The Role of Innovation Capital in Developing Youth Entrepreneurship

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Abstract—The current global economic climate conditions brought challenges to enterprises and entrepreneurs. Uncertainty, higher risk, and intensified competition negatively affect the way business is conducted. Enterprises and entrepreneurs have to adapt to these changes. For economic relief and economic growth, youth entrepreneurship should be developed in a decisive manner. In this paper, youth entrepreneurship development through innovation capital is analysed. The main goal was to identify and discuss main factors that affect vouth entrepreneurship development. In addition, entrepreneurship and innovation as two main concepts are also addressed. The result is a theoretical, circular model that provides a significant and concise overview on how innovation capital derives from entrepreneurship and innovation. The paper provides a solid base for future studies.

Keywords - youth entrepreneurship, innovation capital, business innovation, development

I. INTRODUCTION

In the new business environment that is characterized by constant changes, enterprises face difficult challenges when it comes to achieving and maintaining a competitive position on the market [1]. In addition, the economic environment brought tremendous pressure to these enterprises that led to decrease in employment rates. Entrepreneurship can be noted as an answer to economic turmoil and unemployment [2]. Entrepreneurship can significantly affect economic development and economic growth. Entrepreneurship is mainly driven by innovation and risk taking. Further, similarly to entrepreneurship as broader construct, youth entrepreneurship also plays an important role in reducing youth unemployment rates and in creating new value [3,4]. The current body of literature on entrepreneurship and youth entrepreneurship address a wide array of constructs from different aspects of entrepreneurial activities. However, there are fewer studies that address innovation capital in youth entrepreneurship development. Innovation capital can be viewed as past, current, and future innovation potential that derive from intellectual capital within the enterprise where the employees are the main carriers of this intellectual capital. Innovation in this paper includes multiple aspects such as open innovation, business model innovation, technology innovation, and social innovation [5,6]. The main goal of the paper is to present a theoretical model of innovation capital that relies on entrepreneurship and innovation as two main constructs. This way the above noted knowledge gap is addressed. The paper analyzes the complexity of youth entrepreneurship development and the role of innovation capital in this context. Innovation and the aspects of innovation within an enterprise involve processes from all sectors with the goal to create new value. This approach to new value creation coincides with the core concept of entrepreneurial behavior. Therefore, it can be argued that entrepreneurship and innovation capital are complementary constructs for analysis.

The following research questions are noted as guidelines the study:

- What are the main contributing factors of youth entrepreneurship development?
- How does innovation capital affect the development of youth entrepreneurship?

The paper includes the following sections (excluding the Introduction and Conclusion sections). First, importance the of entrepreneurship and youth entrepreneurship is addressed. The socio-economic impact is noted and the complexity of these social constructs are analyzed. The second section discusses innovation capital and the underlying mechanisms from which innovation capital derives. The third section presents the model for entrepreneurship development with vouth innovation capital at the center of the circular model. The fourth section discusses suggestions and guidelines regarding actions and strategies for improving vouth entrepreneurship development in the context of innovation capital. These suggestions are based on the analyzed literature and developed model presented in the previous section. Finally, conclusions are drawn and ideas for future research are noted.

II. IMPORTANCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In the Introduction section it was noted that entrepreneurship positively affects economic growth and economic development [3,4,5]. Entrepreneurship ecosystems and platforms include policies, markets, human capital, government support, culture, and finance [7]. Digital entrepreneurship systems can provide the necessary outreach to latent and potential entrepreneurs. It can be argued that digital entrepreneurship ecosystems can provide adequate stimulation for the youth to start their own business [8]. Further, entrepreneurship and development in socio-economic and political aspects contribute to youth entrepreneurship development as well. Young entrepreneurs should take into consideration the changes that globalization has brought and the rising importance of social aspects of business [9]. of Form here. the concept social Social entrepreneurship gains traction. entrepreneurship is in-sync with sustainability goals. Its aim is to shape the process conducting business in way that contributes to local communities, to the saving of the environment, reducing the negative impact of business

activities. Young entrepreneurs should nurture a sense of social entrepreneurship even though their business model is not mainly focused on issues [10,11]. Therefore. social new entrepreneurial endeavours should address sustainability issues. Furthermore, as the globalization of markets has brought dynamics changes to the market, venture lifecycles vary significantly forcing new entrepreneurs into riskier than normal actions. Venture lifecycles are a new strategic liability for existing and new entrepreneurs [12]. Previous studies noted that one of the main factors of reluctance to start own business among the young are lack of financial resources [4,5]. The issue of entrepreneurial finance is present in the majority of economies and it presents a systematic problem in the domain of entrepreneurial activities [13]. Crowdfunding entrepreneurial ideas is a concept of group investments based on ideas of projects (products or services) where the risk of failure is taken on by the whole community of investors (participants in the crowdfunding) [14]. These types of "democratization" of entrepreneurial finance have to actively govern funds and appropriately disclose how the funds are managed [15].

From the aspect innovation and innovation capital. entrepreneurship and vouth entrepreneurship can be viewed as drivers of innovative activities and creating new value through the process of innovation. Innovation ecosystems coincide with entrepreneurial ecosystems. The current global business environment focuses on sustainability, thus entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems should also focus on sustainable development sustainable business strategies [16]. and Innovation capital is a driver of youth entrepreneurship, and larger integrated wholes of innovation capital possess larger capacity and for successful entrepreneurship potential ventures.

Overall, entrepreneurship is an active part of the new economy that is characterized by innovation, globalization, intensified competition, rapid technological advancement, and the digitalization of business. In such conditions, starting a new business requires multiple approaches to evaluating the external and internal business environment. Youth entrepreneurship development is a complex challenge both on a national and local level.

III. INNOVATION CAPITAL

The framework of innovation management and entrepreneurship development involves the utilization of knowledge, experience, risk taking, and preparedness to conduct business with high levels of uncertainty. New start-ups face challenges in the form of lack of optimal funding, intense competition, and lack of adequate support from third parties (government, suppliers etc.). Established enterprises especially that with multiple stakeholders, have to effectively manage and balance between stakeholder interests and risk taking through innovative approaches to conducting business [17]. Modern business models should focus on innovation niches in evolving open innovation ecosystems [18]. Open innovation can contribute to economic growth, productivity, new products and services, sustainable development, business model innovation and overall new business ventures [19,20]. Therefore, it is evident that such innovative activities support entrepreneurship and that they are complementary with entrepreneurial risk taking and activities. Furthermore, the concept of social entrepreneurship is synchronized with social innovation [21] and as such provide important driver point of youth entrepreneurship development. Social innovation is taken on a new form with the COVID-19 pandemic. More precisely, the digitalization of social innovation and social entrepreneurship have brought a new dimension how business is conducted. In such conditions, online business models are prevailing compared to traditional business strategies [22].

Innovation capital also includes product innovation and the entrepreneurial effect of innovations disrupting industries and influence existing and new enterprises [23]. With new products and services, innovation within entrepreneurship is present through the mediating role of business model innovation [24]. In other words, business model innovation is a kind of a prerequisite for entrepreneurial innovation to occur. Post-COVID-19 business model innovation should consider re-evaluating the lean concept approach. This new lean approach has to be more resilient compared to the previous setups that were present, in order to reduce bottlenecks in crisis times [25].

Entrepreneurial ecosystems alongside with innovation ecosystems can form an environment where entrepreneurship, and especially youth entrepreneurship can thrive [26]. Innovation in technology can be a challenge and opportunity at the same time, depending on what activities are planned within an enterprise, and which industry is the enterprise in.

In sum, innovation capital, as an integrated whole that consists of multiple business and socio-economic factors including, but not limited to intellectual capital, human resources, infrastructure, R&D activity intensity, proneness to risk taking, and willingness to disrupt markets with new value and new ideas.

IV. MODEL FOR DEVELOPING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Based on the analysed literature and the aim of this paper, a model for developing youth entrepreneurship within the framework of innovation capital, is developed. The model is circular and it has innovation capital at its centre and two main concepts derive from it: entrepreneurship and innovation. The model is presented on Fig. 1. The concept of the model is in accordance with models presented by the World Economic Forum [5].

Based on the presented model on Fig. 1, it can be seen that innovation capital, in this case, derives from the concept of entrepreneurship and concept of innovation. In this sense, innovation capital is viewed as the result of entrepreneurial behaviour and innovation-based constructs. Entrepreneurial systems and infrastructure are key factors for entrepreneurship development. In addition, the concept of social entrepreneurship, venture lifecycles, finances, and entrepreneurs are themselves integral parts of the entrepreneurship construct. On the other side, innovation, as a part of innovation capital includes business model innovation, open innovation, social innovation (which is in-sync with social entrepreneurship, technological advancement and innovation, and the necessary underlying infrastructure and ecosystem for innovative behaviour.

V. SUGGESTIONS AND GUIDELINES

Based on the analysed literature in the domain of entrepreneurship, youth entrepreneurship, innovation capital, innovation ecosystems, entrepreneurial finances, and social entrepreneurship, the following suggestions and guidelines for improving youth entrepreneurship development are noted:

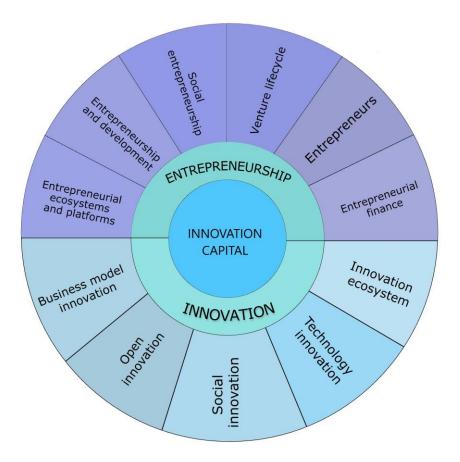


Figure 1. Youth entrepreneurship development model through innovation capital

- New entrepreneurs should focus on creating value and bring innovation into their business model.
- Innovation capital has to be addressed when evaluating market position or potential new market entrance.
- Youth entrepreneurship should be based on value creation in the digital entrepreneurship ecosystem where startup costs are typically lower compared to traditional business ecosystems.
- Support via incentive programs should be introduced on a national scale.
- Innovation should be rewarded both in newly established enterprises and in existing enterprises. Rewards should be in the form of favourable tax rates, credit lines, infrastructure support and other means of promoting and sustaining

innovation and innovative behaviour among young entrepreneurs.

- Open innovation environment along with social innovation and social entrepreneurship should be a considered by the youth when starting their own business.
- Innovation capital has to be taken seriously by individual entrepreneurs as well by institutional players (entrepreneurship in organizations).

Overall, youth entrepreneurship development requires a systematic approach on a national level, but innovation has to be taken seriously as a contributing factor to business success. Innovation has the potential to win against wellestablished organizations that present an intense competition on the globalized market.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the Introduction section of the paper, two research questions were noted:

• What are the main contributing factors of youth entrepreneurship development?

In accordance with the analyzed literature it can be concluded that entrepreneurial finance, entrepreneurship ecosystems, social innovation and social entrepreneurship, technology innovation, open innovation, and innovation ecosystems contribute to youth entrepreneurship development.

• *How does innovation capital affect the development of youth entrepreneurship?*

Innovation capital as an integrated whole of multiple constructs, provides a driving force of entrepreneurial activities and vice-versa. In addition, innovation capital can increase the potential of new youth entrepreneurship endeavours. It can provide necessary support and motivation for starting a new business.

The main limitation of this paper is the lack of an empirical data and a robust data set obtained both from enterprises and entrepreneurs. However, as the study addresses credible literature sources, this limitation is not severe. The paper contributes to the existing body of literature and provides an appropriate basis for future research. Future studies could include surveying existing entrepreneurs, new entrepreneurs, and potential new entrepreneurs. The datasets could be compared with previous studies and thorough meta-analysis could be accomplished.

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