

THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES AMONG MSMEs: A MULTIPLE MEDIATION MODEL

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ABSTRACT

The paper proposes and empirically tests a model explaining the influence of social capital components on entrepreneurial bricolage mediated by opportunity recognition in resource-constrained MSMEs of Punjab, India. Social capital is a multidimensional concept consisting of structural, relational and cognitive capital, all of which are related to opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial bricolage, based on the theories of Social Capital Theory, Opportunity Recognition Theory and Bricolage Theory. A cross-sectional survey was conducted on 320 MSME owners and managers using validated measures of social capital, opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial bricolage. Data were analysed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that all three forms of social capital exert a considerable and favorable influence on opportunity recognition, and that relational capital is the strongest predictor. Recognizing opportunities helps boost entrepreneurial bricolage. Structural and relational capital have strong direct effects on entrepreneurial bricolage while the direct effect of cognitive capital on bricolage is not significant. The mediation analysis shows that opportunity recognition partially mediates the relationships between structural and relational capital and entrepreneurial bricolage, and fully mediates the effect of cognitive capital on bricolage. This research adds to Social Capital Theory by demonstrating different pathways from structural, relational and cognitive capital to entrepreneurial resourcefulness, and to Opportunity Recognition and Bricolage Theory by demonstrating opportunity recognition as a prominent cognitive process that enables the conversion of social capital into innovative resource recombination. The study highlights the need for MSME entrepreneurs and support institutions to develop diversified trust networks and improve their opportunity detection capabilities in order to foster innovative bricolage responses to resource constraints.

Keywords: social capital; structural capital; relational capital; cognitive capital; opportunity recognition; entrepreneurial bricolage; MSMEs; resource constraints

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Within the global economic framework, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are widely recognised as foundational engine of economic stability driven by employment generation, innovation, regional development and economic growth. MSMEs constitute a significant share of industrial output and employment in emerging economies like India and their sustainability and competitiveness are critical for long-term economic progress. MSMEs are crucial to the economy but nonetheless confront persistent challenges such as restricted access to capital, technology shortcomings, market volatility, supply chain disruptions, and growing competitive pressures. Those

constraints often restrict their capacity to get the resources they need to build their companies and innovate.

Recent economic uncertainties, digital change, changing client tastes and fast moving market conditions have increased these problems. Unlike large enterprises with large economical resources and established skills, MSMEs frequently operate with limited financial, human and technological resources. Thus, entrepreneurs need more and more to identify new opportunities and to make imaginative use of the resources available to assist their operations. Therefore, the capacity to identify opportunities and transform resource limitations into entrepreneurial activity has become a vital indicator of MSME survival and success.

In situations where resources are limited, entrepreneurs usually engage in entrepreneurial bricolage, creatively combining and using resources at hand to deal with problems and seize opportunities. Entrepreneurial bricolage allows firms to develop and adapt, without waiting for the right resources to materialize.(Venkataraman, 2019) Hence, the exploration of the components that foster entrepreneurial bricolage has emerged as a major research direction in entrepreneurship research.

Social capital is one such characteristic that may support such entrepreneurial action. “Social capital is the resources embedded within social interactions and networks that can be leveraged to gain information, expertise, support and opportunities(Baker & Nelson, 2005). Entrepreneurs can benefit greatly from their relationships with customers, suppliers, competitors, industry associations and other stakeholders that can help them better identify opportunities and mobilise resources.

Opportunity recognition is an important factor in the entrepreneurial process, among other outcomes associated with social capital. Opportunity recognition is the entrepreneur’s capacity to identify and evaluate possible business opportunities that can create value. Entrepreneurs with large networks and trust-based common understandings with stakeholders are more likely to tap into a wider array of information and insights that improve the discovery of emergent opportunities.(“Opportunity Recognition as Pattern Recognition,” n.d.; Wood et al., 2014) In dynamic and uncertain business environments, opportunity identification is often a major factor that determines whether entrepreneurs are able to effectively start and maintain firm growth.

But spotting an opportunity alone is not enough to make you a successful entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs in MSMEs are resource-constrained which constrains them to be able to use the opportunities identified. In such a scenario entrepreneurial bricolage is an important talent. Entrepreneurial bricolage is a process where entrepreneurs use what resources they have available in inventive ways to solve problems and pursue opportunities while they are limited in resources. Entrepreneurs do not wait for resources to come along, but improvise, experiment and recombine resources to reach their aims. Hence, bricolage is particularly pertinent to MSMEs operating in resource restricted settings(Julienne Senyard et al., n.d.)

Previous research has studied the effect of social capital on various entrepreneurial outcomes, but little is known about the mechanism via which social capital enables entrepreneurial bricolage. Previous research has concentrated on the direct effects of social capital on firm performance, innovation and opportunity identification without considering the mediating role of opportunity recognition. Furthermore, there is limited empirical study on the influence of dimensions of social capital on entrepreneurial bricolage through the opportunity recognition, especially for MSMEs that operate in emerging markets.(Minna Halme et al., 2012)

This paper is based on the tenets of Social Capital Theory and Bricolage Theory and examines how the three dimensions of structural, relational and cognitive capital collectively influence entrepreneurial bricolage practices while mapping the intervening influence of opportunity recognition. The conceptual framework suggests that embedded social networks significantly improve an entrepreneur's ability to recognize highly feasible economic opportunities. Thus owners might deliberately arrange and recombine immediate resource bundles to exploit these highlighted opportunities. This investigation contributes to an understanding of how relational mechanisms promote different entrepreneurial activities in the face of extreme resource restrictions.

This approach has various unique theoretical and practical implications for the wider field of entrepreneurship. The most important of them is the extension of Social Capital Theory, by establishing opportunity recognition as a significant conceptual bridge between network resources and bricolage techniques. In addition, the article offers a broad and multi-faceted view of social network assets by exploring the specific operational routes of structural, relational, and cognitive capital attributes. Moreover, it contributes to the current literature on local bricolage dynamics by highlighting the antecedents leading to resourcefulness of micro entrepreneurs. Ultimately, the empirical outcomes provide actionable strategic frameworks for company owners, developmental agencies, and macroeconomic architects, reiterating the need of establishing interconnected networks and identifying skills to systematically ameliorate environmental resource scarcity.

Therefore, the main aim of this empirical study is to critically examine the effect of social capital attributes on entrepreneurial bricolage strategies and to investigate the mediating mechanisms of opportunity recognition in small business contexts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

This research draws on Social Capital Theory, Opportunity Recognition Theory and Bricolage Theory to illustrate how social relationships allow entrepreneurs to recognize opportunities and carry out entrepreneurial bricolage.

Social Capital Theory states positive resources are embedded in social networks and interactions. According to Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), the social capital facilitates knowledge creation and sharing through structural, relational and cognitive variables. These resources are network focused, and can be used by entrepreneurs to acquire knowledge, assistance and opportunities in growing their companies.

Opportunity recognition is based on Kirzner (1973) who suggests that the difference between entrepreneurs and others is that entrepreneurs are aware of opportunities. Shane and Venkataraman (2000) then claimed that the essence of entrepreneurship is the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of possibilities. Hence opportunity recognition is a key entrepreneurial talent to translate information and expertise into potential business ideas.

Bricolage was originally presented by Lévi-Strauss (1962) and then adapted to entrepreneurship by Baker and Nelson (2005). Entrepreneurial bricolage is about resourcefulness, employing combinations of resources at hand to solve problems and exploit possibilities. Such competency is particularly important for MSMEs that typically operate in resource-scarce situations.

These theories are developed to argue that social capital gives entrepreneurs access to valuable information and knowledge that increases their ability to identify opportunities. Entrepreneurs see

opportunities and then employ entrepreneurial bricolage to creatively use existing resources to exploit potential.

2.2 Social capital

Social capital is a resource that is based on social connectivity and network ties. It is useful in getting access to information, knowledge, trust, cooperation and support that might enhance entrepreneurial endeavours (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 1993, 1995). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) define social capital as comprising three dimensions: structural capital, relational capital and cognitive capital.

Structural capital refers to the form and degree of connectivity among persons and organizations in networks (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998).. Relational capital is the quality of relationships, based on trust, reciprocity and mutual respect (Granovetter, 1985; Krackhardt, 1992; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).. Shared goals, attitudes, and understandings that make communication and collaboration possible are cognitive capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

In entrepreneurial situations, social capital is a strategic resource that entrepreneurs can use for external knowledge and resources required for venture development and opportunity identification (Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Stam et al., 2014; Yli Renko et al., 2001)..

2.3 Recognising an Opportunity

Opportunity recognition is frequently considered one of the most crucial milestones in the entrepreneurial process. Kirzner (1973) introduced the concept of entrepreneurial alertness, which means that entrepreneurs can spot possibilities that others cannot. Later, Shane and Venkataraman (2000) stressed that opportunity recognition is about finding and assessing prospects that might provide economic value.

Opportunity recognition is based on availability of information, prior knowledge, environmental scanning and social interactions (Ardichvili et al., 2003; Casson & Wadeson, 2007; Gaglio & Katz, 2001; Shane, 2000; Tang et al., 2012).. Entrepreneurs with larger and more supportive social networks are more likely to get a variety of relevant information and insights about the identification of company prospects (Ozgen & Baron, 2007; Ramos Rodríguez et al., 2010)..

Opportunity recognition is especially critical for MSMEs functioning in dynamic environments because it allows entrepreneurs to recognize new markets, products, services and development prospects in the face of environmental volatility (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Mainela et al., 2014; Zahra, 2008).

2.4 Entrepreneurial Bricolage

The notion of bricolage was first introduced by Lévi-Strauss (1962) and later adapted to business by Baker and Nelson (2005). Entrepreneurial bricolage is the art of solving challenges by recombining available resources to exploit opportunities (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Baker et al., 2003).

Usually entrepreneurs have poor resources. Bricology, therefore, permits people to use the resources they have in innovative ways, without waiting for further resources to be available before acting (Desa & Basu, 2013; Fisher, 2012; Halme et al., 2012).. This is particularly critical for MSMEs, which often have limited financial, technological and human resources (Kim et al., 2006; Senyard, Davidsson, Steffens, & Baker, 2014).

Entrepreneurial bricolage has been linked with creativity, adaptation, resilience and venture growth, therefore making it a key competence for firms operating in resource-constrained conditions (Senyard, Baker, Steffens, & Davidsson, 2014; Steffens et al., 2023).

2.5 The Opportunity Recognition and Structural Capital

Structural capital is the network arrangement that provides access to information and resources (Burt, 1992; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Entrepreneurs with a broad network are exposed to a range of opinions, market trends and industry knowledge. (Baron & Ensley, 2006)

This exposure gives the possibility to find unmet client needs, new industry trends and possible company prospects (Ozgen & Baron, 2007; Ramos Rodríguez et al., 2010). Diverse networks help entrepreneurs by providing useful information for opportunity identification and appraisal.

Thus, structural capital is predicted to increase the opportunity recognition on MSMEs.

2.6 Relationship Capital and Opportunity Recognition

Relational capital is characterized by trust, reciprocity and strong interpersonal relationships (Granovetter, 1985; Krackhardt, 1992; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Trust ties allow the sharing of high quality information and reduce ambiguity in entrepreneurial decision making (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Stam et al., 2014).

Entrepreneurs who build and maintain excellent relationships with stakeholders are more likely to get relevant insights, recommendations and business related information. This information can enhance their capacity to recognize and assess entrepreneurial opportunities.

Therefore, relational capital is likely to have a beneficial effect on opportunity recognition.

2.7 Cognitive Capital and the Recognition of Opportunity

The cognitive capital of a network is the shared aims, values, language and interpretations of its members capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Shared understanding makes communication possible and to exchange knowledge effectively (Lin, 2001; Puhakka, 2011).

Information is more efficiently digested and possibilities are more easily spotted when entrepreneurs and their network members have comparable perspectives and goals (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Zahra et al., 2005). Thus, cognitive capital can enhance the entrepreneur's ability to identify business prospects.

2.8 Identification of Opportunities and Entrepreneurial Bricolage

Seeing an opportunity is just the first stage of the entrepreneurial process. After this, entrepreneurs need to deploy resources to leverage the recognized opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Venkataraman, 1997). But MSMEs often lack access to ideal resources.

In such cases entrepreneurs perform bricolage, ingeniously recombining available resources to chase opportunities (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Fisher, 2012; Senyard, Baker, Steffens, & Davidsson, 2014). Opportunity recognition consequently serves as a stimulant that drives entrepreneurs to seek new methods to utilize resources even when resources are limited.

Thus, opportunity recognition is predicted to significantly impact entrepreneurial bricolage.

2.9 Social Capital and Opportunity Recognition.

Social Capital Theory suggests that entrepreneurs benefit from vital information, expertise and support through their social networks (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998). The structural capital allows access to a wide range of information channels, the relational capital encourages the diffusion of reliable information through strong relationships and the cognitive capital encourages a shared understanding and effective communication. These network-based resources boost the entrepreneurs' capacity to detect and analyze fresh opportunities (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Ozgen & Baron, 2007; Ramos Rodríguez et al., 2010). Thus, it is hypothesized that the dimensions of social capital will have a beneficial effect on opportunity recognition.

2.10 Entrepreneurial Bricolage and Opportunity Recognition.

Opportunity Recognition Theory states that entrepreneurship starts with opportunity identification and evaluation. But prospects are not enough for a venture to develop (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Venkataraman, 1997). Entrepreneurs must also leverage resources to seize newly discovered opportunities. In MSMEs with limited resources, entrepreneurs are often unable to access appropriate resources and consequently engage in entrepreneurial bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Fisher, 2012; Senyard, Baker, Steffens, & Davidsson, 2014). The awareness of opportunities encourages entrepreneurs to creatively recombine and employ materials available to them, and is thus a crucial antecedent of entrepreneurial bricolage.

2.11 The Mediating Role of Opportunity Recognition

Social capital enables the recognition of opportunities through access to information, knowledge and market intelligence (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Ramos Rodríguez et al., 2010; Yli Renko et al., 2001). Successful opportunity-identifying entrepreneurs are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial bricolage to exploit these opportunities despite resource limits (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Senyard, Baker, Steffens, & Davidsson, 2014).

Accordingly, opportunity recognition is a key mechanism by which social capital characteristics influence entrepreneurial bricolage.

2.12 Research Gap

The literature on social capital, opportunity awareness and entrepreneurial bricolage is developing, but there are still a number of crucial gaps to be filled (Ardichvili et al., 2003; Baker & Nelson, 2005; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). First, previous literature has been mostly directed to the direct effect of social capital on entrepreneurial outcomes such as innovation, company performance, information sharing and opportunity identification (Stam et al., 2014; Uzzi, 1997; Yli Renko et al., 2001). Much less attention has been paid towards understanding the contribution of social capital to entrepreneurial bricolage especially in resource-constrained contexts.

Second, although social capital is acknowledged as a multidimensional construct with structural, relational, and cognitive elements, many empirical investigations have considered it as a single aggregate construct (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Therefore, little evidence is available on the impact of each social capital category on entrepreneurial processes. This knowledge of differential effects is crucial because network architecture, trust-based connections and shared understandings can have varied consequences on entrepreneurial activity (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Ramos Rodríguez et al., 2010).

Third, entrepreneurship academics have highlighted the importance of opportunity recognition as a major entrepreneurial capacity (Ardichvili et al., 2003; Baron, 2006; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000;

Tang et al., 2012). Nevertheless, prior research has mostly focused on opportunity perception as an autonomous outcome, rather than as a process that connects social resources and entrepreneurial behavior (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Ramos Rodríguez et al., 2010; Zahra, 2008). Thus, the process of how entrepreneurs shift network-based resources to creative resource mobilization is little understood.

Finally, an increased scholarly interest has been paid to entrepreneurial bricolage, but an empirical investigation on its antecedents in MSMEs is scarce (Desa & Basu, 2013; Halme et al., 2012; Senyard, Baker, Steffens, & Davidsson, 2014). Given that MSMEs often operate under conditions of resource limits and unpredictable markets, it is important to understand what elements encourage bricolage. The MSME environment thus offers a suitable setting to study how social capital enhances entrepreneurial resourcefulness through opportunity recognition.

To bridge these gaps, this study constructs and empirically examines a model where opportunity recognition mediates the effect of structural capital, relational capital, and cognitive capital on entrepreneurial bricolage among MSMEs.

2.13 The Reason of Conceptual Model

The suggested conceptual paradigm is based on Social Capital Theory, Opportunity Recognition Theory and Bricolage Theory (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). In sum, these theoretical views provide insights on how entrepreneurs mobilize available resources through social relationships to find and exploit opportunities.

Entrepreneurial Bricolage and Identifying Opportunities

Opportunity Recognition Theory states that entrepreneurship starts with opportunity identification and evaluation. But prospects are not enough for a venture to develop (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Venkataraman, 1997). Entrepreneurs must also leverage resources to seize newly discovered opportunities. In MSMEs with limited resources, entrepreneurs are often unable to access appropriate resources and consequently engage in entrepreneurial bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Fisher, 2012; Senyard, Baker, Steffens, & Davidsson, 2014). The awareness of opportunities encourages entrepreneurs to creatively recombine and employ materials available to them, and is thus a crucial antecedent of entrepreneurial bricolage.

The mediating role of opportunity recognition

The study indicates that opportunity recognition mediates the relationship between social capital and entrepreneurial bricolage (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Ozgen & Baron, 2007; Ramos Rodríguez et al., 2010). Social networks give entrepreneurs access to information and knowledge that help them spot opportunities. Entrepreneurs are motivated to perform bricolage when chances are identified to take advantage of such opportunities in the face of resource limits (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Senyard, Baker, Steffens, & Davidsson, 2014). Opportunity recognition explains the conversion of social capital to entrepreneurial activity.

Relevance to Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

The MSME environment provides a particularly ideal setting for the investigation of the hypothesized linkages. MSMEs are more challenged financially, technologically and managerially than larger organisations (Kim et al., 2006; Mair & Marti, 2006). Under such situations, entrepreneurs heavily depend on social networks for knowledge and support, while simultaneously relying on bricolage to overcome resource shortages (Desa & Basu, 2013; Halme et al., 2012). Therefore, examining the role

of opportunity recognition in the relationship between social capital and entrepreneurial bricolage can provide crucial theoretical and practical insights for MSME development.

2.14 Conceptual Model Description

The conceptual framework proposed to investigate the effect of social capital elements on entrepreneurial bricolage among MSMEs is presented in Figure 1. The framework is built on Social Capital Theory, Opportunity Recognition Theory, and Bricolage Theory (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

The approach is based on the idea that social capital is a multifaceted term including structural capital, relational capital and cognitive capital. Structural capital is the sum total of network connections that supply entrepreneurs with a variety of information and resources. Relational capital is the trust, reciprocity and quality of ties among network members whereas cognitive capital captures shared goals, values and common understandings enabling effective communication and knowledge sharing (Granovetter, 1985; Krackhardt, 1992; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

The approach shows that all social capital dimensions positively enhance opportunity recognition (Ardichvili et al., 2003; De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Tang et al., 2012). In strong networks, entrepreneurs are more likely to have access to market knowledge, to detect new trends and to uncover business opportunities that were not previously perceived (Ozgen & Baron, 2007; Ramos Rodríguez et al., 2010). Thus social capital is a crucial antecedent to opportunity recognition.

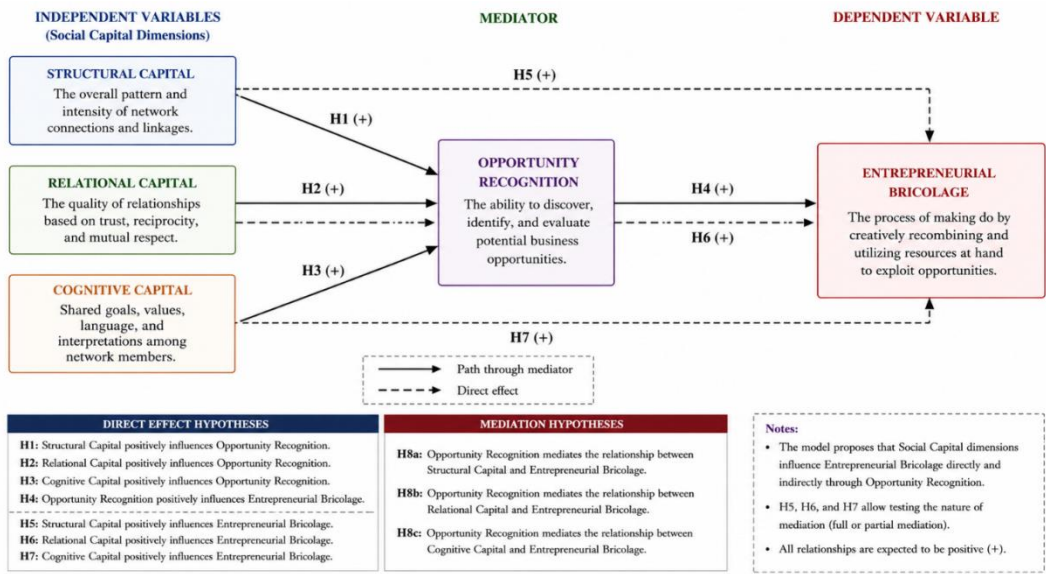
The concept proposes opportunity recognition as a mediating mechanism. It is the entrepreneur's capacity to search for, assess and exploit business opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Venkataraman, 1997). The model indicates that social capital boosts entrepreneurs' awareness and information processing ability, making them more likely to identify chances of value (Gaglio & Katz, 2001; Zahra, 2008).

The framework also suggests that opportunity recognition has a favourable influence on entrepreneurial bricolage. Once possibilities are discovered, entrepreneurs in resource-constrained MSMEs generally depend on ingenious resource mobilization and recombination to take advantage of those chances (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Fisher, 2012; Senyard, Baker, Steffens, & Davidsson, 2014). Entrepreneurial bricolage means entrepreneurs are able to make good use of what is available to them, rather than waiting for the right resources to become available (Desa & Basu, 2013; Halme et al., 2012).

In addition to the indirect links, the model also has direct channels from structural capital, relational capital and cognitive capital to entrepreneurial bricolage (Kim et al., 2006; Senyard, Davidsson, Steffens, & Baker, 2014). These approaches allow us to examine whether the dimensions of social capital directly lead to resourceful entrepreneurial activity, or if the influence of social capital is limited to opportunity recognition. Consequently, the model helps to analyze direct and mediated links as well as to detect full or partial mediation (Hair et al., 2022).

The proposed paradigm explains the contribution of social relationships to entrepreneurial resourcefulness of MSMEs holistically by improving entrepreneurs' capacity to perceive opportunities and creatively deploy available resources (Mair & Marti, 2006; Steffens et al., 2023).

Figure -1



The conceptual framework proposed to study the effect of social capital components on entrepreneurial bricolage of MSMEs is presented in Figure 1. The framework is built on Social Capital Theory, Opportunity Recognition Theory, and Bricolage Theory.

The model conceptualizes social capital as a multidimensional construct comprising structural capital, relational capital, and cognitive capital. Structural capital is the sum total of network connections that supply entrepreneurs with a variety of information and resources. Relational capital is the trust, reciprocity and quality of ties among network members whereas cognitive capital captures shared goals, values and common understandings enabling effective communication and knowledge sharing.

The approach shows that all social capital dimensions positively enhance opportunity recognition. In strong networks, entrepreneurs are more likely to have access to market knowledge, to detect new trends and to uncover business opportunities that were not previously perceived. Thus social capital is a crucial antecedent to opportunity recognition.

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Overall, the proposed framework offers a thorough explanation of the role of social relationships in the development of entrepreneurial resourcefulness in MSMEs by improving the entrepreneurs' ability to detect opportunities and creatively deploy available resources.

Table 1. Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Relationship	Description
H1	Structural Capital → Opportunity Recognition	Structural capital positively influences opportunity recognition among MSMEs.
H2	Relational Capital → Opportunity Recognition	Relational capital positively influences opportunity recognition among MSMEs.
H3	Cognitive Capital → Opportunity Recognition	Cognitive capital positively influences opportunity recognition among MSMEs.
H4	Opportunity Recognition → Entrepreneurial Bricolage	Opportunity recognition positively influences entrepreneurial bricolage among MSMEs
H5	Structural Capital → Entrepreneurial Bricolage	Structural capital positively influences entrepreneurial bricolage among MSMEs.
H6	Relational Capital → Entrepreneurial Bricolage	Relational capital positively influences entrepreneurial bricolage among MSMEs.
H7	Cognitive Capital → Entrepreneurial Bricolage	Cognitive capital positively influences entrepreneurial bricolage among MSMEs.
H8a	Structural Capital → Opportunity Recognition → Entrepreneurial Bricolage	Opportunity recognition bridges structural capital and bricolage practices.
H8b	Relational Capital → Opportunity Recognition → Entrepreneurial Bricolage	The link from relational assets to bricolage is mediated by opportunity recognition.
H8c	Cognitive Capital → Opportunity Recognition → Entrepreneurial Bricolage	Opportunity recognition intervenes between cognitive capital and bricolage.

3. Methods of research

3.1 Research Method

The present study is conducted by using quantitative research method in exploring the links between social capital dimensions, opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial bricolage in the context of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The adoption of a cross-sectional survey design enables data to be collected from a large number of respondents at a single moment in time. It also permits the empirical testing of the presented hypotheses.

The study is based on the positivist research paradigm which argues that relationships among variables may be objectively assessed and examined via the use of statistical techniques. The suggested model is predictive in nature and has numerous latent constructs, for this reason Partial Least Square Structural

Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was selected as the main analytical technique. PLS-SEM is very useful for exploratory and predictive research, for complicated research models, and for investigations where latent variables are assessed by several indicators. (Joseph F. Hair, et al., 2026)

The proposed model analyzes the direct effects of structural, relational and cognitive capital on opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial bricolage. In addition, the model examines the mediation of opportunity recognition in understanding the relationship between social capital aspects and entrepreneurial bricolage among MSMEs.

3.2 Sampling & Population

The target group of this study is owners, founders and senior managers of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) of Punjab. The unit of analysis was MSMEs because they usually operate in a situation of scarcity and uncertainty and so represent a relevant context for the study of opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial bricolage.

Respondents with enough understanding of their firm's networking activities, opportunity discovery processes and resource usage strategies were identified using a purposive sample technique. Only people directly involved in strategic decision-making and business operations were able to participate in the poll. Final respondents were chosen with the purposive sampling technique.

The minimal sample size was established according to the recommendations for PLS-SEM. The ten-times rule and concerns of statistical power meant that a higher sample size than the minimum criterion was essential to provide reliable and robust results. The final sample has 320 valid answers from MSME owners and managers in different industry sectors of Punjab.

3.3 Instrument of Measurement

The measuring instrument consisted of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire collected personal and enterprise information of the respondents such as age, gender, qualification, industry type, experience of business and size of organization. The second part measured the research constructs using existing scales modified from previous studies.

Social capital was operationalized as a multidimensional entity consisting of structural capital, relational capital and cognitive capital. The structural capital was measured by 6 items on the extent and intensity of network connections. Relational capital was measured with six variables measuring trust, reciprocity and quality of the relationship among network members. Cognitive capital was examined using six measures that assessed shared aims, values and common understanding. The measurement items were derived from Nahapiet and Ghoshal's (1998) social capital framework.

Eight items measuring opportunity recognition were taken from the entrepreneurial opportunity recognition literature, especially the work of Tang et al. (2012). These items probed the entrepreneur's capacity to spot, assess and perceive nascent company opportunities.

Entrepreneurial bricolage was measured using 10 items derived from the scale developed by Senyard et al. (2014). The items measured the entrepreneur's creativity in linking and using available resources to tackle obstacles and exploit opportunities despite resource limits.

All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Prior to the main survey, the questionnaire was examined by academic experts and practitioners for content validity and contextual relevance to MSMEs.

Table -2

Construct	Dimensions	No. of Items	Source
Social Capital	Structural Capital	6	Nahapiet & Ghoshal (1998)
	Relational Capital	6	
	Cognitive Capital	6	
Opportunity Recognition	-	8	Tang et al. (2012)
Entrepreneurial Bricolage	-	10	Senyard et al. (2014)

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data were acquired using a standardized questionnaire online and offline. The poll was distributed through entrepreneurial networks, MSME associations, business incubators, industry groups and professional contacts. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents and they were assured that their responses would be anonymous and used only for academic research. All respondents granted informed agreement to participate in the study before data collection and participation was voluntary . Questionnaires were reviewed for missing values, discrepancies and quality of response before being entered into the final data collection.

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

The obtained dataset was analyzed using a variance-based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with the SmartPLS software package. The empirical evaluation was performed in a two-tier framework with the examination of the outer measurement model and then the inner structural model. The first part was to check the robustness of the outer model by assessing the reliability of the items and the construct validity (convergent and discriminant). Specifically, the performance of the separate indicators was examined by standardized factor loadings, while internal consistency was assured through the simultaneous assessment of the Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha values . To verify convergent validity, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were calculated. Discriminant validity was established rigorously using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion. Then the hypothesized relationships were tested by evaluating the inner structural path model. In the second stage, the structural path coefficients were calculated, the target variance was determined using the coefficient of determination (R^2), the systemic effect sizes (f^2) were determined, and the predictive relevance (Q^2) was assessed. Statistical significance for hypothesis testing was calculated using a non-parametric bootstrapping method using 5000 subsamples. Finally, an indirect effects computational technique was done to assess the mediation of opportunity recognition.

4.1 Assessment of the measurement model

The reliability of the items, internal consistency, convergent and discriminant validities, and potential multi-collinearity issues required an empirical assessment to evaluate the outer model. The current diagnostic phase was built on the structural equation modeling frameworks developed by Hair et al. (2022) that included the calculation of the outer factor loadings of the indicators, Cronbach's alpha coefficients, and the composite reliability (CR) metrics. Moreover, the average variance extracted (AVE) was tested with the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) and variance inflation factors (VIF) for all the psychometric criteria.

Outer loadings were initially investigated for indicator reliability. All measurement items had loadings more than the acceptable value of 0.70 and ranged from 0.884 to 0.925. The findings of these analyses suggest that the indicators appropriately represented their respective latent constructs and no items were deleted from further analysis.

Table 3. Indicator Reliability (Outer loadings)

Construct	Loading Range
Structural Capital	0.888 – 0.908
Relational Capital	0.898 – 0.918
Cognitive Capital	0.894 – 0.915
Opportunity Recognition	0.884 – 0.916
Entrepreneurial Bricolage	0.894 – 0.925

Afterwards, the parameters of internal consistency and convergent validity were investigated. As indicated in Table 4, Cronbach's alpha indicators are between 0.952 and 0.975, and the equivalent composite reliability diagnostics are between 0.962 and 0.978. All of these estimations are much above the traditional threshold benchmark of 0.70 which confirms good construct reliability. Further, the average variance extracted (AVE) statistical values were within the range of 0.808 to 0.823. Crucially, every calculated AVE score comfortably surpasses the minimal allowable value of 0.50, so strongly confirming convergent validity across the model.

Table 4. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Latent Variable / Construct	Alpha	C R	AVE
Structural Capital	0.952	0.962	0.808
Relational Capital	0.957	0.965	0.823
Cognitive Capital	0.956	0.964	0.819
Opportunity Recognition	0.966	0.972	0.810
Entrepreneurial Bricolage	0.975	0.978	0.814

Discriminant validity was assessed by the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio method. All calculated inter-construct HTMT ratios are presented in Table 5 and range from 0.598 to 0.728 which is below conservative cutoff value of 0.85. This establishes statistical discriminant validity, showing that the latent variables are experimentally unique and different from each other.

Table 5. HTMT Results

Construct	CSC	EB	OR	RSC	SSC
CSC	-				
EB	0.616	-			
OR	0.667	0.722	-		
RSC	0.728	0.650	0.676	-	
SSC	0.631	0.602	0.598	0.633	-

The VIF values were from 3.34 to 5.84. While one of the indicators had a VIF value somewhat higher than the threshold, all the values were below the crucial value of 10, suggesting that multicollinearity was not a major worry for the model.

Table 6. Collinearity Assessment (VIF)

Construct	VIF Range
Structural Capital	3.34 – 4.00
Relational Capital	3.68 – 4.61
Cognitive Capital	3.65 – 4.31
Opportunity Recognition	3.63 – 4.87
Entrepreneurial Bricolage	4.12 – 5.84

In sum, the results show that the measurement model has sufficient reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and absence of problematic multicollinearity, indicating its suitability for structural model analysis.

4.2 Assessment of the Structural Model

After the measurement model, the structural model was assessed by means of bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. Evaluation was based on model explanatory power, model fit, path linkages and effect magnitude.

The explanatory power of the model was tested using the coefficient of determination (R^2). The findings suggest that Structural Capital, Relational Capital and Cognitive Capital explained 51.6% of the variance in Opportunity Recognition, together. Furthermore, Structural Capital, Relational Capital, Cognitive Capital, and Opportunity Recognition explained Entrepreneurial Bricolage together with 56.7% of variance. These values, according to Hair et al. (2022), reflect moderate explanatory power

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Opportunity Recognition	0.516	0.511
Entrepreneurial Bricolage	0.567	0.562

The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and the normed fit index (NFI) were used to assess the model fit for the overall structural model. The empirical diagnostics indicated an SRMR of 0.027 which is far below the maximum conservative limit of 0.08. The NFI calculated was 0.942 and is above the generally accepted minimal baseline value of 0.90. All these statistical measures suggest that the proposed model has a very good and strong compatibility with the observed data set.

Table 8. Model Fit Assessment

Fit Metric	Estimated Statistical Output	Recommended Criteria
SRMR	0.027	< 0.08
NFI	0.942	> 0.90

Finally, the relative importance of each predictor construct was investigated through the examination of the effect size values (f^2). Opportunity Recognition had a medium effect on Entrepreneurial Bricolage ($f^2 = 0.201$) which implies that it is the most influential predictor in the model. However, Structural Capital, Relational Capital and Cognitive Capital had minimal effects on Opportunity Recognition and Entrepreneurial Bricolage

Table 9. Effect Size (f^2)

Relationship	f^2	Effect Size
SSC → OR	0.048	Small
RSC → OR	0.100	Small
CSC → OR	0.083	Small
OR → EB	0.201	Medium
SSC → EB	0.036	Small
RSC → EB	0.034	Small
CSC → EB	0.008	Negligible

4.3 Testing of Hypotheses

A non-parametric bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) was performed to assess the postulated routes set up in the structural framework. The importance of these conceptual linkages was statistically assessed by examining the corresponding path coefficients (β), crucial t-values, and significance p-values. The complete direct effect estimates are presented in Table 8. The empirical data reveal that structural capital strongly affects the opportunity recognition capabilities ($\beta = 0.202$; $t = 3.770$; $p < 0.001$), therefore supporting H1. Similarly, relational capital has a significant positive effect on the opportunity recognition dimensions ($\beta = 0.323$; $t = 5.782$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, H2 is empirically supported. Similarly, it was found that cognitive capital has a positive effect on opportunity recognition ($\beta = 0.295$; $t = 4.958$; $p < 0.001$). This gives strong support for H3. Furthermore, the structural estimation indicates that opportunity detection is a strong predictor of entrepreneurial bricolage behaviors ($\beta = 0.424$; $t = 7.723$; $p < 0.001$), providing robust support for H4. The statistical result indicates that the firm owners with a better level of market opportunity recognition and analysis capacity have a significantly greater willingness to creatively reorganize and utilize local resources. Structural capital had a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.168$; $t = 3.051$; $p = 0.002$) in the direct mapping of individual social capital pillars on entrepreneurial bricolage, fulfilling the requirements of H5. The structural association between relational capital and entrepreneurial bricolage was also statistically significant ($\beta = 0.187$; $t = 3.145$; $p = 0.002$), supporting H6. On the contrary, the direct effect of cognitive capital on entrepreneurial bricolage was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.091$; $t = 1.660$; $p = 0.007$). Therefore, the assumptions stated in H7 are statistically rejected.

Table 10. Direct Effects and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Structural Capital $\rightarrow$ Opportunity Recognition	0.202	3.770	<0.001	Supported
H2	Relational Capital $\rightarrow$ Opportunity Recognition	0.323	5.782	<0.001	Supported
H3	Cognitive Capital $\rightarrow$ Opportunity Recognition	0.295	4.958	<0.001	Supported
H4	Opportunity Recognition $\rightarrow$ Entrepreneurial Bricolage	0.424	7.723	<0.001	Supported
H5	Structural Capital $\rightarrow$ Entrepreneurial Bricolage	0.168	3.051	0.002	Supported
H6	Relational Capital $\rightarrow$ Entrepreneurial Bricolage	0.187	3.145	0.002	Supported
H7	Cognitive Capital $\rightarrow$ Entrepreneurial Bricolage	0.091	1.660	0.097	Not Supported

Overall, six of the seven direct hypotheses received support. Among the social capital dimensions, Relational Capital was the biggest predictor of Opportunity Recognition, whereas Opportunity Recognition had the strongest effect on Entrepreneurial Bricolage.

4.4 Mediation Analysis

To test the mediating effect of Opportunity Recognition in the relationship between social capital dimensions and Entrepreneurial Bricolage, the bootstrapping approach was used. The significance of the indirect effects was tested by path coefficients, t-values, and p-values. The results are given in Table 9.

The results showed that Opportunity Recognition strongly moderated the link between Structural Capital and Entrepreneurial Bricolage ($\beta = 0.085$, $t = 3.275$, $p = 0.001$), thus supporting H8a. Likewise, the indirect effect of Relational Capital on Entrepreneurial Bricolage through Opportunity Recognition was significant ($\beta = 0.137$, $t = 4.486$, $p < 0.001$), in support of H8b. Moreover, Opportunity Recognition mediated the connection between Cognitive Capital and Entrepreneurial Bricolage strongly ($\beta = 0.125$, $t = 4.225$, $p < 0.001$) confirming H8c.

Table 11. Indirect Effects and Mediation Results

Hypothesis	Indirect Relationship	Indirect Effect	t-value	p-value	Decision
H8a	SSC → OR → EB	0.085	3.275	0.001	Supported
H8b	RSC → OR → EB	0.137	4.486	<0.001	Supported
H8c	CSC → OR → EB	0.125	4.225	<0.001	Supported

The VAF technique was applied to test the mediating role of each mediator. The results show that Opportunity Recognition partially mediates the association between Structural Capital and Entrepreneurial Bricolage with a VAF value of 33.6%. Similarly, the association between Relational Capital and Entrepreneurial Bricolage is partially mediated by Opportunity Recognition with VAF value of 42.3%.

On the other hand, Opportunity Recognition fully mediates the relationship between Cognitive Capital and Entrepreneurial Bricolage. Cognitive Capital had a significant effect on Opportunity Recognition but no significant direct effect on Entrepreneurial Bricolage. However, the indirect effect on Entrepreneurial Bricolage through Opportunity Recognition was significant. This research indicates that Cognitive Capital is mainly related to Entrepreneurial Bricolage through entrepreneurs' capacity to identify opportunities.

Table 12. Nature of Mediation

Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	VAF (%)	Mediation Type
SSC → OR → EB	0.168	0.085	0.253	33.6	Partial Mediation
RSC → OR → EB	0.187	0.137	0.324	42.3	Partial Mediation
CSC → OR → EB	0.091 (ns)	0.125	0.216	-	Full Mediation

The mediation results suggest that Opportunity Recognition is a significant channel through which social capital factors influence Entrepreneurial Bricolage among MSMEs. In particular, the full mediation found for Cognitive Capital underscores the necessity of opportunity identification as a vital channel to translate shared aims, values and understandings into entrepreneurial resourcefulness and creative resource use.

5. DISCUSSION

The present study examined the impact of Structural Capital, Relational Capital and Cognitive Capital on Entrepreneurial Bricolage through the mediating role of Opportunity Recognition in MSMEs. The results provide vital insights into how different aspects of social capital have favorable effects on entrepreneurial competence in resource-constrained corporate contexts (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Zahra et al., 2005).

The results showed that Structural Capital has significant effect on Opportunity Recognition and hence H1 is validated. The study finds that entrepreneurs with stronger network connections and better access to external stakeholders are more likely to uncover and recognize new business possibilities (Ozgen & Baron, 2007; Ramos Rodríguez et al., 2010). A robust network helps to spread information, market data and industry expertise and allows entrepreneurs to spot possibilities that might otherwise be ignored (Burt, 1992; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998). This is in line with the Social Capital Theory which argues that network structures are crucial avenues to obtain valuable information and resources (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). This finding is in line with earlier entrepreneurship research emphasizing the importance of network interactions to improve the spotting of entrepreneurial opportunities (Ardichvili et al., 2003; De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Tang et al., 2012).

The results also corroborate H2 where Relational Capital has a considerable beneficial effect on Opportunity Recognition. Relational Capital was the most significant predictor of Opportunity Recognition among the three forms of social capital. Trust-based linkages, reciprocity, and mutual support are considered to promote the sharing of high-quality information and expertise among network members (Granovetter, 1985; Krackhardt, 1992; Stam et al., 2014). The entrepreneur who interacts highly with stakeholders is more likely to get timely and reliable knowledge about industry trends, client wants and forthcoming prospects. This is consistent with previous studies highlighting the significance of trust as an important channel for entrepreneurs to obtain relevant entrepreneurial knowledge (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Ozgen & Baron, 2007; Zahra et al., 2005).

Likewise, Cognitive Capital positively affected Opportunity Recognition supporting H3. The members of the network have same aims and mutual understanding and common principles encourage exchange and interpretation of information (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Lin, 2001). Entrepreneurs embedded in cognitively aligned networks are better equipped to digest external information and recognize new opportunities (Puhakka, 2011; Zahra et al., 2005). This research also contributes to the evidence of the function of shared cognitive templates in improving entrepreneurial awareness and opportunity recognition processes (Ardichvili et al., 2003; Baron, 2006).

Moreover, the findings offered robust support for the substantial role of Opportunity Recognition on Entrepreneurial Bricolage (H4). The finding shows that entrepreneurs who can recognize and assess business possibilities are more likely to engage in creative recombination and resource utilization (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Fisher, 2012; Senyard, Baker, Steffens, & Davidsson, 2014). Entrepreneurs look for strategies to take advantage of identified possibilities, despite resource limits. Thus, opportunity awareness is seen as the trigger that causes entrepreneurs to employ available resources in new ways. The results of this study confirm the Opportunity Recognition Theory and extend the current research on bricolage by suggesting that opportunity identification is a key antecedent of entrepreneurial bricolage (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Steffens et al., 2023).

H5 and H6 were supported as Structural Capital and Relational Capital had a significant and direct effect on Entrepreneurial Bricolage. The findings suggest that the network structures and trust based linkages of entrepreneurs, provide direct access to resources, support and knowledge required for operations of bricolage. (Halme, Lindeman, & Linna, 2012; Senyard, Davidsson, Steffens, & Baker, 2014). Entrepreneurs frequently make use of their social networks for information collection, support, and resource mobilization to take advantage of possibilities in resource-constrained MSMEs (Desa & Basu, 2013; Kim et al., 2006). Thus, social connection is not only vital for the recognition of opportunities, but also directly contributes to entrepreneurial innovation.

However, the direct effect of Cognitive Capital on Entrepreneurial Bricolage was not significant, so H7 was rejected. The research suggests that shared values and mutual understandings are not enough to drive entrepreneurial bricolage. Cognitive alignment can facilitate communication and knowledge exchange, but not the mobilization of creative resources (Lin, 2001; Zahra et al., 2005). The only way cognitive capital may activate bricolage behavior is when entrepreneurs see credible prospects. This study makes a significant theoretical distinction among the dimensions of social capitals, and indicates that not all the measures of the social capital have identical effect on the entrepreneurial results (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Stam et al., 2014).

One of the most important contribution of this work is the mediation analysis. The findings show that Opportunity Recognition partially mediates the association between Structural Capital and Entrepreneurial Bricolage and Relational Capital and Entrepreneurial Bricolage. The results indicate that both network architecture and trust-based interactions have direct and indirect influences on

bricolage via opportunity detection (Desa & Basu, 2013; Halme et al., 2012). Social connections are useful to entrepreneurs, helping them access resources, but also helping them learn about prospects worth pursuing.

More crucially, Opportunity Recognition fully mediates the effect of Cognitive Capital and Entrepreneurial Bricolage. This is an important theoretical contribution of the work. The result suggests that the influence of shared values, same aims and mutual understanding on entrepreneurial resourcefulness is effective only through the opportunity recognition process (Zahra et al., 2005; Puhakka, 2011). That is, cognitive capital only facilitates entrepreneurial bricolage when it enhances entrepreneurs' ability to discover and analyze opportunities. Cognitive capital does not directly lead to resource recombination or improvisational behavior but requires the perception of opportunity.

From theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the Social Capital Theory showing the effect of the three aspects of social capital on entrepreneurial performance through numerous ways (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Stam et al., 2014). Structural and relational elements directly lead to entrepreneurial bricolage, and cognitive capital needs opportunity perception to enable entrepreneurial action. The findings further add to the Theory of Opportunity identification by demonstrating that opportunity identification is a mediating step between social resources and entrepreneurial action (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Tang et al., 2012). The study is based on Bricolage Theory. Social capital and opportunity perception are key antecedents of entrepreneurial resourcefulness in MSMEs (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Fisher, 2012; Steffens et al., 2023).

Overall, the results emphasize the significance for MSME entrepreneurs to create strong social networks, trust-based connections and improve opportunity recognition capacities. The findings imply that the success of entrepreneurial ventures in resource-constrained environments is not only dependent on the availability of social resources but also on the capacity of the entrepreneur to identify and capitalize on opportunities through inventive resource mobilization (Desa & Basu, 2013; Halme et al., 2012).

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the mediating function of Opportunity Recognition on Entrepreneurial Bricolage to determine the effect of Structural Capital, Relational Capital and Cognitive Capital in MSMEs. Drawing upon Social Capital Theory, Opportunity Recognition Theory and Bricolage Theory, the study created and evaluated a model of the impact of social capital characteristics on entrepreneurial resourcefulness in resource restricted environments (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

The results demonstrated that all the three elements of social capital are strongly contributing to Opportunity Recognition. Opportunity Recognition was most strongly predicted by Relational Capital. This indicates that trust, reciprocity and quality of relationships matter for entrepreneurial awareness (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Stam et al., 2014). The results also showed a substantial effect of Opportunity Recognition on Entrepreneurial Bricolage. Thus, entrepreneurs who can identify and assess opportunities are likely to mobilize and recombine available resources in inventive ways (Fisher, 2012; Senyard, Baker, Steffens, & Davidsson, 2014).

The research further indicated that Structural and Relational Capital had a direct influence on Entrepreneurial Bricolage, while Cognitive Capital did not have a significant direct influence. On other hand, all three traits influence Entrepreneurial Bricolage through Opportunity Recognition but indirectly influence (Desa & Basu, 2013; Halme et al., 2012). The results suggested that the influence of Structural Capital and Relational Capital was considerably mediated by Opportunity Recognition

while the effect of Cognitive Capital was totally mediated by Opportunity Recognition. The findings of this study imply that shared beliefs and understandings play a role in entrepreneurial resourcefulness, but only to the extent that they serve to improve an entrepreneur's capacity to detect possibilities(Puhakka, 2011; Zahra et al., 2005).

Finally, the current study enriches the entrepreneurship literature by offering a full explanation for the process by which social capital variables promote entrepreneurial bricolage through opportunity perception. The findings give useful insights for MSME owners, policy makers and entrepreneurship support groups interested in increasing entrepreneurial capacities and company resilience in volatile business settings.

7. THEORY AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

7.1 Contributions to Theory

The present study contributes to existing literature in several ways. First, it enhances the Social Capital Theory by taking into account the differentiated effects of Structural Capital, Relational Capital and Cognitive Capital instead of seeing it as a unidimensional concept (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Stam et al., 2014). The findings suggest that different aspects of social capital impact entrepreneurial outcomes via distinct methods.

Second, this study contributes to the Opportunity Recognition Theory by conceptualizing opportunity recognition as a key explanatory mechanism between social capital attributes and entrepreneurial activity(Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Ardichvili et al., 2003; Tang et al., 2012). The results suggest that opportunity recognition is an important cognitive task in the process of converting social resources into entrepreneurial action.

Third, the importance of social capital attributes as antecedents of entrepreneurial bricolage is underlined as part of Bricolage Theory(Baker & Nelson, 2005; Fisher, 2012; Senyard, Baker, Steffens, & Davidsson, 2014). A previous study has mostly dealt with resource limits and improvisation. The study points to social networks and opportunity identification as facilitators of resource recombination and new problem solutions(Desa & Basu, 2013; Halme, Lindeman, & Linna, 2012)

The finding that the association between Cognitive Capital and Entrepreneurial Bricolage is fully mediated by Opportunity Recognition contributes a novel theoretical contribution as it demonstrates that shared goals and values matter for entrepreneurial behavior only when they are relevant in the process of opportunity recognition (Puhakka, 2011; Zahra et al., 2005).

7.2 Implications for practice

The findings have some practical implications for MSME entrepreneurs, business aid organizations and policy makers.

First, MSME business should actively spend in building various network relationships to increase their access to information, skills and resources . Networks can help to identify prospective new enterprises and to stimulate entrepreneurial activity(Halme et al., 2012; Mair & Marti, 2006).

Second, entrepreneurs should build trust-based relationships with customers, suppliers, business partners and industry stakeholders. These findings highlight the importance of relationship capital in opportunity perception and entrepreneurial bricolage (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006; Stam et al., 2014).

Thirdly, entrepreneurial development initiatives should include training on identifying opportunities. We identify opportunity awareness as a fundamental driver of entrepreneurial bricolage Thus,

improving opportunity detection capabilities of entrepreneurs may enhance their ability to creatively utilize resources(Tang et al., 2012; Fisher, 2012) .

Fourth, governments and MSME support institutions should provide networking platforms, business groups, mentoring programmes and collaborative ecosystems to allow entrepreneurs to share experience and identify future potential (Halme et al., 2012; Mair & Marti, 2006)..

Lastly, incubators and entrepreneurship support groups should encourage collaborative learning environments among entrepreneurs to improve cognitive capital and entrepreneurial capability growth through shared understanding and collective problem solving.

8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

This work has limits that warrant additional research. First, the study adopted a cross-sectional research methodology, which does not allow for causal correlations across dimensions. Future research may employ longitudinal designs to study the historical evolution of social capital, opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial bricolage.

Second, this report solely discussed about MSMEs. Thus, conclusions may not generalize to larger firm or entrepreneurial environments. Future research could examine the hypothesised relationships in various business sizes, industries and nation contexts.

Third, the study relied on primary data, which is based on respondent's subjectivity. Future study can gather several data sources or multiple stakeholders' data to improve data validity

Fourth, the study evaluated opportunity recognition as a distinct mediating mechanism between dimensions of social capital and entrepreneurial bricolage. Future research may consider other aspects like entrepreneurial alertness, absorptive capacity, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, knowledge sharing, innovative competence or resource orchestration (Tang et al., 2012; Zahra & George, 2002; Zhao et al., 2005).

Fifth, the model did not take into account potential moderating variables. The moderating influence of environmental uncertainty, digital transformation, entrepreneurial experience, age of the business, size of the firm and dynamism of the industry on the connections found in this study can be tested in future research. (Casson & Wadeson, 2007; Mainela et al., 2014; Zahra, 2008)

Finally, future research may use serial and moderated mediation models to provide a more holistic understanding of the role of social capital in contributing to entrepreneurial resourcefulness and business performance in dynamic and risky situations(Desa & Basu, 2013; Steffens et al., 2023).

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