

## Studying the effect of information technology and social networks on international entrepreneurial business (Case study: nontechnology companies)

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**Abstract:** Current research has studied the effect of information technology and social networks on international entrepreneurs in nanotechnology companies business. This descriptive research in terms of purpose is applicable and in terms of nature and the methodology is a correlation and survey kind, because it studies the relationship between the variables. The statistical population of this research includes the managers and experts of small and medium active companies which are the member of nanotechnology staff. The statistical sample includes 231 persons of managers and experts of studied companies that have been selected and tested by simple random sampling method. The studied variables of this research were measured by using of research tool, standard questionnaires, information technology (researcher-made) and international entrepreneurial questionnaire (international standardized questionnaire of entrepreneurship center of « Darham» University) and social networks questionnaire. In order to determine the validity of these tools, the face validity and content validity were used. In order to analyze the data, the hypotheses were evaluated by using of linear Regression. The results obtained from the research indicate that information technology and social networks have had strong and positive effect on international entrepreneurial business of studied companies. Also there is positive and meaningful relationship between entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurial business.

**Key words:** information technology, social networks, international entrepreneurship, international entrepreneurial small business

### Introduction and statement of problem

In today's world, attention to the export development is one of the main demands and needs of the countries in economic activities dimension. With regard to the appropriateness of environmental conditions and tendency to create small and medium business in the world and prevalence of this kind of business in the export world level in this business, the field for studying many scientific researches has been provided. In this competitive space, today's organizations in order to utilize of special opportunities of business have to utilize of conformable and innovative strategies to respond to the quick changes of the customers' need and also lack of environmental confidences (Peng & Zhang, 2008). In the meantime, the researchers have paid attention to the entrepreneurship concept as a solution for keeping and elevating the stability indexes of competitive advantages in the organizations and businesses (Sattari et al, 2013, Chiang et al, 2014: page 34).

Entrepreneurship as the driving motor of economy is accounted as one of the important factors in economic development domain of the country. Entrepreneurship development is accounted as one of the important factors of economic development of the countries. The necessity of knowledge-based economies development for long-term and stable

development of the country has caused more attention to the technologic entrepreneurship especially in new technologies arena. Technologic entrepreneurship is mainly according to the convergent technologies namely nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology and cognitive technology. In the technologic entrepreneurship process, different stages and aspects have been proposed that the companies based on new technologies are as one of the main outputs of this process. These companies play an important role in development of knowledge-based economy. In the meantime, nanotechnology is one of the cases which provides many opportunities for creating these kinds of companies (Keshmiri Hagh, 2013, page 68).

Nanotechnology is the art of manipulating the materials in atomic or molecular scale and especially constructing the microscopic pieces and devices like microscopic robots. Despite of existence of many definitions for nanotechnology, the following definition includes all cases:

« development of technology and researches in atomic, molecular or macromolecular levels in measurement sale of 1 to 100 nanometer», creating and using of structures, tools and systems that due to the small size or their median limit have new properties and performance, and the ability of controlling or manipulating in atomic levels

(Bahreini Yazdi, 2012: page 41). Current players of nanotechnology in the world are divided into three large groups and each kind of entrepreneurship in this domain depends on cognizing the needs of these three groups:

1)local and regional political governments and structures, 2)investigative universities and centers, 3)private section including venture investors that actual entrepreneurial opportunities in nanotechnology are formed in relation with the needs of these three groups (ibid).

On the other hand, small and medium companies play an important role in economy and these companies especially in nanotechnology domain are increasing. Small and medium companies for development of their products and processes usually need researches especially applicable ones and if they are not able to convert the accomplished researches to the value and are not able to utilize of them, they will only face with accumulation. Generally, the companies with small and medium size (SMEs) in a global frame should have proper development capability to be able to continue their life in today fully competitive environment. Internationalization is one of the methods that through it the companies with doing activities in international market are able to enjoy of its advantage. The least benefit that internationalization has for the companies and countries is the technology transmission between the borders (Jang et al, 2014: page 14). Therefore, in a special time interval, the internationalization process should be accounted as an unavoidable stage of strategic evolutionary path of these companies (Behrouzi et al, 2013: page 59). In the meantime, without utilizing of information technology not only the possibility of using of new methods in the organization isn't provided, but also the possibility of competition with other organizations will be also eliminated (Emadzadeh, 2009). Development of organizational innovations like using of updated wide social networks encourages the companies toward internationalization. Social networks can be defined as connected societies with different motives which have a structure including knots with more than a kind of relationship (Vidal et al, 2011 quoted by Farhangi, 2014: page 41). These networks empower people to share their desired knowledges and issues and increase the communications in the world.

Therefore, with regard to the importance of current research issue, in order to study the effect of information technology and social networks on international entrepreneurs in the business of small and median active companies in Nano industry that are the member of special staff of nanotechnology of Iran, the researcher seeks to respond to this question that whether the information technology and social networks are effective on international entrepreneurial business or not.

## **Research literature**

### **Information technology**

It studies, designs, develops, implements, supports or manages the information systems based on computer, especially software and hardware programs of computer (information technology forum of America). Information technology in this research is evaluated by three components of information systems, information acquisition processes, information technology management; 1- information systems: information systems are told to the systems which provide data or information for users in an organization (Hacek et al, 2013: page 5). Some authors have considered the information system as system as regards it is clear from its name and they have defined it from the systematic view. 2- Information acquisition processes: data are a collection of separated realities about incidents and events. All organizations need data and some industries are dependent on them deeply, and keeping and recording the data management are necessary for their success (Lavendon & et al, 2000 quoted by Rasoulinezhad, 2009: page 44), 3- information technology management: in recent years all around the world the information technology costs in the organizations both small and large, services or manufacturing, profitable or non-profitable have been increased. The costs of official automation and manufacturing automation which include computers, applicable packets, development of software according to the need, communications, computer networks and internet are accounted as investment and they are usually accomplished for developing the effectiveness, increasing the efficiency, keeping and promoting the competitive position of the organization (Jothy, 2011: page 67).

### **Social networks**

Social networks refer to that group of internet networks in which the facilities such as interaction, adding the friends, comments in profiles, creating new groups, joining to other groups and engaging in discussion are possible simultaneously (Ahsan et al, 2012). These media enable people to share their knowledges and information and they increase the communications in the world (Tourban et al, 2010, quoted by Ashraf, 2012: page 18). Cambridge dictionary defines « social network» lexically as follows:

« a website or computer program that allows people to communicate and share the information on internet by using of a computer or cellphone» (dictionary-Cambridge.org. quoted by Navazeni, 2016).

The origin of these social media is very changeable: some of them like Facebook have been developed for supporting different student groups in American Universities, while some others like LinkedIn have more professional concentration that

their purpose is to develop work or occupational connections through network. Social networks websites like Facebook, friend star, LinkedIn, live journal and my space have become expensive and global (Boyd & Ellison 2007, quoted by Kevin et al, 2010: page 152). Facebook of a social network website is with the quickest development in the world which has one billion and three-hundred million users ([www.internet-society.org](http://www.internet-society.org)).

As the existential philosophy of social networks (such as Facebook), formation and linkage of social groups are according to the doctrinal, economic, political and social sharing, (Facebook) has been also formed with the motivation of organizing virtual social groups relying on different sharing (Soleimanipour, quoted by Navazeni, 2016), according to it, Facebook users have four classifications of this global network members which are: friends, users who are the member of groups which are similar to you and aren't your friends, the persons who are out of your intended groups. Users according to the number of friends that have in this network and also proportional with membership in different groups and the rate of activities that do in this social network provide their more effectiveness from this space and interact with what occurs in this space in different times (Navazeni, 2016: page 3).

### **Internationalization and international entrepreneurship**

Internationalization for the first time was proposed in 1966 in the product life cycle theory of Vernon. Discussion about internationalization theory is very difficult because this term hasn't been defined clearly yet, despite of that, there are wide definitions of internationalization; for sample, internationalization has been cognized as a process for increasing the involvement in international operations, and international business has been defined as a kind of business which includes commercial exchanges of two or several countries. The researchers know the internationalization as an outward motion for international operations of the company. Internationalization has been also defined as the reflection of origin country benefits and eagerness of decision-makers (entrepreneurs) for doing activities according to the existing opportunities in the foreigner markets (out of the border of origin country). Internationalization of a company isn't a one-dimensional concept and can not be studied only in operational dimension, therefore according to the research approach, its full dimensions should be identified. Internationalization concept has been developed in 6 dimensions: foreigner operations methods (entry method, entry strategy) (how), market (where?), product (what), work force, organization structure and financial affairs. In comparing the mentioned dimensions, product, workforce, organizational structure and

financial affairs are necessary for development of each company (Alipour Shirsavar, 2013: page 50).

There are two approaches in facing with foreigner markets: sale approach and entry strategy approach. In sale approach company has not real commitment to the international operations. But in entry strategy approach, company has commitment to the international operations. In other words, in sale approach company adopts passive state in facing with foreigner markets but in entry strategy approach, it adopts active state in facing with foreigner markets. Sale approach is suitable for the companies that have entered to the foreigner markets recently or the companies which need to achieve export experience and more self-respect. Entry strategy approach is also suitable for the companies which have enough experience for presence in foreigner markets (Salehi et al, 2013: page 79).

### **The research background**

With studying the existing references, the researcher didn't achieve a research with the title of current research, therefore the similar cases have been mentioned in this field;

Moradhasel & et al (2009) have done a research entitled « the effect of information technology and communications on business space and commercial facilitating». The article results indicate the meaningful effect of information technology and communications on the business space and commercial facilitating in developed countries and unclearness of this effect in developing countries. Namely the developed countries have been able to use of capabilities and advantages of information technology and communications in their development path. While in developing countries, the effect of information technology and communications isn't tangible on business space and commercial facilitating.

Jokar & et al in 2009 in a research entitled « a research about the properties of business in university educated entrepreneur women and their problems in business startup» indicated although one-third of women are active in the field of educational services, research and consultation, about half of them are active in the field of industrial manufacturing and related services such as transportation, packing and advertising. Also the most important problems of university educated entrepreneur women are existence of cumbersome laws, administrative bureaucracy, getting licenses and funding, and the cases such as roles contradiction, business management and existence of discriminations which are resulted from gender problems and in the research literature, they have been called significant problems of women business, are not accounted as serious obstacle for university educated entrepreneur women in Iran.

Yadollahi Farsi and Vahed Vahdatkar (2013) in a research entitled designing the conceptual model of technological organizational entrepreneurship with case study of intelligent transportation systems of Tehran municipality organization presented a systematic and conceptual model from conceivable measures confluence in the frame of technological organizational entrepreneurship conceptualization. The obtained model indicates the main category of technological organizational entrepreneurship process namely identifying and exploring the technological opportunity is caused by casual conditions including monitoring, selecting the technology and analyzing the needs procedure; and according to the strategies of evaluation and exploitation of technological opportunities, it leads to the new value based on technology as the process consequence. On the other hand, the underlying conditions like culture, structure, management, provisions and also environmental conditions such as government, investigative centers and consultants are effective on this process.

According to the research of Imanipour & et al entitled the role of electronical human sources management on the organization innovation (2013), applying the information technology in human sources of electrical systems of payment and reward according to the education performance and management causes to encourage the persons to innovate and it improves the human sources performances.

Arabion & et al (2013) studied « the marketing obstacles in export according to two international models of Apala and world born businesses in small and medium sizes». In this article, they cognized and evaluated two models of internationalization of small and medium businesses of Apala and world born business models and they cognized and studied the marketing obstacles in export of small and medium businesses and finally they studied and compared the models according to the marketing obstacles in export.

The research results of Ghanbarinezhad Esfaghonsari, Mohammadi Almani (2013) indicated that applying the management of technology, research and development causes to promote the quality performances and more importantly it strengthens the innovation performances in the organizations.

Zali & et al (2013) in their research entitled « the effect of social network on business performance» indicated Danish entrepreneurs more than the entrepreneurs of two other countries start up their business with motivation of exploiting the opportunity. Also the size of social network in Croatia and Denmark is 6 and it is 2.9 in Iran. But the size of private network of Iranian entrepreneurs is more than their other networks. Generally, the results of structural equations indicate that business

performance (export, innovation and expected development) as much as 74% is under the direct effect of social network of entrepreneurs and this effect is adjusted by the role model (0.70%) and especially opportunity motivation (6%).

The research results of Tahir, Barach (2003) indicate that organizations for compatibility in operational purposes, environmental changes and organizational development, constantly proceed to develop and improve four variables of human force, applying new technologies, equipment, provisions and cultural space of the organization.

Beatrice I.V & Vincentiu I.M (2009) did a research entitled "innovation, research and development as important factors in countries competitiveness: case study of European countries economy". In their article in order to clarify the relationship between innovation and competitiveness, data panel of European countries membered in Europe union has been utilized. The article findings indicate that innovative activities and R&D activities which are done mainly by entrepreneur and innovative companies are accounted as important factors in the countries competitiveness. In addition to it, the results of this research indicate that the policy change with the purpose of improvement of human capital level and technologic capabilities is needed for newfound economy to improve their economic performance for quicker convergence with Europe standards.

An article with the title of « analysis of entrepreneurial behavior in the internationalization process of companies in the kind of world-boundary with small and medium size» in 2010 has been done by Hong & et al. In this article, they concluded that entrepreneurial behavior has direct and meaningful relationship with success of small business companies in internationalization process; whatever the international communications are developed, the variety of entrepreneurship in the presented models will become more and it comprises financial and non-financial profit for the companies.

## **The research hypotheses**

### **The main hypothesis of the research**

It seems the information technology and social networks have positive and incremental effect on international entrepreneurial business.

### **Subsidiary hypotheses**

It seems the information technology has meaningful relationship with development of international entrepreneurial business.

It seems social networks have meaningful relationship with development of international entrepreneurial business.

**Methodology**

The method used in this research is survey and it is a descriptive-correlative kind. According to the existing information in the nanotechnology staff site and also the technology service institution to market, the statistical population of current research includes 63 small and medium companies which are active in Nano industry and are the member of special staff of Iran Nano industry and the intended statistical population in this research includes 248 persons of managers and experts of active small and medium companies that are the member of Nano technology staff. (After data collection, 231 questionnaires were used). The sampling method is simple random method, the tool used in this research for collecting the data and information has been questionnaire. In order to evaluate the validity of the questionnaire, after providing the questionnaire, the opinions and suggestions of some experts and pundits (face validity) were used. In order to test the reliability of the tool, 30 questionnaires were distributed among 30 persons out of statistical population randomly. After collecting the mentioned questionnaires, data were entered into the computer

and they were evaluated by using of spss 18 software with Cronbach's Alpha. The validity of information technology section of this questionnaire which has 15 questions was measured,  $\alpha=0.98$ . The validity of social networks was  $\alpha=0.87$  and the validity of international entrepreneurship with researcher-made questionnaire was measured  $\alpha=0.89$ . The obtained questionnaire had been designed in a 5-part Likert scale in the domain of 1 to 5. Then by sum of responses given to the items, the score of studied variables for statistical expert was obtained in the distance scale. In order to analyze the information obtained from the research, descriptive statistics like frequency, percent, mean, standard deviation and the changes coefficient and inferential statistics like correlation and Regression analysis were used.

**The research findings**

**Descriptive findings**

Distribution of the research data has been summarized according to the demographic variables (gender, age education, ) obtained from the main questionnaire of the research and it has been indicated in the following table.

Table 1. general status of the statistical population

	Domain	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	65	28.1
	Male	166	71.9
Age	Lower than 30 years	37	16.01
	31 to 40	139	60.1
	41 to 50	40	17.31
	Higher than 50	15	0.64
Education	Associate degree	84	36.3
	Bachelor degree	113	48.9
	MA and higher	34	14.7
Marriage status	Single	47	20.3
	Married	184	79.6

As it is observed in the table, 28.1 percent of the statistical sample members are women and 71.9 percent are men. Also the most frequency is in the age range of 31 to 40 years which comprises 60.1 percent of the whole statistical sample and 16.01 percent of the statistical sample persons are in the age range of lower than thirty years and the least frequency is in the age range of higher than 50 years. About marriage status, it is observed 79.6 percent of the statistical sample members are married persons and 20.3 percent are single persons. Also in terms of the education level, the most frequency is related to the educated level of bachelor (48.9 %) and the least level belongs to the educational level of MA and higher (14.7).

**The hypotheses test**

**The main hypothesis**

Information technology and social networks have positive and incremental effect on international entrepreneurial business.

Stage 1: according to the table No.1, the first anticipator variable of international entrepreneurial business which has been entered into the Regression equation is the social networks variable which explains about 42 percent of variance of international entrepreneurial business of the companies. Beta coefficient of this variable is 0.683. In other words, whatever the rate of using of social networks in manager is more, the international entrepreneurial business in the companies is better.

Stage 2: in the stage 2, the information technology variable is entered into the Regression equation and 40.27 percent of the dependent variable is explained. With entry of this variable, about 2.2 percent is added to the anticipation power

of the model. Beta coefficient of this variable is 22.1. In other words, whatever the managers' attitude to the information technology indexes is more positive, international entrepreneurial business in the

companies is also improved. Totally, these two variables explain 45.4 percent of the dependent variable changes.

Table 2. the test results of multi-variable regression analysis with step-by step method about effective factors on international entrepreneurial business in small businesses

ROW	ANTICIPATOR VARIABLES	R	R <sup>2</sup> .ADJ	B	T	SIG.T	F	SIG.F
1	Using of social networks	0.683	0.417	0.683	8.421	0.000	70.913	0.000
2	Using of social networks and information technology	0.661	0.454	0.225	2.275	0.025	40.271	0.000

**The first subsidiary hypothesis**

It seems information technology has meaningful relationship with international entrepreneurial business of the companies.

With regard to the obtained results in the table 2, it can be said that with confidence of 0.99 and meaningfulness level less than 0.0020, there is relationship between information technology and

international entrepreneurial business of the companies. On the other hand, the amount of this relationship which is equal to 0.618 is in direct (positive) form and average limit. Namely, whatever the managers' attitude to the information technology indexes becomes more positive, the rate of international entrepreneurial business of the companies will be increased with average ratio.

Table 3. Pearson correlation test between information technology and international entrepreneurial business of the companies

STATISTICAL TEST	INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESS OF THE COMPANIES/INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
Pearson correlation coefficient	0.618
Meaningfulness level	0.0020
The number of responders	231

**The second subsidiary hypothesis**

It seems, social networks have meaningful relationship with international entrepreneurial business of the companies.

With regard to the obtained results in the table 3, it can be said that with confidence of 0.99 and meaningfulness level less than 0.0038, there is relationship between the rate of using of social

networks and international entrepreneurial business of the companies. On the other hand, the amount of this relationship which is equal to 0.624 is in direct (positive) form and in the strong limit. Namely whatever the rate of using of social networks in the managers becomes more, the rate of international entrepreneurial business of the companies will be increased with much ratio.

Table 4. Pearson correlation test between using of social networks and international entrepreneurial business of the companies

STATISTICAL TEST	INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESS OF THE COMPANIES/SOCIAL NETWORKS
Pearson correlation coefficient	0.624
Meaningfulness level	0.0038
The number of responders	231

**Conclusion**

The purpose of current research is to study the effect of information technology and social networks in international entrepreneurial businesses in nanotechnology companies.

The results of the main hypothesis indicated the information technology and social networks are

effective on international entrepreneurial business. The social networks variable explains about 42 percent of variance of international entrepreneurial business of the companies. Also, the information technology variable is entered into regression equation and 43.2 percent of the dependent variable is explained. Totally, these two variables explain 45.5

percent of the dependent variable changes, the obtained results conform to the researches results of Yung (2010), Moradhasel & et al (2009), Zali & et al (2013).

The results of the first subsidiary hypothesis indicated that there is relationship between information technology and international entrepreneurial business of the companies. On the other hand, the amount of this relationship is in direct (positive) form and in average limit. Namely, whatever the managers' attitude to the information technology indexes becomes more positive, the rate of international entrepreneurial business of the companies will be increased with average ratio. The obtained results conform to the research results of

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