, reaching up a startup could devote to new entrepreneurial venture outcomes where entrepreneurial performance has seen remarkable (M, 2014). Acquiring the connections from entrepreneurial learning programs could undeniably pin some advantages. Yet, to which extent those sakes could play some significant keys, enhancing a stage of entrepreneur development, is questionable still.

In this chapter, the following reviews are considered as the important areas which the researcher would later use to base this paper's examining and analysis. Hence, it is aimed to discuss and review the frameworks and findings that the published literatures have highlighted about entrepreneurial business connection.

Regarding the term "entrepreneurship", there are different definitions and the terms are generally broad and elastic. Therefore, before moving to further reviews on academic papers and in order to clarify the readers who may have found many terms of the word "entrepreneurship" in different academic reviews or deliberation, the researcher would like to initially elaborate the term "entrepreneurship" which this paper bases the study and discussion on.

In this study, the researcher bases the scope and definition of "entrepreneurship" on the framework of Osman EROĞLU and Murat PIÇAK. Regarding to Thailand's culture, it is characterized as a collectivism culture (Buriyameathagul, n.d.). Then, Eroglu and Picak have done the academic review on the term "entrepreneurship" in respect to cultural values which the researcher of this paper sees it is reasonable to convey through the study. Eroglu and Picak account "entrepreneurship" as when the entrepreneur spots the market opportunity and be able to demonstrate those opportunity into particular initiative business idea in the purpose

of new business venture building. Additionally, "entrepreneur" is able to turn resources into practical yields while well organize typical social mechanism, as well as accept any potential risk and failure (Eroglu, 2011).

According to Eroglu and Picak, the term "entrepreneurship" also involves society, culture and norms of individuals, regarding to Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions. Also, their research embraces the significant effect of the individuals' particular culture on entrepreneurship. Their conclusion, on the term 'entrepreneurship", notes the relationship between the individual's particular culture and the typical cultural condition, reflecting in entrepreneurs' activities which are dominant by their norms and culture (Eroglu, 2011).

2.2   Start-up entrepreneurs

Referring to the research aim indicated in a previous section, entrepreneurial network is mostly highlighted during the early stage of entrepreneur development as known as start-up stage (Miller, 2010). Thus, the review on start-up stage will be solely elaborated.

During start-up stage of entrepreneur, venture growth depends upon the networking capabilities of entrepreneurs. Additionally, "liabilities of newness" seems to be an initial challenge for entrepreneurs. This is the time when entrepreneurs face a limitation of experiences and have a struggle on adjusting the dynamic business environment. Then, the early stage is to cope with accessing resources, building a customer base and developing the business processes (Tseng, 2013). According to the research, the most occurring problems in this stage are positioning, sales and marketing, and external relations. Hence, this finding gives a notice to the significance of entrepreneurial networks (Miller, 2010). From past studies, researchers have investigated business networking related activities during the start-up stage. As a result, there are different combinations of entrepreneurial business activities that are found used by a fast-growing entrepreneur business during the start-up stage, including social participation, marketing networks, as well as knowledge, innovation and technology networks (Durugbo, 2014).

Previous researches have investigated the entrepreneurial networks through the phase of a start-up formation. During the ongoing start-up phase, entrepreneurs restrain their initial idea about the venture to their familiar environment. Then, the venture preparation is set up and the network enlarges and networking activities are especially emphasized focused (Strobl, 2016). Entrepreneurs need to go through the process of relationship exploring, related business community searching and business ties establishing. Thus, during the phase of start-up, the entrepreneurial network is limited to useful business related ties. There are also some reviews on a conceptual framework of network development during the entrepreneurial business formation. Initially, entrepreneurs focus on the capture of essential business related relationships. Next, they would convert these relationship into business networking relationships which include an individual's work experience and one's social position related to others that is family's economic status, education and occupation (Holmlund, 1997).

2.3 Entrepreneurial Behaviors

Given the proof studies, the researchers have noted that entrepreneurial behavior is socially and culturally based. It is highlighted that entrepreneurial development process is partly tied on the interaction between individual's education, society and culture (Kirkley, 2016). Entrepreneurship is considered more as a system rather than an individual's part. The key to developing entrepreneurial stage remains within one's society, and the extent to which the individual handles circumstances of uncertainty and competition (Rigg, 2012).

From a behavioral perspective regarding cultural and social aspects, the entrepreneurial behaviors basically shaped and interpreted through each individual's attitudes, attributes, and personal values. Thus, entrepreneurial culture is composed of people interacting along with determining future interaction. Accordingly, this interaction leads to the exchange of idea, knowledge and one's network, bringing the acknowledgement of self-identity. Then, within a typical community, individuals belong to a number of different cultural and social levels and at the same time correspond to the one's business status and identities spread within society (Kirkley,

2016). Therefore, this can evidence the occurrence of that the relationship between each entrepreneur within certain culture and society. Then, the enrollment of entrepreneurial activity is essential.

From an entrepreneurial perspective, individuals who belong to a particular society tend to reveal the social framework in which they find themselves provides a particular social related pattern that allows a person to function. This pattern shows shared sets of qualities, business related attitudes, behaviors and values, integrating among a particular community (Thompson, 2007). It is also acknowledged that individual members of society have the freedom to add one's self-identity and to differentiate one's self in term of ideas, knowledge and network, through entrepreneurial behavior and the process of entrepreneurship. Thus, entrepreneurs seem not to engage a society which does not compass an entrepreneurial activity. On the other hand, a group of individuals or community where actively supports entrepreneurial activity is more likely gain substantially interest (Pau, 2012).

2.4 A community of practice

Regarding to earlier mention, entrepreneurship involves in individuals' culture and behaviors. Plus, the start-up phase of entrepreneurship, which is here focused, requires the strain of ideas and connection. Then, a community of practice is also seen as one framework which highlights the entrepreneurship's connection, respecting individuals' social aspect.

According to Lave and Wenger, who originate the term "community of practice" (COP), it is defined as the occurrence of sharing process through a group of individuals in a particular society. Lave and Wenger state in their research that the group of individuals passionately share things that they believe themselves perform better while being in a particular group, called a community of practice (Retna, 2011). Achieving a community of practice, Lave and Wenger discover three elements which give a community of practice be a successful mechanism for the individuals. Those elements are the association the three sequent components of a particular occurrence, including interest, community and practice. Then, this occurrence happens when a group of individuals, who have a similar interest, interact and participate activities

together. Here is where the sharing of idea, information, creativity and experience among those individuals, building a relationship eventually. Finally, a most critical part of COP, those individuals have to be able to turn the derived resources into a new or any innovation practice (Hoadley, n.d.).

The business related network, derived from education programs, is considered as a community of practice. This also provides new entrepreneurs the induction of knowledge stimulation, as well as a learning process regarding of how to start their acquisition of business status and identity, not only enhance the business related practical skills (Rigg, 2012). Referring to the previous reviews, it is founded that once the entrepreneur has been a part of community of practice, he or she is being a part of a network which means whenever in the future he or she could call on any of this entrepreneurial network (Jin, 2016).

Program mentors are identified as one of the key in the program for developing entrepreneurs, in the aspect of providing specific focus and support for entrepreneurs, based on each individualized business related context and critical aspects of their business development. The research also further lightens the importance of relationships and connectivity within the program, regarding the development of knowledge. Accordingly, mentors can be considered as a source of knowledge transfer stimulating or as individuals who help lead aspiring entrepreneurs in order to reflect and boost up new idea and knowledge (Rigg, 2012).

Beside the program leader, mentors also play other two roles which are identity work and a source of social capital (Rigg, 2012). The theory of social learning highlights the significance of persuading new members to the institutional norms in the purpose of establishing a "community of practice". Also, work identity refers to an entrepreneurial transition. This is when an on-going learning and activity during the program is helpful for developing the network in the program to be a community of practice (Altinay, 2011). This then brings the induction for early stage entrepreneurs of stimulating their acquisition of business status and identity, not only their development of business related practical skills.

The effective mentoring preparation also leads the access to further business related capital which is an essential to the success of an entrepreneur's new venture. The social capital refers to the networks accumulated through the mentoring

process by the program mentor, forming a community of practice (Rigg, 2012). Hence, it is a community of entrepreneurs who are able to identify and acknowledge each other's idea, knowledge, status and connection. Moreover, the research also highlights this connectivity that successful new entrepreneurs are more likely to be those who can build trusted networks within a community of practice, assisting them in accomplishing a faster start-up entrepreneurship (Jiao, 2010).

2.4.1 Social and Business Relationships

Accordingly, social and business networks also play an important role in the entrepreneurial development process. According to past studies, regarding to the business networking perspective, the researchers assume that entrepreneurs are linked to other entrepreneurs. Therefore, the business relationship could provide access to resources that may create a new business venture. Although these ties can vary and have several roles, they all contribute an impact at different stages in the new business venture's life. Also, the research shows that business networking is always an essential entrepreneurial tool that leads to the business's establishment, development and growth, especially for small firms (Pinho, 2014).

Referring to previous academic reviews, the business networks are proven necessary, especially to firms that face higher levels of uncertainty and being more affected by dynamic business environment. Then, it is essential having relationships built on trust. Furthermore, business networking is enclosed for the entrepreneurs who seem to be attracted to environments where sharing resources and information systems could encourage the faster formation and development of firms. Moreover, entrepreneurs often depend heavily on additional information and business contacts to develop and expand their business. According to the research, there are presented evidences of a positive relationship between entrepreneurs' business networks and their success (Stephen, 2013).

Additionally, the studies have found that this network, as a result of COP, will be more beneficial to a start-up entrepreneur than other stages of entrepreneurial development. The entrepreneurship network will create more channels in accessing new market opportunities. Under such perspective, entrepreneurs are embedded in networks of business relationships which allow them to enlarge their knowledge

capability, business opportunities, ability to access critical resources such as customers, suppliers, advisors, as well as to gain critical knowledge which allows them to cope with business obstacles (Jose, 2014).

2.4.2 Social Power and Entrepreneurs' Success

The empirical studies have identified the term "successful entrepreneur" as a set of personal traits, attributes, attitudes, and values which motivate individuals to form a new business venture. Plus, those entrepreneurs must be driven by a supreme desire for achievement toward different tasks that challenge their competencies. Principally, even within similar social positions, entrepreneurs differ in the way which they independently could be able to take advantages of such position still (Aguinis, 2008). Thus, given these differences in individual characteristics, successful and unsuccessful entrepreneurs would then have some underlying factors that have an impact on their entrepreneurial development.

Referring to past academic research findings, the typical activities which found entrepreneurs implement during the start-up note certain types of social power as one of a key determinant of entrepreneurial success (Anderson, 2012). Considering an entrepreneur's activities, entrepreneurs initially demand in identifying market needs and gaps, developing a product or service to respond to those needs and planning a marketing and financial plan. Accordingly, they need to cope with the potential diversifying risks that correspond to their performance. Eventually, they have to find the essential resources which include the establishment of important business related relationships, having supporters to launch their businesses. As a result of previous research findings, a set of activities in the purpose of business network forming is a key which determines the success of an entrepreneur's effort to turn business ideas into a venture (Franco, 2014).

The research has also reviewed that social power, in the form of a personal's social position or family privilege. This highlights the entrepreneurial ventures in the fact that it eases social interactions that provide such an effective support (Anguinis, 2008). Unfortunately, during the start-up stage, business concepts and intensive resources accessing are not enough competencies for entrepreneurs to push start-up stage forward. Toward business success for an entrepreneur, a personal's

social status could help establishing business networking which lead a shared awareness, idea and knowledge among a group of individuals who remain in a similar society. A well-established support network then will provide an entrepreneur with a competitive advantage in the means of acquiring others' resources that can be a later potential source of their competitive advantage (Stephen, 2013). Therefore, this evidences that entrepreneurs need to well utilize their social power in order to turn this general tied relationship into a business networking. As well as, entrepreneurs must be able to develop their social power into networks of business cooperation as they help bring their ideas to a venture. Consequently, it seems that entrepreneurs must also partly rely on their social power to help them easily obtain support and lighten their competitive advantage in a business environment.

Furthermore, during the first period of entrepreneurial development, the research reveals that one of the most significant mechanism for the firm performance in the early stage of business formation are cultural and social norms. These are including entrepreneurial related activities in societies in which the entrepreneurs find themselves the opportunity to be in the areas where they can meet other potential entrepreneurs. It is a place where they believe they can discuss ideas, existing and potential problems and solutions. Furthermore, the researchers also show that there is an increasing chance of new business creation from participating social events where there are entrepreneurs engaging (Gomezelj, 2013).

Frameworks chart summary
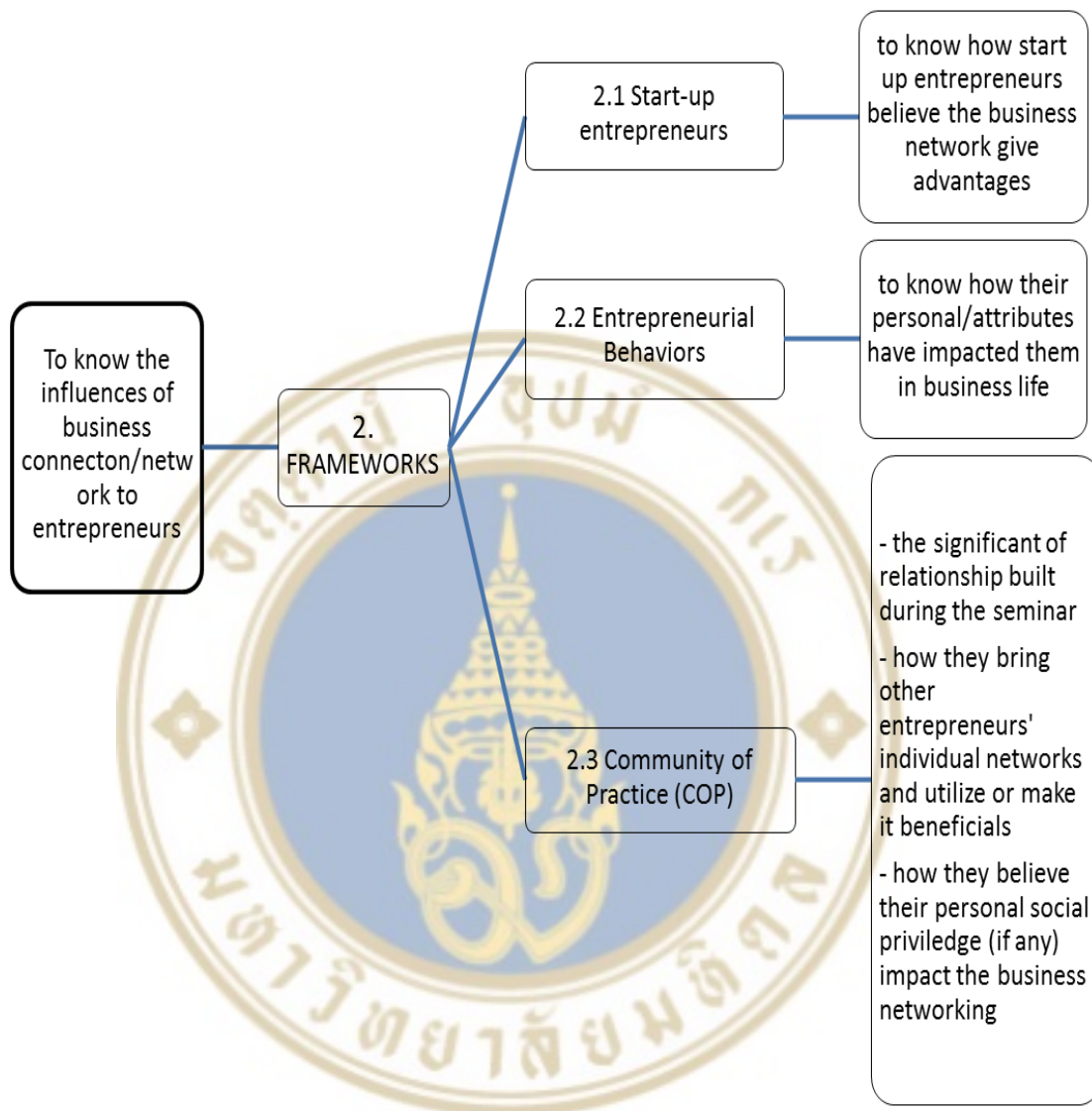
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the researcher will explore the influences of business connections from attending business programs for early-stage entrepreneurs as to proof whether it helps achieve a faster entrepreneur development. Specifically, in the purpose of finding a broader perspective, the paper would merely observe the findings from a short business program which is last less than 20 weeks which is considered more opened and has less limitation to individuals, rather than observing a degree program. This is to have a population from different age range and education background which would contribute a more variety of feedbacks and information of each individual's perspective.

Due to the aim of this paper, it is also aimed to understand business networking, accumulating from the programs, to which extent their impacts play some essential roles on entrepreneurial business connections and networking. Plus, the researcher will elaborate which facilitators in the programs can give some impacts on entrepreneur development. Therefore, the research methodology which would be conducted is in a form of qualitative.

Qualitative research helps reveal some hidden ranges of opinions and the perceptions which, here, the researcher is willing to dig down into more details. The researcher, therefore, could use this in-depth study of small group interview of target people to guide and develop the conclusion. Furthermore, the researcher believes that using qualitative research could help contribute unique and insightful views from synergy among participants where the respondents are being engaged more actively than they do in a more structured survey.

Hence, the opportunity to explore, which brings deeper understandings why the samplings audiences feel that typical ways, enable the researcher to reach more responsive explanation opinion and ideas. As well as, the qualitative research allows the opportunity to observe and interpret non-verbal communication such as gesture,

voice tone and intonation. This can be also used as a part of participants' feedback, which is valuable during interviews for later analysis.

3.1 Research Design

In this research paper, the qualitative method, that the researcher would conduct, will include in-depth interviews with individuals and group discussions which will have around eight to ten participants. Therefore, the research is designed to conclude both individual interviews and focus group. Moreover, since we are observing a group of entrepreneurs which are expected to have a close business and social position, the sampling sessions for group interviews will be asked for selected entrepreneurs' support to refer their entrepreneurial friends to join.

During the sessions, the interview methods are used for both group and individual interviews. The open-ended questions are mostly used during the interview sessions. With open-ended questions, participants can respond to questions in their own point of views, allowing participants the opportunity to elaborate answers and comments in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose the answers from fixed choices as quantitative methods do. Hence, the researcher, as an interview stimulator, will primary ask open-ended questions as they bring more responses that are valuable and meaningful for further analysis, richer explanations and flexible engagement.

3.2 Research Population

The sample size includes 54 entrepreneurial respondents and the respondents are selected among Thai entrepreneurs whose businesses are in start-up stage and have participated at least one entrepreneurial business program. Regarding to individual interviews, the session will be separately done through 30 individual participants, which yield around 20-30 minutes for each session. For group interviews, those entrepreneurial participants will be grouped into a group of 8 persons, totally 3 groups.

3.3 Data Collection and Procedure

As mentioned, both individual interviews and focus group are particularly conducting for obtaining a specific type of data. Then, there are 2 main session interview modules, including in-depth individual interviews, and group interviews.

The first session is individual participant observation which the researcher believes it is appropriate for collecting data on naturally each individual's opinion. The in-depth interviews, therefore, are done for collecting data on individuals' opinions and post business related experiences after enrolling the program, in an individual perspective. Furthermore, the social network will be included here as a tool for interviewing via videoconferencing.

Second, a group interview is also conducted as another effective method in a better gathering data on the cultural norms of a group or between entrepreneurs. In addition, the group session is expected to help the researcher in stimulating broader overviews of entrepreneurial peers' considerations regarding cultural groups or norms.

Both sessions, all respondents are informed in advance that the data during interviews are audio recorded and their contributions, speeches, reactions and engagement will be memo for further used in the paper analysis in the aspect of educational purposes.

3.4 Instrument

The interview questions are developed from literature reviews, accordingly. With the open ended questions, the respondents would be overall asked to freely contribute their ideas and opinions. During the sessions, the participants will be not only observed about their answers, but also their responsive comments and views toward typical questions. According to literature reviews, there are three main considerations including in developing interview questions, including entrepreneurship life cycle, entrepreneur behaviors and a community of practice.

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Interview Questions

- <u>Demographic questions</u>

  Gender, age, education, business career

- <u>Participants' background questions</u>

  o What is the last time you attended the seminar?

  o How often/ how many times you attend the seminars?

  o How do you know each seminar?

  o What are your purposes of attending the seminars?

- <u>Frameworks</u>

  o Do you think your social status or family reputation provide some advantages while participating the seminar?

  o Do you think your business position or family reputation have any privileges in helping you to attend the seminars?

  o Do your reasons of attending the seminars are based on the seminar curriculum or other factors?

  o Which skills or expertise you believe you still need or lack of in running your business during start up?

  o Do you think the seminars you have attended could provide you more or less some strength to those needed skills?

  o Which mechanisms in the seminar you think influence your performance the most?

  o Do other seminar attendants have some influences on you?

  o Do you find a program mentor play any influent role?

  o Have you built any relationship during the seminar and how you think it is beneficial to your entrepreneurial performance and business?

o   Do you rely on the relationship or connection from the seminars on business purposes?

o   Do you think how the relationship built during the seminar could create you any innovative business idea?

4.2 Data collection

According to research population, the sample size includes 54 entrepreneurial respondents and the respondents are selected among Thai entrepreneurs whose businesses are in start-up stage and have participated at least one entrepreneurial business program. Running the interview sessions was composed of individual interviews and focus groups. There are 30 individual interviews which were done by a telephone or a video-call interview. Plus, there are 3 focus groups, consisting of 3 groups of 8 participants which were done by a Skype video conference program.

Demographically, the selected sample composes of approximately 75% women and 25% male. The population is in the age range of 25-40 whom their businesses are in start-up phase. Within the selected sample, 70% are Master's degree graduated and 30% are bachelor's degree graduated. Moreover, around 70% of the selected sample has their families being in the business cycle.
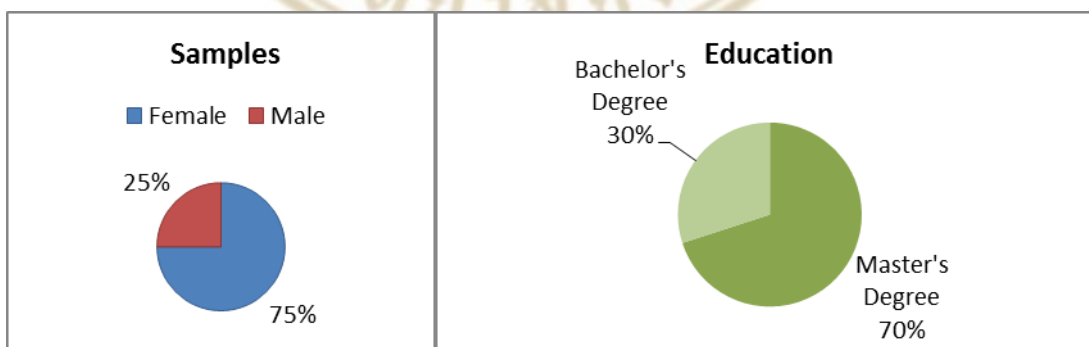
In collecting the data, the content derived from the interview session was processed as a semi-structured interview sessions. Plus, all the data was collected and grouped regarding similarity or difference, accordingly. Then, the researcher would find some relationship of the contributed information and research's questions, regarding the based frameworks.

4.3 Findings

The following summary is the result that was explored from the interview sessions in the purpose of exploring the influences of business connections from attending business seminars of early-stage or start up entrepreneurs. Here are the findings derived from the interviews and focus groups which will be sequentially shown in each framework.

Start-up entrepreneurs

Referring to interviews' initial observing with demographic and background questions, 100% of participants have attended the seminar while 60% have attended more than 1 seminar since they were starting their businesses. Interestingly, more than 80% of participants prior choose the seminars regarding to their references, including entrepreneurial friends and invitation from the seminar coordinators. Moreover, the participants would rather choose to attend the seminars which provide more workshops, activities or abroad field trips, rather than academic lectures.

"I think the activities could help me to know and make a relationship with other seminar attendants more easily and it helps reduce some ice breakers among the attendants. – Participant 8

In addition, 70% of participants do not much expect the academic knowledge from attending the seminars as the priority. Rather, they focus on business purposes as to know more people or some relationship that would have some benefits to their later business related projects. Then, rather than randomly choosing or searching the seminar curriculums, they will choose the seminar according to recommendations as they could ensure what they have expected.

Regarding to individual interviews, more than half of participants agree that they do not expect to gain lots of academic knowledge from attending the seminar. Instead, they will interest the seminars from what their friends have experienced. On the other hand, running the focus group sessions, all groups agree that they will both base their decisions on references and seminar curriculums. They will filter the interesting seminars from their references and then work through the seminar modules whether they see enough efficiency of planned workshops and lectures.

"I would select the seminar that I can ensure the society and expected environment, so I will based my decision on what I have seen from my friend's experiences and feedbacks"- Participant 21

"There are lots of seminars popped out recently, some are interesting but when we asked the friends who attended. The feedbacks are not enough persuading. So, we based the decision on references first then choose the most interesting curriculum"- Focus Group 1

Entrepreneurial Behaviors

Overall, 90% of the participants, including individuals and focus groups, agree that they do need their social or family reputation in applying the seminar. Briefly, according to the interviews, some participants have noted that they were required to do a short video clip of self-introduction and an individual interview. Also, in the application form, they were asked to include the information of their family or owned business in order to complete their qualification in applying.

Generally, not all applicants are accepted. Referring to focus group sessions, they have explained that some seminars, in their opinion, would solely accept the entrepreneur who have their family engaged in the business cycle or who are engaging in a society. Yet, there are also few seminars loosen their application screening process, having more rooms for higher applications. Still, regarding to focus group discussions, the seminar participants' social reputation play some keys in enhancing the relationship building during the program.

"I think my family business profile have helped me in applying the seminar. Also, I guess I was firstly asked about my family profile before my own established business during the seminar interview"-Participant 16

In addition, 80% of the participants agree that the seminar's workshops or field trips intend to bring out their personality and personal characters as one of the driver in accomplishing the assign tasks. Interestingly, more than half of those 80% are female. Plus, most of the participants agree that they have learned how to bring out their hidden personality or other intangible side such as creativity. Additional to individual interviews, focus group sessions have added the aspect of personality training such as leadership, self-confidence, and group participation.

"During the first session, we were grouped randomly by the program coordinators. Then we were forced to be in the same team for the entire program. It was quite not comfortable for almost the first half of the program, yet we think it has somehow lead us to learn how we comply the way we are with others'- Focus group 1

Community of Practice (COP)

80% of the modules in the seminar, the attendants are encouraged to perform as a team. According to individual interviews, some seminars do a group rotation as to force all attendants to see each other. The participants believe that this is the main purpose of the seminar which is to create a new community for the attendants, referred as entrepreneurs. Interestingly, 90% of the participants agree that this mechanism do create a community for them while 80% of them noted that they have been taking advantages and gain some significant business related yields from those built relationship.

Alternatively, regarding the focus groups' discussion sessions, the more variety of individuals' interests gathered within the group could generate new born business alliances or co-project. There are different entrepreneurs from many business field attended the seminar. Then, regarding to each entrepreneur's experience and personal attributes, the effort of the community building would result in a more healthy community for entrepreneurs. Plus, the discussions during the focus group session have significantly noted that engaging the workshops, activities or field trips during the seminars has an impact in pushing a stimulation of knowledge, ideas and creativity. As a result, the entrepreneurs, who could be able to find the right fit or being in a healthy community, would be able to take or share those stimulated advantages within the community.

Additionally, referring to individual interviews, 90% of the seminars will have a program mentor who plays a role in leading the entire activities during the seminar. Almost all participants agree that the program mentor plays an influent role in leading the seminar's activities or workshops. Moreover, focus groups have stated that they have an impressed experience to the program mentor who is also an academic fellow. The discussions noted that the program mentor is one of drivers in pulling off the attendant's outstanding personality and idea. Also, the mentor would adjust the circumstances to be in a creative environment.

Regarding to a business relationship, more than half of individual interviews agree that they consider their business promotions, campaigns and strategies to the acquired relationship accordingly. Possibly, they will do PR or promotion campaigns which they believe they could bring some parts of the relationship in assisting the campaign development and activities, having less resource consuming and cost reduction.

4.4 Data Analysis

Regarding to the findings, it is concluded that the entrepreneurs eventually influenced by the derived the business connection in several dimensions, including business direction, competitiveness and benchmarking.

Interestingly, the entrepreneurs would base their upcoming business strategies such as promotion, PR campaigns and new product development to their derived business connection. For example, they would primary see the possible allowed utilized resources of other entrepreneurs in the community. Then, they would add those resources to their planned project. Therefore, this can evidence the derived connection does impact the direction of their further business direction in the way that they will primary concern the connection in their business plan. Plus, they seem to direct themselves to what they can gain from the connection, rather than alone follow the strategies from what they have earlier planned. Hence, this can significantly notice the significant influence of how the entrepreneurs base their business direction from the derived connection.

Contingency plans are most of the time bring up in adjusting the dynamic business environment. Additionally, there are lots of confusion, regarding to initial product or service launches, marketing activities and target customer responses. Hence, in order to reduce the uncertainty, the entrepreneurs choose to launch the product or service in the place where they are familiar with and where believe they will derive almost positive responses. Also, they start their initial marketing and PR activities to the place where they can gain more enthusiastic reactions from audiences. As a result, the entrepreneurs decide to first introduce their product or service to persons whom they are familiar with, as well as the ones that are expected to contribute positive feedbacks to the product or service such as friends or other surrounding persons in their society.

"During my very first trial, I find it was quite tricky to find the appropriate time to launch my brand in the market. Unfortunately, there was low enthusiastic responses from the market and it was yield a longer time and higher marketing/PR cost"- Participant 11

"In association of my networking in implementing marketing activities, it consumes less time and lower costs. Also, I can be sure that I can gain enthusiastic positive responses which make my brand being more aware by more people"- Participant 17

However, regarding to the focus group sessions, during start-up phases, venture preparation, especially PR and marketing, has been almost relying on the entrepreneurs' personal networking. This can be in a form of groups of friends, family reputation, social status privileges and education. Moreover, the entrepreneurs will ask for the collaboration from their networking, regarding to promotions and distribution channels. Then, the entrepreneurs will find the opportunity to enlarge their personal networking in order to search more business related advantages.

"In the process of introducing the brand and reaching the expected distribution channels, we find that having a social status and family reputation can provide some privileges and help to have a shorter process and comfortable negotiable outcomes"- Focus group 2

"When we want to do some co-promotion with other brands or distribution channels, without any personal network, it seems that there is a less opportunity to make any interesting deals."- Focus group 1

"Suppliers do not see any coming business related benefits from someone whom the business position or social privileges are not embedded."- Focus group 3

Moreover, the entrepreneurs do add the derived connection in enhancing their business competitiveness. One of the most highlights is that they will find the chance to develop some co-project or co-brands with other business in their community. This is the way that they can have more minimized business risks in term of lower shared cost, more accessible resources and more customer base gain. Therefore, it is obvious that the entrepreneurs are also influenced by their derived community, regarding to their business competitiveness seeking. By gaining some lack resources and accessing more customer base, the entrepreneurs would be embedded themselves into their community.

In addition, beside business direction and competitiveness, the entrepreneurs do also concern other entrepreneurs in the community as their business benchmarks. Benchmarking is one of important consideration in a business practice. Then, being in the typical entrepreneurship community, it lets the entrepreneurs, especially start-ups, benchmark themselves with other business. This can be occurred when they do some co-brands or projects with other entrepreneurs or when they find some lack resources from other entrepreneurs. Rather integrating one's resources with others, the entrepreneurs can know what they can further develop from what others' business practices, enhancing a brighter business performance. Hence, it is evidenced that the start-up can be influenced by the derive community where they do benchmarking within the community.

In addition, according to the one-on-one interviews, during start-up phase of business, it is when entrepreneurs officially launch their business into the market and also the most concerned time as the riskiest moment of the entire business life. Some wrong taken steps or mistakes could incurred some negative images or bring all prepared business plan down. Therefore, the entrepreneurs seem to see the adaptability as a key to survive during this phase of business cycle. Then, being part of a healthy

entrepreneur community is one way which they can be more capable of adaptability enhancement.

Additionally, as mentioned earlier, we can see that most of the start-up phases, there are family or one's social position influenced the business path. Then, here can evidence that the start-up entrepreneurs would hardly emphasis in building a more outstanding personality as the purpose of society engagement. Plus, the seminars can be one of the reachable entrances where they can use as a tool for building their existence in a society. Obviously, the findings have shown that the seminars modules are not eventually a driver for entrepreneurs to gain a business connection, but other seminar participators. The modules can partly help qualified entrepreneurs to be gathered. However, it is eventually the seminars participators themselves who can create and develop a business connection. They have to use their own personalities, other self attributes and characteristics to call others' attention and finally build some connection.

Even most of the seminar modules do force the participators to meet each other, they still have to be able to adjust themselves to the situations. Referring to research findings, the program mentors have some impact to help pulling out the individuals' outstanding characteristics. Yet, in order to find the right healthy business community, the entrepreneurs need to represent their business position to show their interests and highlighted on-hand resources during the program in order to be concerned, leading the community establishment.

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Referring to earlier explained analysis, the start-ups are influenced by the derived business community by three dimensions which are business directions, competitiveness and benchmarking. Also, there are three frameworks which this paper bases the discovery of the research findings on. Here are the discussions of what the researcher have analyzed, agreed and contradicted to the based frameworks.

Significantly, the findings and analysis have agreed that the start-ups have engaged themselves to the seminars in the purposes of business community establishment. It is proof that they believe they can somehow gain some business related privileges from their expected business community and they accept the derived community have some significant benefits to their business. Hence, this paper's study also agrees with the previous research, regarding to the start-ups and the business connection

Regarding to the findings, the seminar's participators seem to be the influence of business community establishment, rather than the seminar modules. This can be seen when the seminar attendants will most interest the seminar that provide more workshops and field trips because they can meet more entrepreneurs, leading the start of community creation.

Plus, the previous study has noted that the entrepreneurial behaviors are generally interpreted through one's personal attributes and characteristics. Therefore, this point somehow contradicts to what the findings show and what the earlier analysis has noted. According to this paper analysis, the entrepreneurs, who are outstanding or being well known in the society, would automatically gain the attention from other seminar participators, during the participation in the seminar. Also, their born social position or family business position do have large influences on their seminar attendance. Hence, this shows that they do need some existing social position in order

to gain further business position. Also, the entrepreneurs' attributes and characteristics cannot alone bring the entrepreneurs a business community, but the combination of one's embedded social position and personality are required.

Additionally, regarding to COP frameworks, the previous study has highlight the occurrence of COP is when the individuals share each other idea in a typical society. Also, this particular group should be composed of the similar interests and social or business position. Yet, there is some contradiction between the COP framework and this paper's findings and analysis. Noting, regarding to the paper analysis, establishing the business community, the entrepreneurs do need to express their outstanding in order to call others' attention, leading the building of business community. Plus, the start-ups also show their business highlights such as success projects or resources to their community, rather than alone emphasizing on idea boosting, in order to gain more focus from other entrepreneurs. Thus, this paper has found the additional point from COP framework of the previous research in which there are both idea and one' s business highlight expression need to be pointed within the community in order to have a healthy business community. Then, it is found that the start-ups can more utilize the benefits from the community when they are able to express their outstanding ideas, business highlights and interesting resources.

In summary, the start-ups do play their primary attention of business connection establishment in their business agenda. Also, the derived business community of any start-ups who engage the seminar would be influenced by their born social position, family privileges and outstanding idea and one's business highlight expressions. Plus, the derived business connection has influences to the start-up entrepreneurs in three different dimensions which are business direction, competitiveness and benchmarking. The start-ups would base their business direction to their derived business community which implies that the business community would be one of significant drivers to the start-ups' upcoming business plan and strategies. Also, the start-ups would have to put a large effort in expressing their interesting ideas and existing resources in order to develop and gain more business competiveness. Moreover, the entrepreneurs may see their entrepreneurial friends in the community as their business benchmark in which they can learn how to enhance a lack business capabilities and resources from other entrepreneurs.

5.2 Recommendation and Suggestion

Regarding to this paper's data collection and analysis, the study's sample covers only the entrepreneurs who attended at least one entrepreneurial seminar. Then, readers, who emphasis those mentioned derived dimensions, must concern to attend at least one entrepreneurial seminar in order to expect the familiar dimensions as this paper's elaboration about entrepreneurial community. Also, as mentioned, the readers may have some social profile or being outstanding in a typical society in order to gain acknowledgement from the community. As well as, attending seminars seem to provide some benefits and influences to start-ups, yet, in order to derive those three dimensions, the entrepreneurs must present their critical or highlighted business related resources and ideas. This is to gain attention and encourage the resources sharing among the community. Plus, the result and analysis of this paper are useful for the entrepreneurs whose business is in a start-up stage. However, the analytical dimensions here are not best reflections to all entrepreneurs due to the fact that the findings are covered only one stage of entrepreneurs.

5.3 Limitations and Further Research

The research conducted in a small population who are Thais and attended at least one entrepreneurial seminar. Also, the sample size is chosen among the Thai entrepreneurs whose businesses are in a start-up stage. Therefore, the findings and conclusion only reflects the dimensions derived from this group of chosen population. However, there are other stages of entrepreneurs and other upper level of businesses which are not yet studied and explored by this research paper. Hence, in order to further develop the later study and to fulfill these gaps, the further study might consider cover more population in studying this aspect, achieving all possible beneficial dimensions, reflecting entrepreneurs in different stages and other influential dimensions. Moreover, the population and selected sample size should be raised to cover more participants and gathered among all stage of entrepreneurs, retrieving more intense and detailed data.

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