Young students are active and experienced users of online social networks (OSNs) which transformed their way of communicating, behaving and learning. Young students even in small developing European economies can benefit from using OSNs from entrepreneurial learning and cross-border opportunities. Therefore this doctoral thesis explores the necessity to understand online social networking readiness for young student entrepreneurship in small developing European economies such as Albania. This research is divided into three parts which focus in exploring how OSNR for young student entrepreneurship can be developed in the context of a small developing European economy using the theoretical background from the entrepreneurial education field and OSNs field. In this study, it is added a comparative perspective with Estonia a small developed European economy. Mixed methods are used combining qualitative data from pilot semi-structured interviews, final semi-structured interviews, focus groups, blog posts from the course Business in Virtual Networks at Estonian Business School and quantitative data from a pilot questionnaire, improved questionnaire and final questionnaire. Data collection was realised in Albania and in Estonia from 2013 to 2018. The first part of study analyses components that describe and define OSNR such as online social networking competencies, online social networking barriers, online mentoring and expertise. In this part of the study online social networking barriers were defined, online social networking barriers implication for OSNR was explained and online mentoring and expertise strategies were identified. In the second part of the study, the role of online social networking ties is explored a typology of online social networking ties was identified. In the third part of the study OSNR was developed through OSNR challenged and OSNR opportunities together with the application of OSNR through online entrepreneurial learning orientations. This study gives a conceptual contribution to the entrepreneurial education field and OSNs field. Its main practical contributions are for the young student, higher education institutions and policymakers.
Estonian Business School

YOUNG STUDENTS’ ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING READINESS FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SMALL DEVELOPING EUROPEAN ECONOMIES

Thesis for Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
by
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LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS


¹ The first author contribution was on selecting the topic, elaborating literature collecting and analysing data, organizing and submitting. The second author advised through the process and contributed in to adding to the literature review and in discussion of results.

² The first author contribution was on selecting the topic, elaborating literature collecting and analysing data, organizing and submitting. The second author advised through the process and contributed in to adding to the literature review and in discussion of results.
LIST OF PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES


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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEE – Central Eastern Europe
B2C – Business to Consumer
EU – European Union
EFA – Exploratory Factor Analysis
FR – Facebook readiness
HDI – Human Development Index
ICTs – Information and Communication Technologies
KMO – Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test
OSN – online social network
OSNs – online social networks
OSNR – online social networking readiness
UN – United Nations
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ABSTRACT

Young students enrolled in Business Degree programs in higher education institutions are digital natives because they are born digital and they have grown up digital. Online social networks (OSNs) as the main consequence of digital transformation are revolutionising the way of living, behaving and learning. OSNs are transforming communication, business decisions, and business opportunities, social and political engagement, learning environment, personal relationships, entertainment and leisure. Nowadays, higher education institutions are using OSNs for marketing purposes to increase their target audience and branding, at the same time OSNs are becoming an additional tool for research and learning.

Young students are active and experienced users of OSNs even in small developing European economies. Entrepreneurship education is increasing globally, requiring innovative learning opportunities outside of the classroom environment. OSNs complement the classroom environment for entrepreneurial learning and they increase the possibility to find cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities. OSNs can take young students everywhere with just one click. This is relevant in the case of Albania; OSNs can be transformed into an incentive for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities.

This research is based on the necessity to understand how young students can benefit from entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities in OSNs. The object of this research is online social networking readiness (OSNR) for young student entrepreneurship. OSNR to use OSNs for young student entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities in small developing European economies is an underdeveloped concept. Consequently, the research problem of this doctoral dissertation is formulated as a central research question: How online social networking readiness (OSNR) can be developed in the context of a small developing European economy for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities for young students?

This doctoral dissertation focuses on small developing European economies, taking as an example Albania compared with Estonia, a small developed European economy. These countries share common commanded-economy past but have had different development paths. Albania is a small developing
European economy that is challenged by the requirements of the European Union (EU) integration. Estonia is part of the EU since 2004. It has embraced digital transformation, and it is taken as a reference in Europe in terms of innovation and entrepreneurship.

To analyse the theoretical background of OSNR for young student entrepreneurship, two research fields are integrated: OSNs field and entrepreneurial education field based on knowledge flow dimension of OSNs and structural and relationship dimensions of OSNs which are online ties. The entrepreneurial education field is a consolidated research field. The OSNs field is a novel research field. After the analysis of the theoretical background, the main gaps of this research were identified and research questions were formulated. Firstly, as OSNR is an underdeveloped theoretical concept, it is necessary to describe OSNR for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities. RQ1 was formulated as follows –

RQ1 – How to describe OSNR for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurship?

Consequently, the first component of OSNR that is online social networking competencies was underdeveloped. RQ2 was formulated as follows –

RQ2 - What kind of online social networking competencies define OSNR for young students in small developing European economies?

The second component of OSNR which is online social networking barriers was analysed through RQ3 - What kind of online social networking barriers young students experience in entrepreneurial knowledge sharing through OSNs in small developing European economies? The third component of OSNR which is online mentoring and expertise was underdeveloped, RQ4 was formulated as follows -

RQ4 - What kind of online mentoring and expertise strategies are needed for OSNR for cross-border youth entrepreneurship in small developing European economies?

Support for OSNR from online ties for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border opportunities for young students was unclear in previous research. It leads to the formulation of RQ5 - How online social networking ties support entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities for young students in small developing European economies?

The development of OSNR focusing on the entrepreneurial learning dimension in OSNs was absent in previous research which lead to the formulation of RQ6 - How entrepreneurial learning in OSNs can be used for developing OSNR of young students in small developing European economies? Application of OSNR for entrepreneurial learning and cross-
border opportunities through online entrepreneurial learning orientation was unclear in previous studies. It leads to the formulation of **RQ7** - What kind of online entrepreneurial learning orientations in OSNs are necessary for young students OSNR in small developing European economies?

To answer the research questions, this study has been divided into three parts. They are published and, they meet the requirements for doctoral thesis defence.

The approach of this research is interpretative/constructionist as it deals with the exploration of the development of OSNR for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities for young students in small developing European economies that is an underdeveloped concept. Mixed methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative research methods is used in this study. It is compatible with the interpretative/constructionist approach. These methods offer complementarity and completeness for the study through triangulation. Coherence between RQs and research approaches and research methods assure the validity and reliability of the study.

In the first part of the study, the focus was on **RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4** focusing on the description of OSNR and its components for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities for young students. Qualitative data were collected through focus groups and pilot semi-structured interviews in Albania and Estonia. Quantitative data were collected through a pilot questionnaire distributed in Albania and Estonia. Frequency analysis was employed for quantitative data and thematic analysis for focus groups and pilot semi-structured interviews.

The second part of the study explored **RQ5**. Quantitative data were collected through an improved questionnaire. Qualitative data were collected through focus groups, blog posts from the course Business in Virtual networks at Estonian Business School and final semi-structured interviews with young experienced entrepreneurs from Albania and Estonia realised in OSNs. Quantitative data were analysed through descriptive statistics and qualitative data were analysed with thematic analysis.

The third part of the study responds to **RQ6 and RQ7**. Quantitative data were collected through a finalised questionnaire distributed in Albania and final semi-structured interviews with young experienced entrepreneurs from Albania and Estonia realised through OSNs. Exploratory Factorial
Analysis (EFA) was used to analyse quantitative data and qualitative data was analysed through thematic analysis.

The findings of this study are organised based on the answers to different RQs. While answering **RQ1**, OSNR is described through online social networking competencies, online social networking barriers, and online mentoring and expertise. Consequently, while answering to **RQ2**, the first component of OSRN, online social networking competencies are composed of technical competency, collaborative competency, creative competency, storytelling competency, relationship building interpersonal competency, effective communication competency, and monitoring competency. For OSNR, young students should be able to understand the technical features of OSNs, create content, filter and monitor knowledge and contacts and be aware of the building relationships in OSNs. The second component of OSNR is online social networking barriers is analysed in **RQ3**. These barriers are identified as: lack of control during the knowledge sharing process, isolated learning, lack of learning motivation, lack of time, lack of social interaction, communication, culture, and lack of trust, technical aspects, and physical distance. There is not a relevant difference between Albanian and Estonian young students in terms of online social networking barriers. To overcome online networking barriers that are related to entrepreneurial learning in OSNs such as lack of motivation and isolated learning, entrepreneurial learning culture in OSNs need to be transformed. Other online social networking barriers can be overcome with the development of online social networking competencies. The third component of OSNR is online mentoring and expertise. After answering to **RQ4**, two online mentoring and expertise strategies for OSNR were suggested: classical online mentoring and expertise strategy and collaborative online mentoring and expertise strategy. Online social networking competencies together with the appropriate online mentoring and expertise strategy help to overcome online social networking barriers for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities for young students in small developing European economies.

Support for OSNR is analysed in **RQ5**. There are no relevant differences between Albanian young students and Estonian young students in preference between online and offline ties for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities. A new typology of ties emerges within OSNs that supports OSNR, which is an online social networking tie that is composed of the Facebook tie, LinkedIn tie, and Group tie. For OSNR, a Facebook tie is a personal tie useful for young students in the
pre-start or start phase of their entrepreneurial project. A LinkedIn tie is formal tie developed in LinkedIn. This OSN is not popular for Albanian young students, and it is more popular among Estonian young students even though it has cost implication due to paid features. Group tie formed within Facebook groups allows young students to learn and search for cross-border opportunities in specialised Facebook groups.

In answering, the RQ6 OSNR entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurship of young students is developed from Facebook readiness (FR) taking into consideration that Facebook is the most widespread OSN for young students worldwide. EFA defined a structure from items from the questions of the finalised questionnaire (online social networking competencies, Facebook learning environment, and need for a friendly online learning community, operational benefits, opportunities for collaborative learning, support for online mentors and need to adapt to virtual learning reality). This structure of factors emerged from EFA is used for development of OSNR through OSNR challenges (need to for a friendly online learning reality, need to adapt to virtual learning community) and OSNR opportunities (online social networking competencies, Facebook entrepreneurial learning environment, operational benefits, support from online mentors) for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities for young students.

While answering the RQ7 three kind of online entrepreneurial learning orientation and for the application OSNR are suggested: solo individual online learning entrepreneurial orientation, online collaborative entrepreneurial orientation, and influencer online entrepreneurial orientation. The second orientation is prioritised. In general, there is no relevant difference between Albanian young students and Estonian young students. The only difference is in using OSNs; Estonian young students are more active and familiar with LinkedIn. OSNR for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities is defined through the components of online social networking competencies, online social networking barriers, and online mentoring and expertise. It is supported through the typology of online social networking ties and developed through OSNR challenges and OSNR opportunities and it is applied through online entrepreneurial learning orientations.

The main conceptual contributions of the development of OSNR are in the entrepreneurial education field and the OSNs field. In the entrepreneurial
education field, the main conceptual contribution is the elaboration of online mentoring and strategies useful in entrepreneurial learning and of the three online entrepreneurial learning orientations. In the OSNs field, the main conceptual contribution for the structural and relationship dimensions of OSNs through the typology of ties in OSNs for the support of OSNR and the definition online social networking competencies as a component of OSNR. The last conceptual contribution is the development of OSNR with OSNR challenges and OSNR opportunities.

The main practical contributions are firstly for the young student that should be able to understand the components of OSNR, support from OSN ties, OSNR challenges and OSNR opportunities and online entrepreneurial learning orientations. This can be helpful for her/his personal and professional development. Secondly, for higher education institutions in small developing European economies because they have the task of raising awareness about OSNR. OSNs education can be integrated into business-related curricula and reinforcing mentoring and online mentoring. Thirdly, policymakers at the EU level should consider in further extending the Digital Competencies Framework to online social networking competencies. In small developing European economies, OSNR facilitates the elaboration and implementation of innovative youth entrepreneurship and online social networking culture.

One of the main limitations of this research is the use of qualitative data as they limit the generalisability of the study. Another limitation is respondent bias, as the researcher is herself a lecturer and interacts on a daily with students. Qualitative studies imply always a certain degree of interaction. The last limitation is the geographical and cultural perspective as the study is focused on small developing European economies. Further research directions consist of applying OSNR in action research, longitudinal studies, operationalised quantitative studies and comparative studies with other Central Eastern European (CEE) countries or Western Balkan countries.

**Keywords:** online social networking competencies, online mentoring and expertise, online social networking ties, online entrepreneurial learning orientation, online social networking readiness challenges, online social networking readiness opportunities
INTRODUCTION

Albania has one of the youngest populations in Europe (ILO, 2015); the number of students enrolled in business-related degree programs is increasing each year, and especially after the fall of communism in 1991 intensifying after the 2000s. According to Roberts (2009), the young generation in CEE is more privileged than youth in Western Europe. Young people in CEE spend more time at the university, learn more foreign languages and are highly adaptable to change.

The economic development of a country depends on knowledge-based entrepreneurship (Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2013). Efforts have been made from higher education institutions and policymakers in Albania to incentivise youth entrepreneurship, especially for young students enrolled in business-related degree-programs. In the National Action Plan for Youth in Albania 2015-2020 (Xhafaj et al., 2015), youth entrepreneurship is among the top priorities.

Entrepreneurial education remains complex in Albania, as Drishti et al. (2016) conclude that the importance of entrepreneurship-related curricula is relatively small in higher education institutions in the country and learning activities are concentrated in a passive face-to-face classroom setting with little innovative elements. OSNs can be beneficial for entrepreneurship education as suggested by Barczyk and Duncan (2013) as they can facilitate interaction between learners, enhance learners’ skills and interaction in entrepreneurial knowledge acquisition (Wu et al., 2017). A study on six courses where different types of OSNs were used by Bennett et al (2012) shows that young students struggled to use OSNs for learning purposes. On the other hand, a study by Wang et al (2012) shows that young students want to use OSNs and more specifically Facebook for learning purposes. Facebook is currently the most widespread OSN with 2.23 billion users (Statistica, 2018). It counts for 1.4 million users in Albania (Statecounter, 2018). In a study about the use of OSNs by undergraduate students at the University of Tirana in Albania by Brahimllari (2017), it is shown that 84.5% of the students use OSNs on a daily basis, 92% use Facebook and 77% use Instagram.

The topic of this doctoral dissertation was chosen based on more than seven years of professional experience of the author; as a lecturer in Entrepreneurship and Business Communication and her research interests, which are youth entrepreneurship, OSNs, digital policies, digital competencies, and digital
literacy. The author started her academic career in 2012 when OSNs were widespread among young students even in a small developing European economy such as in Albania. Young students would spend a large amount of time in OSNs for entertainment or communication purposes. In parallel to digital transformation, young students appear to be more demanding in expanding their knowledge for entrepreneurship purposes. OSNs can offer this kind of support because they facilitate knowledge sharing as suggested by Hansen et al. (2017).

It is necessary to clarify terms that compose and contextualise the topic of this research. Albania is referred to as a small developing European economy. Lederman and Lesniak (2017) define small economies as economies with a working population of fewer than 5.3 million inhabitants. A developing country is a country with low levels of industrialisation and low levels of the Human Development Index (HDI). According to the World Economic Outlook (2018), Albania is a developing country. Based on the definitions above Albania is considered by this research as a small developing European economy where OSNs have a potential for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities.

Another term to be clarified is young students. The UN (United Nations) refers to youth to all these individuals aged between 14-25 years (Furlong, 2013). For different purposes, this age group can be extended from 18-32 years old to 15-35 years old. As this study deals with students, the age group to be considered as youth compatible with students enrolled in higher education programs is 18-32 years old. Reeves and Oh (2008) include in the Millennials Generation individuals born from 1981 to 2000 and in the Generation Z individuals born after 2000. In this doctoral dissertation, young people are digital natives included in the Millennials Generation and in Generation Z. They are born digital and they are growing up digital and they can benefit from the use of OSNs for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities.

OSNR for young student entrepreneurship is the object of this research. There exist different definitions of e-readiness that include only the dimension of how to adapt to technology with no specific focus on OSNs (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Whereas the entrepreneurship education field and networking field have been integrated together even before the emergence of OSNs as suggested by Aldrich and Zimmer (1986). Studies focusing on OSNs conclude that in OSNs, there are opportunities for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities (Benson and Morgan, 2014).
This study focuses on aspects of entrepreneurial education such as entrepreneurial learning. It can be defined as the process that facilitates the development of knowledge and knowledge sharing for entrepreneurial purposes and competencies that can help young students to create new business ventures (Reuber and Ficher, 1994; Gottleib and Ross, 1997). The definition of entrepreneurship includes the exploitation of market opportunities (Schumpeter, 1934) and entrepreneurial opportunities with the intensifying globalisation are growing across borders (Reuber et al., 2017).

The research problem of this doctoral dissertation is how OSNR can be developed in the context of a small developing European economy for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities for young students. It is divided into seven RQs that are the following:

**RQ1:** How to describe OSNR for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurship?

**RQ2:** What kind of online social networking competencies define OSNR for young students in small developing European economies?

**RQ3:** What kind of online social networking barriers young students experience in entrepreneurial knowledge sharing through OSNs in small developing European economies?

**RQ4:** What kind of online mentoring and expertise strategies are needed for OSNR for cross-border youth entrepreneurship in small developing European economies?

**RQ5:** How online social networking ties support entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurship of young students in small developing European economies?

**RQ6:** How entrepreneurial learning in OSNs can be used for developing OSNR of young students in small developing European economies?

**RQ7:** What kind of online entrepreneurial learning orientations in OSNs are necessary for young students OSNR in small developing European economies?
This research adopts a comparative perspective with Estonia, a country that shares the same commanded-economy past and different development path with Albania. Estonia is a small developed European economy (World Economic Outlook, 2018) and an EU member state.

The interpretative/constructionist approach is compatible with the research problem as OSNR for young student entrepreneurship in small developing European economies is explored (Saunders et al., 2009). Mixed methods are used by combining qualitative and quantitative data. Data collection and data analysis can be yet a source of debate because of the closeness of the researcher with young students (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) but in interpretative/constructionist approach researcher and the sample are supposed to be linked. Literature review, data collection, and results should be coherent (Morse et al., 2002). As this study concentrates on OSNs, secondary sources of data come from blog posts of the courses used as the unit of analysis. Primary data is original data and it is collected from the researcher through focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires in Albania and in Estonia.

To answer the research questions the study is divided into three parts that combine the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. In the first part of the study RQ1 and RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4 are addressed analysing qualitative data with thematic analysis and quantitative data with frequency analysis. The second part of the study deals with RQ5 and qualitative data are analysed with thematic analysis and quantitative data with descriptive statistics. The third part of the study focuses on RQ6 and RQ7, qualitative data is analysed through thematic analysis and quantitative data with EFA. These studies have been published and they meet the requirements for doctoral thesis defence.

In Chapter 1, the theoretical background of OSRN for young student entrepreneurship is analysed based on the analysis of the integration of the entrepreneurial education field and OSNs field. It is presented through exploring gaps for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities in developing OSNR. Chapter 2 explains research methods and steps of data collection and data analysis for the three parts of the study. Chapter 3 presents findings based on the RQs. This review article concludes with the Final Conclusions section that includes conceptual contributions based on gaps identified in Chapter 1, practical contributions and limitations and further research avenues.
CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

As OSNR for young student entrepreneurship is the object of research in this research; to analyse the theoretical background of OSRN, the focus is put in two research fields which are entrepreneurship education field and OSNs field.

Studies in entrepreneurship education field estimate that entrepreneurship education happens within the education system providing to the young students’ entrepreneurial knowledge for entrepreneurial opportunities, entrepreneurial behaviour, feasibility and new venture creation (Kourilsky, 1995; Shepherd and Douglas, 1997; Gibb, 2005). Entrepreneurship education has been defined as a research field that enables researchers to investigate how to transform young students into individuals equipped with the adequate knowledge and competencies (Abiougu, 2015; Amos and Onifade, 2013).

Entrepreneurship education started at Harvard University in 1947 and in the American higher education system, it has reached maturity (Katz, 2003). More than 1600 higher education institutions offer entrepreneurship courses worldwide, even in small developing European economies (Kuratko, 2005). Policymakers promote entrepreneurial education (Hoppe, 2016). Albert and Gallaynor (2003) suggest that young students should search and combine entrepreneurial learning opportunities outside of the classroom setting. Kirby (2004) considers incubators and business parks suitable for entrepreneurial education. There is a growing awareness of directing entrepreneurial education towards the needs of young students (Hofer and Potter, 2010). Solomon (2007) suggests that OSNs have a major role in entrepreneurial education.

Moreover, the European Commission (2006) considers entrepreneurship as a key competence for personal development. In small developing European economies, there is a lack of venture creation from young students due to the heritage from command-economy systems and transition process after the fall of communism (Swedberg, 2000).

With the integration of the sociological approach to the networking field, individuals became the nodes of the network with communication and knowledge inflows and outflows dimension of networks as connecting lines (Granovetter 1973) where the degree of relations established between
is reflected through the development of strong and weak ties. This is the structural and relationship dimension of networks. Aldrich and Zimmer (1986) apply social networking to entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is perceived as embedded in social relations as it can be facilitated or controlled by relationships that entrepreneurs develop within the network. Burt (1992) introduces the dimension of structural holes and knowledge flows of networks that are developed by the span through social networks between individuals.

Entrepreneurship education field and networking field are connected by entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial opportunity exploitation as proposed by Shane (2003). Entrepreneurs are traditionally involved in formal and informal networks. Formal networks are defined by the institutional relationship that the entrepreneur has with different public and private organizations (Johannisson, 1997). Informal networks consist of family, friends and acquaintances. The role of these networks is not only related to business formation, but it is applicable in all life cycle of business (Hoang and Antonic, 2003). Akoh (2012) considers that with the digital revolution, OSNs offer entrepreneurial learning opportunities for young people and online ties play a major role. OSNR for young student entrepreneurship is underdeveloped.

In the first section of this chapter, OSNR for young student entrepreneurship will be explored through integrating the entrepreneurial education field with the OSNs field, describing in the second section components that define and develop OSNR focusing on the knowledge flow dimension of OSNs. In the third section, the role of support of online ties for OSNR will be analysed focusing on the structural and relationship dimension of OSNs. The fourth section will conclude the application of OSNR through online entrepreneurial learning orientations.

1.1. Exploring online social networking readiness for young student entrepreneurship

When exploring OSNR, the theoretical background from the OSNs field is analysed. The definition of OSNs suggests that OSNs are networks in which individuals interact using the different web-based services on the Internet (e-mail, forums, blogs, social networking sites, etc.) (Lazer et al., 2009). OSNs allow individuals to create a public or semi-public profile in the virtual space where they articulate a list of other members with whom they share connection and knowledge (Boyd and Ellison, 2008). Another
alternative definition of OSNs is based on the collaborative dimension that facilitates participation and collaboration of individuals (Henderson and Bowley, 2010). Individuals have uniquely identifiable profiles supplied through content. They can publicly view data, which can be produced and consumed through interactions with others, connections created within these networks (Ellison and Boyd, 2013).

Through offering the possibility of personal presentation and creation of connections but as well as through facilitating bridging between people, Facebook is the most widespread OSN worldwide especially among young students (Ellison et al., 2007). Young students adopt it in their learning processes (Roblyer et al. 2010). According to an analysis of OSNs by Social2b (2014), Facebook is focused on social sharing, LinkedIn is designed for business purposes, Instagram for social sharing based on pictures and Google+ is integrated with Google services focusing on creating identities. OSNs are websites where the interaction happens (Cohen, 2011; Kazienko et al., 2011).

Focusing on the analysis of the theoretical background from the entrepreneurial education for the OSNs field, entrepreneurship combines discovery, exploitation of opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000) together with the constraint of bearing with uncertainty. The purpose of entrepreneurial education is that young students take more responsibility in their learning for entrepreneurship, learning about entrepreneurship and learning through entrepreneurship (Gibb, 1996). OSNs imply transferring entrepreneurial opportunities, finding potential business contacts, business partners, and entrepreneurial knowledge sources with a focus on maintaining a long-term relationship (Hardwick et al, 2014). OSNs have increased constantly knowledge sharing opportunities across borders (Elenurm, 2008).

Therefore, higher education institutions have a role in preparing young students to use OSNs for entrepreneurial cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurial learning (Benson et al., 2014). Previous research shows the importance of OSNs for cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurial learning for young students. In a study with American young students, Ezumah (2013) concluded that young students used primarily Facebook in their knowledge sharing processes followed by LinkedIn. Only a quarter of the young students considered in the sample use OSNs for making new business contacts. In Albania, there are no specific studies about the use of OSNs for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border
entrepreneurial opportunities by young students. However, a study by Dawn and Valentine (2013) considers that young students from former command-economies, which include Albania and Estonia, are familiar with the use of OSNs although their online social networking priorities for entrepreneurship purposes remain unclear.

As suggested by Benson and Morgan (2014) after studying the use OSNs by British students young students should have a certain level of readiness in using OSNs for entrepreneurial purposes but there is not yet a developed theoretical concept that refers specifically to OSNR for young student entrepreneurship,

While previous research is focused mainly on studying e-readiness for e-learning purposes as suggested by Keramati et al. (2011) that identified elements of e-readiness for e-learning, which are technical, social and organisational. The concept of e-readiness is defined as the degree to which individuals can be prepared to benefit from the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and it is based on their competencies and trust on technology acceptance (Dada, 2006; Ventkatesh et al., 2012). E-readiness creates new business opportunities and competitiveness (Janom and Zakaria, 2008) through facilitating the acquisition, organisation, dissemination, and application of information (Mutulaa and Brakel, 2006). The starting point of defining OSNR is the definition of Hoffmann et al. (2014) on social media readiness. Social media readiness is the extent to which individuals or citizens are willing or prepared to use social media for business purposes and the ability of young people to explore various opportunities in OSNs. Conduras et al. (2016) define OSNR as the ability of young people to explore various opportunities and the use of skills and capabilities to analyse the environment to channel their creativity and productivity potential. There is not yet in the specific theoretical concept referring to OSNR young student entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities. Its description remains unclear.

While exploring previous studies, ICTs competencies and skills and access to technological readiness are considered crucial components that can describe OSNR (Darab and Montazer, 2011). Another component of OSNR is online mentoring and expertise as Martin (2015) suggests after a study in the Romanian context. Young students can build up their online communities in OSNs. Online mentoring activities can happen inside online communities where online mentors can be experienced entrepreneurs and this would facilitate entrepreneurial in OSNs. The last component of OSNR
is online social networking barriers that young student experience in OSNs. These barriers are any challenge, risk, difficulty, obstacle or restriction that might prevent a single person, a group or an organization to reach an objective and success in a specific context when the challenge is related to acting or working in a collaborative environment (Pirkkalainen and Pawlowski, 2013). If the components of OSNR are online social networking competencies, online social networking barriers, and online mentoring and expertise, structural and relationship dimension of OSNs which is online ties should be taken into consideration for the support of OSNR. The role of the different types of online ties emerged in different OSNs is unclear in the current literature. OSNR is developed through its different components and the role of application of OSNR through online entrepreneurial learning orientations is underexplored.

In the next section, analysis of the description of the components for the definition and the development of OSNR will be explained through focusing on knowledge flows components and structural and relationship dimensions of OSNs while specifying correspondent theoretical gaps.

1.2 Analysis of description of online social networking readiness for young student entrepreneurship

While exploring OSNR in the previous section, possessing certain competencies that enable young students to use OSNs for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities was identified as one component of OSNR together with online social networking barriers and online mentoring and expertise.

Leu and al. (2004) suggest a definition of the new literacies of Internet and other ICTs that can be described as competencies, strategies, and dispositions that are necessary to adapt to the transformation that derives from the digital transformation. Jenkins (2009) develops literacy skills in the 21st century. These skills enable the participation of new communities in a networked society. They consist of elements of play, simulation, appropriation, multitasking, distributed cognition, collective intelligence, judgment, transmedia navigation, networking, and navigation.

Erstad (2010) extends the concept of digital skills suggesting that they should include basic skills, media as an object of learning, knowledge building domains, learning strategies, and cultural competence. In the EU,
DigComp Framework 2.1 (Carretero et al., 2017) propose eight proficiency levels of the areas of digital skills firstly developed by DigComp Framework 2.0 (2013) (Vuorikari et al., 2016) focusing in aspects of information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, managing digital content creation, safety and problem solving. Eshet Alkai and Chahut (2010) focus on critical thinking component of digital competencies, whereas other pioneers in the field such as Van Dijk and Van Deursen (2014) consider digital competencies as functional competencies that allow users through ICTs competencies to access and analyse different spectrums of information available online. JISC (2014) refers to digital competencies as competencies that enable learning, communication and collaboration activities that can be used even from young students in their learning activities in the context of OSNs (Purvis et al., 2016).

Moreover, Benson et al. (2014) recommend that students should develop their competencies in OSNs not only to assess and update their online profiles but as well as for researching information about organisations, job opportunities and critically analysing information. Beetham and Shape (2013) support that young students need to develop a set of digital skills for their employability opportunities. There is a gap in the existent literature on online social networking competencies that can define OSNR for young student entrepreneurship which has not been previously explored.

Relying on online mentoring and expertise is another component of OSNR. Johnson and Ridley (2004) consider that mentoring is a complex process but it has a facilitating effect in networking because it allows knowledge sharing and online social networking competencies building. Mentoring in youth entrepreneurship has been related to offline networks where a confidential relationship is supposed to be built between mentor and mentees (Collins, 1983). Governments and higher education institutions for more than 40 years have been using mentoring as a powerful tool for youth entrepreneurship (Allen et al., 2006). According to St-Jean and Audet (2012), mentoring involves support from an experienced entrepreneur (mentor) to a novice entrepreneur or wannabe entrepreneur (mentee).

Learning from experience is crucial for the young entrepreneur especially for how to deal and react in challenging situations and contexts (Cox and Jennings, 1995). Entrepreneurial learning from experience allows young students to take advantage of the experience of others. Entrepreneurship learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities require flexible learning environments that can be provided by mentoring (Gibb, 1996).
In many entrepreneurial educational contexts, mentoring is included in programs and curricula (Kirwan et al., 2008). In Albania, mentoring activities are not included in curricula. The effort is put in mentoring activities during student Start-Up competitions organised inside universities. Mentors usually are educators or experienced industry professionals.

E-mentoring is defined as a form of mentoring that is mediated by web-based technologies (Heallam-Wells, 2004). It can be categorised as an informal form of mentoring which occurs outside the formal structure of higher education institutions (Hamburg, 2012). E-mentoring provides wider entrepreneurial network contacts (Smith-Jentsch et al., 2007). In OSNs as young students can mentor not only young peers but as well as adults who might require assistance (Tapscott, 2008). The role of online mentoring in describing and defining OSRN for young student entrepreneurship remains unclear which leads to the identification of another theoretical gap.

Online social networking competencies and online mentoring and expertise are components of OSNR connected to online social networking barriers that young students can experience during their entrepreneurial learning and when they are looking for cross-border entrepreneurial in OSNs. Lesser and Fontaine (2004) consider that the main online social networking barriers to effective knowledge sharing emerge from a lack of awareness about the kind of knowledge that young student seeks.

Traditionally, knowledge sharing barriers in OSNs are linked to the lack of physical contact. Some studies have focused in organisational contexts analysing barriers through the optic of willingness of employees to adopt OSNs in knowledge sharing processes (Leonardi et al., 2013; Von Krogh, 1998) and lack of time (Berge, 2013). Other barriers of knowledge sharing in OSNs identified in the educational context are lack of awareness about the possibilities that OSNs can offer (Kärkkäinen et al., 2010) that are accentuated and challenged by managing reputation issues in academia (Matesic et al., 2010). Knowledge sharing barriers in such environment for young student entrepreneurship have not been described yet. This is another gap in describing and defining OSNR.

To develop OSNR it is necessary to explore what kind of knowledge development environment for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities, OSNs can provide. Latour (1987) defines networks as interrelated knots and nodes loaded with knowledge. Knowledge development occurs in networks and it is facilitated by learning
interdependence processes (Powell et al, 1996). Network learning occurs from knowledge and experience that is gathered from network relationships. The use of networks allows access and use knowledge plays a crucial role in discovering and exploring business opportunities (Inkpen and Tsang, 2005). Knowledge combinations that materialise in OSNs concluding with business creation opportunities and entrepreneurial learning which can happen internationally (Yli-Renko et al., 2001).

With the emergence of OSNs, knowledge sharing processes occur at a lower cost. The four dimensions of knowledge sharing in OSNs are coordination, learning and innovation, translation and local adaption and the support of the individual (Pugh and Prusak, 2013). Knowledge sharing processes are beneficial in organisational and entrepreneurial context (Lee and Choi, 2003). One way to succeed for the young entrepreneur is through finding unexplored niches (Kirzner, 1979).

Studies on the use of OSNs for academic purposes by young students conclude that one of the main motivations of using OSNs such as Facebook is expertise and knowledge sharing (Barseghian, 2011). OSNs are useful learning in higher education context as they do not focus on the content of knowledge shared but connectivity between users is the other important element that influences the entrepreneurial learning process (Ajjan and Hartshorne, 2008). A recent study by Zivkovic et al (2016) shows that the main motivation of using an OSNs such as Facebook for learning purposes is resource-sharing, exchange of practical information and learning from discussions with peers. Opportunity recognition, competitor analysis, market research, influencer detection and innovative product development and information monitoring are some of the features of entrepreneurial knowledge flow in OSNs (Kasper and Kett, 2011).

Young student entrepreneurial learning communities can be built in OSNs and especially on Facebook (Kabilan et al., 2010; Al-Rahmi et al, 2015). OSNs have different tools such as group features, hashtags, event creation, pages, discussion dashboard, instant messaging and content filters that can facilitate monitoring processes (Lim and Xavier, 2015). OSNs allow young students a multi-tasking operating mode that facilitates the learning process (Wu, 2015). Some other benefits of using OSNs for entrepreneurial purposes from young students are speed and reactivity (Salway et al., 2008), autonomy and decreased cost-related benefits (Wang et al., 2011).
The other dimension of OSNs is its structural and relationship dimension represented by online ties; its relevance for OSNR will be developed in the next section.

1.3 Online ties in supporting online social networking readiness

Studies in the networking field take into consideration the structural and relationship dimensions of networks (Granovetter, 1973; Hoang and Antonic, 2003; Semrau and Werner, 2013). The structure of entrepreneurial networks is an overall pattern of connections between actors that reflects whom and how entrepreneurs reach. It is based mainly in the definition of Granovetter (1973) about the strength of network ties.

Network ties are defined as the strength/intensity and diversity/quality of relationships in the network where can be distinguished strong and weak ties depending on the amount of time, emotional support, intimacy, and reciprocity of services that characterise the tie connection. Granovetter (1985) further explores the strength of weak ties concluding that weak ties can serve as bridges of connection even in networks where strong ties dominate. The degree of connection and with stronger ties is closer, weak ties are considered wider ties with a low degree of connection and interaction (Dubini and Aldrich, 1991).

The network of the entrepreneur that is characterised by strong ties includes an inner circle of the entrepreneur that can comprise strong personal relationships such as family members and relatives (Riquelme, 2013). Jack (2005) suggests that entrepreneurs might benefit from stronger ties because they can explore entrepreneurial opportunities and can have instrumental resources. From a point of view knowledge flows, sharing knowledge with strong ties is a quick (Coleman, 1988) but it implies more trust (Eagle et al., 2010). Strong ties are more relevant in cultural contexts were the risk and degree of uncertainty are high (Johannisson, 1996). In Albania, family and personal relationship are an important element of the network of the entrepreneur. Lechner and Dowling (2003) argue that strong ties may be useful in providing in-depth knowledge in some areas such as profitability, but they do not provide knowledge in some other areas such as new market trends.

Weak ties refer to a diverse group of people that can belong to different contexts with whom the entrepreneur does not have a regular interaction
(Granovetter, 1985). They can provide to the entrepreneur knowledge and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities that go beyond the social circle (Elfring and Hulsink, 2007). One of the main challenges of developing weak ties for entrepreneurs is network overload with a large number of weak ties that can be time-consuming to manage (Aldrich and Kim, 2007). Strong and weak ties are relevant for young entrepreneurs because their networks are less developed (Larson and Starr, 1993).

Computer-based communication and interaction offer young students the possibility to access online ties which can be defined as ties that are distant physically but can be reached at minimal cost (Houser et al., 2012; Rainie and Wellman, 2012). Wright and Miller (2010) suggest the establishment of ties via OSNs is done for support purposes. Online ties can be strong or weak depending on the context where they are established and maintained and they can be relevant in maintaining core relationships for the young entrepreneur (Hampton et al, 2011). In OSNs, support is offered through from interaction with weak and strong (Marwick et al., 2011).

Kane and Fichman (2009) conclude that OSNs provide a unique learning environment through interaction. As Wang et al. (2011) suggests some OSNs such as Facebook provide to young students’ tools of interaction with online ties in their entrepreneurial learning such as Facebook groups. For De Laat and Strijbos (2014), an effective relationship in OSNs should be topic related and peer-to-peer. Online ties can be a facilitator of knowledge sharing in small developing European economies (Brzozowski et al., 2009).

There is a gap in specifying the role of online ties in OSNR for young student entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities. The typology of online ties formed in different OSNs should be explored.

1.4 Online entrepreneurial learning orientation in applying online social networking readiness

The entrepreneurial learning process is a lifelong learning process that occurs on a personal and social level and it can happen in OSNs based on subjective experiences and opportunity discovery (Politis, 2005). Entrepreneurship is an action-oriented process where creative ideas are exploited and the reality can change as a consequence of these actions implying a pragmatic view knowledge generation (Kyrö, 2008). In higher education context, the focus
is put on the young student as individual pioneers in the field such as Kickul and Fayolle (2006) argue that much of the entrepreneurial knowledge occurs in the collaborative and co-participation environment.

OSNs represent an opportunity to make learning more attractive young students can receive more collaboration opportunities (Kirsi et al., 2009). The theoretical foundation of collaborative learning as proposed by Vygotsky (1978) defines collaborative learning as an experience that can assist learners to take advantage of new knowledge opportunities. OSNs make learning process more ludic through their collaborative features. Young student learners can benefit from the information that may change their type of knowledge that apply in new situations. A study by Benson and Kolsaker (2015) shows that young students in their learning processes are depended from OSNs.

Entrepreneurial orientation plays an important role in the entrepreneurial learning processes in OSNs. The main typologies of entrepreneurial orientation are imitative orientation, individual orientation and collaborative orientation (Elenurm et al., 2007). An imitative entrepreneurial orientation implies not just being memetic and copying ideas but as well as it implies a readiness to monitor new trends and best practices in the markets. This kind of orientation limits the readiness of the entrepreneur to share knowledge and opportunities in OSNs. An individual entrepreneurial orientation can be suitable for young students that operate in domestic markets where product differentiation is the main competitive advantage. It can be useful for long-term research and development but when the entrepreneur risk to not be part of the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Adner, 2012). OSRN for entrepreneurial learning must focus on market monitoring (Elenurm et al., 2007).

The co-creative orientation is the most evident reflection of digital transformation especially because open innovation assumes the use of purposive flows of knowledge to accelerate internal innovation and external use of innovation (Chesbrough et al., 2006). Co-creative orientation assumes competencies for applying the knowledge received from other networking partners but also competencies for sharing the entrepreneur’s knowledge to create value for other network members. Co-creation and co-innovation orientation can be integrated to OSNR.

Another aspect to be considered in OSNR is the influence that the young student can create in OSNs in the knowledge sharing process. Online
entrepreneurial learning orientations are underexplored in current literature. According to Forbes (2016), the online social influencer is a kind of status that can shape attitudes, actions, and opinions of individuals in OSN. An individual in OSNs while interacting with other peers can take leadership positions, influence others with ideas, and expertise. An online entrepreneurial learning orientation assumes that the young student has a certain previous knowledge or is in the process of requiring a certain typology of knowledge for entrepreneurial purposes (Kapitain and Silveiria, 2016).

Young students particularly tend to be influenced by other peers who have a certain reputation and higher status in entrepreneurial knowledge sharing processes (Xiang et al., 2016). Influencer orientation would require a more elevated and elaborated knowledge and higher recognition or experience in the field.

1.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to identify the gaps existing in developing OSNR for young student entrepreneurship using the integration of the entrepreneurial education field and OSNs field. Two dimensions of OSNs were retained for analysis that is knowledge flows dimension and structural and relationship dimension.

Components that define OSNR need be described using the main gaps identified in the previous sections of this Chapter which are: online social networking competencies, online social networking barriers and online mentoring and expertise. These elements helped to formulate RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4 developed in the first part of the study and RQ6 concluded in the third part of the study. Structural and relationship dimensions of OSNs were taken into consideration to explore gaps that exist in the support provided by online ties for OSNR for young students when elaborating RQ5 explored in the second part of the study. It is essential to analyse online entrepreneurial learning orientations in the application of OSNR. This is developed through RQ7 in the third part of the study.

The main gaps identified can be summarised in Figure 1 as illustrated below.
Figure 1. Gaps identified from theoretical background. Composed by the author.

Underdeveloped description components that define OSNR: online social networking competencies, online social networking barriers and underexplored role of online mentoring and expertise (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ4)

Describing and defining components of OSNR:
Components of OSNR: broader digital skills (Eshet Alkai and Chalut; Vuorikarti et al., 2016), e-mentors (discovering (Gibb, 1997; Johnson and Ridley, 2004; Martin, 2015), knowledge barriers (Leonardi et al., 2013; Matersic et al., 2010)

Support for OSNR:
Theoretical foundations of strong and weak ties for entrepreneurship (Granovetter, 1973; Hoang and Antonic, 2003; Semrau and Werner, 2014) and online ties (Wang et al., 2012, De Laat and Strijbos, 2014)

Underexplored the role and support of online social networking ties and typology of online social networking ties created in the context of OSNs for OSNR (RQ5)

Developing OSNR: development entrepreneurial learning and cross-border opportunities especially in Facebook (Barseghian, 2011; Kasper and Kett, 2011; Lim et al., 2015; Zivkovic et al.)

Developing OSNR through the integration of the components of OSNR (RQ6)

Applying OSRN: collaborative and co-creative entrepreneurial orientations in OSNs (Chesbrough et al., 2006; Elenurm et al., 2007; Adner, 2012); online influencers and knowledge opportunities (Forbes, 2016; Xiang et al., 2016)

Application of OSRN through online entrepreneurial learning orientations (RQ7)
A general overview of the interconnection between RQs can be resumed as it follows in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Overview of the connection between RQs. Composed by the author.
In Figure 1 were presented the gaps from the theoretical background of OSNR for youth entrepreneurship. These gaps were in describing, supporting, developing and applying OSNR for youth entrepreneurship from where different RQs were formulated. Figure 2 develops the interconnections between different RQs. In the elaboration of Figure 2, it is taken into consideration the knowledge flows dimension and structural and relationships dimension of OSNs. RQ1 starts with the description of OSNR through the definition of its components that are analysed through RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4. RQ6 is formulated to develop OSNR for young student entrepreneurship in the context of a small developing European economy. RQ5 will focus on the gap of support from online social networking ties whereas RQ7 will aim to clarify the application of OSNR in terms of online entrepreneurial learning orientations.
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODS

The previous chapter explored the theoretical background of OSNR for young students in small developing European economies. In this chapter, research methods will be presented. This research adopts an interpretative/constructionist approach. According to Burrell and Morgan (1982), there are four main approaches in social science research: functionalist, interpretative/constructionist, radical humanist and radical structuralist. In the functionalist approach, the researcher approaches the research questions in an objective manner methods of natural sciences are applied to social sciences. In the radical humanist approach, researchers are individuals who attempt to transform reality radically. The radical structuralist approach assumes that radical change is built into the structure of society and researchers try to understand the relationships that generate structure creation. Researchers view the world in an interpretative/constructionist approach as a dynamic changing process created by the individuals that constitute it (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

In the entrepreneurship education field, the functionalist positivist approach dominates, even though traditionally functionalist and interpretative/constructionist approach are both used (Lehner and Kansikas, 2011). OSNs field is a novel research field where functionalist positivist approach and interpretative constructionist approach are used (Baviskar et al., 2009). Interpretative/constructionist approach is adequate for this study as the research questions are open-ended (Creswell, 2009). They explore in depth the complexity of OSNR and this research has been placed in the interconnection between entrepreneurship education field and OSNs field, which include both complex processes of social interaction (Downing, 2005).

Functionalist and positivist approaches are often based on the deductive approach that supports quantitative methods where the world is described through observable and measurable facts (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Whereas in the interpretative/constructionist approach, researchers use methods that enable them to understand in-depth relationships of individuals of their environment. Individuals play the most important role. In interpretative constructionist studies, there is a tendency to not prefer research methods that directly offer precise information or observation (McQueen, 2002).
Given the research problem, mixed methods are used with a predominance of qualitative methods as suggested by Creswell (2009). In an interpretative/ constructionist approach, patterns of meanings are developed throughout of the research process quantitative and data may be used in a way, which supports or expands upon qualitative data and effectively deepens the descriptions. Venkatesh et al., (2013), underline other benefits of mixed methods. These benefits are complementarity, completeness, development, compensation, and diversity. This supports Denzin’s (1978) and Jick’s (1979) definition of triangulation between and across methods where at least two methods are used for collecting data, at least one method is qualitative (e.g. interviews), at least one of the methods is quantitative (e.g. surveys). Qualitative and quantitative data are presented and analysed. The only appropriate way to ensure validity is triangulation as explained by Merriam (1998). In this study, data were collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and blog posts. Eisenhardt (1989) considers that the generalisability consists of validity and analytical generalisation. In the qualitative approach, generalisability refers to what extent results can be transferred. Winter et al. (2000) suggest that qualitative studies are generalisable when they attempt to contribute to theory.

In the first section of this chapter is presented data collection for the three parts of the study. In the second section, data analysis is presented.

2.1 Data collection instruments

This section explains the collection of data for the three parts of the study focusing on different sampling techniques used for the collection of data and explaining each step of every part of this study.

2.1.1. Data collection for the first part of the study

OSNs have a potential for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities while being at the same time a massive tool of distraction for young students. In a classroom, educators face the typical situation where students are all the time connected in OSNs.

The steps of data collection instruments of the first part of the study and their respective period and corresponded method employed are resumed in Table 1.
Table 1. Steps of data collection of the first part of the study.
Composed by the author

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Data collection instruments</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>3 Focus interviews groups</td>
<td>Tirana, Albania, Durres, Albania, Tallinn Estonia</td>
<td>3 groups of 10 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>December 2013-March 2014</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Pilot questionnaire</td>
<td>Tirana, Albania, Durres, Albania, Tallinn Estonia</td>
<td>50 pilot questionnaires distributed in Albania and 40 pilot questionnaires distributed in Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>August 2014</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Pilot semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Tirana, Albania</td>
<td>8 pilot semi-structured interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The transition from Step 1 to Step 2 of this part of the study was possible by setting up a qualitative phase that was followed up by a quantitative phase. Step 1 started with exploring components that describe OSNR as investigated by RQ1. Consequently, RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4 focus on description and definition of these components for OSNR. Focus groups were organised in class during October 2013 with Master’s degree young students from Faculty of Economy at the University of Tirana and from young students in Bachelor degree from Faculty of Business at the University “Aleksandër Mosiú” Durrës, Albania. Whereas in Estonia focus groups were realised with a group of Bachelor and MBA young students from Estonian Business School in Tallinn, Estonia. The researcher moderated the discussions. The focus group discussion technique is qualified as a group interview technique that can stimulate discussion and generate debate among participants (Domegan and Fleming, 2007). It can help to collect high-quality data and it helps to understand a problem from the point of view of the participants (Blackburn, 2000). The focus group technique has been applied in entrepreneurship research. It is as well applied for the development of questions and questionnaire design (Gibbs, 1997).

**Focus group sampling** – purposive sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of cases in order to cope with the limited use of resources (Patton, 2002). The researcher must identify individuals who are knowledgeable about the phenomena that are being explored. Bernard (2002) adds as well the availability and willingness
of respondents to participate. Whatever research method is used, sampling methods are intended to maximise efficiency and validity (Morse and Niehaus, 2009). Focus groups realised in class are a practice of evaluation of courses and academic needs of young students in different contexts (Zhu and Flaitz, 2005).

In the beginning, participants were introduced to the topic of this study. General introductory remarks were made about the use of OSNs. The discussion focused on the role of online social networking competencies to use OSNs and more specifically to the kind of online networking competencies useful to them. The second axis of discussion was focused on what kind of online social networking barriers students have when using OSNs for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities focusing on the advantages of using OSNs. The length of the focus group discussions was one hour.

**Pilot questionnaire sampling** – it was elaborated based on the outcome of items identified during discussions in focus groups as suggested by Gibbs (1997). It contained eight questions. The two first questions focused in online social networking priorities comparing online and offline ties elaborated on a five-point Likert scale, the third question was about assessing OSNs preference for entrepreneurship (OSNs relevant in 2013 when the pilot questionnaire was distributed).

The pilot questionnaire can be found in **Appendix 1**. It was distributed to 50 Albanian young students at Bachelor’s degree and Master students during December 2013 and 40 pilot questionnaires were distributed to Estonian Bachelor and Master young students in Estonian Business School in Estonia. To build a bridge for step three of this part of the study, the courses International business in Estonia and Business Ethics and Entrepreneurship in Albania focused on international entrepreneurship. Group work and individual work were focused on aspects of internationalisation, cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities and involvement of young students in OSNs. The pilot questionnaire served as the basis of identification of trends that were further commented and developed in the third step of this part of the study represented by eight semi-structured pilot interviews realised in Albania in August 2014.

**Pilot semi-structured interviews sampling** - the transition from step 2 to step 3 of this part of the study was made to ensure the triangulation of
data obtained by the pilot questionnaire through organising pilot semi-structured interviews with young students in Albania who participated at least in youth Start-Up competitions organised in Albania. Sampling was purposeful. Young students who were knowledgeable and familiar with the subject were targeted. In the pilot semi-structured interview, there were eight participants. The pilot semi-structured interviews had a duration of 20 minutes for each participant, and they were organised in Albania during August 2014. The number of participants suggested for semi-structured interview sample is from 5 to 25 participants (Creswell, 2009) or at least 6 participants (Bertaux, 1981). The criterion of selection of sample size was data saturation.

The pilot semi-structured interviews contained questions concerning the exploration of the components of OSNR such as online social networking competencies, online social networking barriers and online mentoring and expertise in order to overcome online social networking barriers and to use online social networking competencies. Pilot semi-structured interviews were conducted to complement the results of the first pilot questionnaire and to develop patterns connected to online social networking competencies, online social networking barriers and online mentoring expertise in OSNR. In Appendix 2, it is attached to the guide of the pilot semi-structured interviews. Participants’ profile information is resumed in Table 2. For ethical reasons, the names of the participants are presented in the table with pseudonym initials.

Table 2. Profile of young students’ participants in pilot semi-structured interviews in the first part of the study. Composed by the author.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym initials</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Entrepreneurial experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 M.N</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Freelancer/web design, Start-Up competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 K.K</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Start-Up competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 N.N</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Start-Up competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 M.Z</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Start-Up competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Xh.A</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Start-Up competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 L.K</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Start-Up competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 A.Gj</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Start-Up competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 S.S</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Start-Up competition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1.2 Data collection instruments for the second part of the study

The second part of the study dealt with online ties and their implication for OSNR. Data collection was based on mixed methods. It integrated secondary data from blog analysis and primary data from focus groups and final semi-structured interviews.

In Table 3, the steps of the second part of the research are resumed.

Table 3. Steps of data collection of the second part of the study. Composed by the author.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Data collection instruments</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td>Spring Semester academic year 2016-2017</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Improved questionnaire</td>
<td>Durres, Albania Tallinn Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td>Spring Semester academic year 2016-2017</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Focus groups interviews</td>
<td>Durres, Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
<td>Autumn 2017</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Blog post analysis</td>
<td>Blog of course Business in Virtual Networks at Estonian Business School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 4</strong></td>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Focus groups interviews</td>
<td>Durres, Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 5</strong></td>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Online social networks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data collection from the questionnaire – taking into consideration the outcome from the first part of the study, the questionnaire was improved and extended to 20 questions. Appendix 3 improved questionnaire can be found, it combines open-ended questions, Likert scale questions and closed questions. There are questions about online ties and entrepreneurial learning in OSNs such as LinkedIn and Facebook. Young students were also asked to assess their online social networking priorities and their online social networking competencies priorities. This improved questionnaire served to identify general trends. Further exploration was needed considering the exploratory nature of the research question. Only questions from 1-6 and 9 were used because they were relevant RQ5.

Data collection from focus groups – focus groups in Durres were organised twice the same approach of the focus groups realised in the first part of the study. Third-year of Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration young students and second year of Master’s Degree in Business Administration young students participated. They were chosen based on the fact that Entrepreneurship and Small and Medium Business Management as part of the curricula of their and their participation in informal events such as Start-Up Weekend. The sampling technique was purposeful. Focus group questions were open-ended. They moved from general to more specific questions about OSNs usage, entrepreneurial learning, the influence of online ties and the role of the cultural context.

Data collection from blog posts – in order to ensure triangulation, posts from the blog of the course Business in Virtual Networks at Estonian Business School were analysed. International and Estonian young students enrolled in the course posted and commented on each other posts on the use of OSNs. The focus was put on specialised OSN that did not include traditional OSNs with massive use such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram or Google+. The advantages and disadvantages of OSN for entrepreneurship were discussed. 130 posts were analysed. Posts dated from the year 2010 but posts from the years 2016 and 2017 were taken only into consideration for analysis.

Data collection from semi-structured interviews - semi-structured interviews were used as well in the third part of the study, specifically question 9 and question 10. Questions of the semi-structured interview are enclosed in Appendix 4. The technique of semi-structured interviews was innovative as it was done in OSNs such as Facebook and LinkedIn. Sampling was purposeful because the participants were current or former
young students that participated in any stage of the research. There were 12 participants, 8 from Albania and 4 from Estonia.

Defining the unit of analysis limits data collection (Yin, 2003). According to Webb et al (2011) in the field of entrepreneurship education, research has traditionally focused on the entrepreneur as a unit of analysis. In this study, while sampling semi-structured interviews and the ego-centred method was used where the interviewee describes his/her experience and perceptions in OSNs. The profile of young students that participated in semi-structured interviews is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Profile of young students participants in semi-structured interviews.
Composed by the author.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym initials</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Entrepreneurial experience</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 S.L</td>
<td>Consulting Services/Project Management</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 B.S</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 V.S</td>
<td>Digital Marketing</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 K.S</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 B.Q</td>
<td>Digital solutions</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 O.S</td>
<td>IT solutions</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 L.S</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 A.Z</td>
<td>IT solutions</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 M.A</td>
<td>IT solutions</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 R.L</td>
<td>IT solutions</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 E.A</td>
<td>IT solutions</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 S.R</td>
<td>Technical solutions</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Estonian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1.3 Data collection instruments for the third part of the study

Steps of data collection for the third part of the study can be found in the table below.

Table 5. Steps of data collection of the third part of the study.
Composed by the author

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Data collection instruments</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Spring Semester academic year 2017-2018</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Improved questionnaire</td>
<td>Durres, Albania and Tirana, Albania</td>
<td>489 Respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Spring Semester academic year 2017-2018</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>EBS Tallinn and Helsinki</td>
<td>4 focus groups with 8 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Online Social Networks</td>
<td>8 interviews with experienced Albanian young entrepreneurs and 4 with Estonian young entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative data collection - during the academic year 2017/2018 the improved questionnaire was finalised as shown in Appendix 5. The final questionnaire contained 18 questions the 6 main sections retained as a unit of analysis that was adaptable with the correspondent research question. The main sections of the finalised questionnaire retained were demographic, Facebook as an online learning network, online social networking advantages for learning, online social networking barriers for learning, online social networking competencies, online mentoring and expertise. In the demographic session, young students were asked to specify their names, ages, and nationality. As specified before Facebook was retained as referent OSNs because it is the most widespread OSNs. The sections contained 5 point Likert scale questions ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree. In total 42 items were retrieved from analysis of the theoretical background and previous stages of the study. Further details
Qualitative data collection

Focus groups were realised during the course of Business in Virtual Networks at Estonian Business School Tallinn and Helsinki; the group had 22 participants from different nationalities because there were as well Erasmus + students together with Finnish and Estonian students. The discussions were led by the researcher. It was discussed how students can take advantage of Facebook as an OSNs and their online entrepreneurial learning orientation on Facebook and in other OSNs in general. The follow-up process of discussions was made in Canvas where students posted their additional comments about the topics. Semi-structured interviews contributed to answering to RQ6 and RQ7.

The semi-structured interview grid can be found in Appendix 4. Its focus was the exploration of OSNR components, especially in online entrepreneurial learning orientation.

2.2 Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis given the nature of research questions of the first and second part of the study, questionnaires were used just to verify trends corresponding to the respective research questions. In the first part of the study, frequency analysis was applied. In the second part of the study, descriptive statistics elements were given in order to compare online and offline ties. Whereas in the third part of the study in order to build FR that can be further generalised to OSNR, EFA technique was used. SPSS software was employed to develop the underlying structural dimension of items of the components identified from RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4. As Onwuegbuzie (2003) suggests in a mixed-method approach, EFA is used to analyse the structure of items that emerged from the qualitative analysis (Turkey, 1980; Milles and Huberman, 1994).

After collection, data was cleaned and it was subjected to normality and outer testing. The EFA process provides a systemic factorial technique. Varimax rotation was applied to determine the dimensionality of the measure. Items that failed to meet the loading requirement were removed. From 42 items;
only 33 items were retained for further analysis. Each of the factors met the satisfactory level of internal consistency and adequacy.

**Qualitative data analysis** thematic analysis was applied to focus group data and to data from semi-structured interviews. Codes were developed and grouped in themes. Similar and related codes could be aggregated to form a major idea or a bigger overarching theme (Braun and Clarke, 2006, Saunders et al., 2009). As the analysis of qualitative data is delicate and complex, there should be clarity on the process of analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The researcher used N-Vivo in order to analyse qualitative data, but considering the amount of data narratives, a manual thematic analysis was more suitable. Qualitative data in the Albanian language was translated into the English language. Thematic analysis is a common tool for qualitative analysis as it is a flexible way of analysing qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Identification of themes and codes was top-down guided by theoretical background and bottom-up driven by data set (Patton, 2002).

### 2.3 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to give the outline of research methods and as the study includes different parts which are connected between each other, it was necessary to describe each steps of data collection instruments as well as data analysis for each part of the study justifying the sample used as a unit of analysis. Triangulation in this study was a central element not just for justifying data collection but as well as for ensuring validity and reliability. Findings and their discussion will be presented in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present findings from the three parts of the study. In this chapter, findings and their discussions are be structured through presenting answers for each RQ and discussing their interconnection in Figure 2. Answers from RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4 will be presented in the first section following answers from RQ5 in the second section, answers from RQ6 in the third section concluding with answers RQ7 in the fourth section.

3.1 Description of online social networking readiness

| RQ1: How to describe OSNR for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurship? |

While answering to RQ1 the knowledge flows dimension of OSNs was taken into consideration to describe OSNR for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities referring to online social networking competencies, online social networking barriers, and online mentoring and expertise. These are the components that describe and define OSNR. Consequently, these lead to the further exploration of these components through answering to RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4. In the first subsection through answering to RQ2, online social networking competencies are mapped. In the second subsection, the focus is put in RQ3, online social networking barriers are explained. The role of online mentoring and expertise is clarified through answering to RQ4 in the third subsection.

3.1.1. Online social networking competencies

| RQ2: What kind of online social networking competencies define OSNR for young students in small developing European economies? |

Online networking competencies are the extent of digital competencies as proposed by (Kizner et al., 1997), further developed by DigComp (2013). The dimension of OSNs in digital competencies is missing in the previous research. In this research, it was used the cognitive dimension of learning as elaborated on Bloom’s Taxonomy of learning (Bloom et al., 1956) with the dimensions of “remembering,” “understanding,” “applying,” “analysing,”
“evaluating” and “creating”. Churches (2008) developed digital taxonomy in education which can be used in entrepreneurial learning.

The map of online social networking competencies and their respective definitions and implications for OSNR for young student entrepreneurship that emerged from thematic group analysis from the focus discussions in the first part of the study as developed by the author is summarised in table 6.

Table 6. Online social networking competencies map. Composed by the author based on focus group discussions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online social networking competencies</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical Competency</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>The definition of this competency was based on the configuration and the technical and operational infrastructure of OSNs. This competency refers to technical features that enable access to OSNs and basic use of OSNs which is the main requirement for young student OSNR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implication for OSNR</strong></td>
<td>Young students should be able to distinguish different OSNs. They should be able to understand the different tools that OSNs provide. Tools such as links, comments, share, likes, tags, and hashtags are essential for OSNR because they facilitate the process of entrepreneurial learning. As one young student in Albania mentioned: &quot;... that some people do not know how to correctly write a hashtag or write multiple hashtags, they do not know how to put a space between two different hashtags&quot;...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborative competency</strong></td>
<td>It refers to the collaborative perspective to share knowledge in OSNs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implication for OSNR</strong></td>
<td>Collaborative competency is developed based on Elenurm (2007) and in terms of OSNR young students should develop co-creative projects and develop and exchange new entrepreneurial ideas in OSNR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creative competency</strong></td>
<td>It is the ability to use creativity in building a personalised business profile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implication for OSNR</strong></td>
<td>As technology evolves rapidly, young students should be able to have content building competency. This implies an ability to build attractive business profiles in OSNs through multimedia, text, and tools and to create content about entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Storytelling competency</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>It focuses on the narrative perspective developed in OSNs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implication for OSNR</strong></td>
<td>Young students should be able to tell their stories and to learn from experience. As one young student in Albania mentioned, some young student that might be at ease in creating or developing an app, they might not feel ready to share their stories in OSNs because they do not know how to build good and impactful narratives of their entrepreneurial ideas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Relationship building competency</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>Competency that is needed for long-term contact building process based on trusting in OSNs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implication for OSNR</strong></td>
<td>The young students should be able not just to add contacts in their OSNs, but it is essential for them to build long-term relationships. As it was suggested by young students in both countries having too many contacts in OSN does not mean that it is beneficial for entrepreneurial learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Interpersonal competency</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>It adds to relationship building competency and it focuses on building relationships with contacts in OSNs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implication for OSNR</strong></td>
<td>The young student should not only be able to build a relationship in OSNs for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities but it is important as well to take into consideration the element of empathy as was mentioned because it helps to build trust and build young students’ own ability in OSNs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Effective communication competency</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>It involves settings that allow being reactive and adaptable during the communication process in OSNs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implication for OSNR</strong></td>
<td>It is important to understand and use of operational features of OSNs that allow effective communication such as immediate and instantaneous feedback. OSNs imply as well lack of physical contact and of non-verbal communication, young student students should be aware of these aspects for their OSNR and they should be able to take advantage of operational features of OSNs for their effective communication in entrepreneurial.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Monitoring competency</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>This competency allows monitoring and filtering information and contacts in a regular basis in OSNs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implication for OSNR</strong></td>
<td>Young students should aware that OSNs are overloaded with information. They should be able to monitor new sources of entrepreneurial knowledge for entrepreneurial learning and contacts in OSNs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Online social networking competencies combine technical features of OSNs, the collaboration between young students and their contacts in OSNs as a condition for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities. Firstly, young students should understand the basic technical features of OSNs through technical competency. Young students should be able to create a suitable professional profile in OSNs and to produce content. They should be able to filter and select information and contacts in OSNs for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities which correspond respectively to creative competency and monitoring competency. The young student should be aware of the fact that interaction and collaboration within OSNs is made possible through relationship building competency and effective communication competency. Online social networking competencies that are mapped in this research were not explored before. Online social networking competencies are a component of OSNR. They facilitate entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities while managing knowledge flows in OSNR.

After defining online social networking competencies and explaining their implications for OSNR, the other component of OSNR to be analysed online social networking barriers and their implications for OSNR.

3.1.2. Online social networking barriers

| RQ3: What kind of online social networking barriers young students experience in entrepreneurial knowledge sharing through OSNs in small developing European economies? |

In the first part of the study, online social networking barriers were identified based on the definition of Pirkkalainen and Pawlowski (2013) of knowledge sharing barriers as mentioned in section 1.2, this definition was taken as the main reference in order to explore online social networking barriers.

Online social networking barriers and their description and definition provided by the analysis of responses the first pilot questionnaire and focus group thematic analysis are summarised in Table 7.
Table 7. Online social networking barriers. Composed by the author based on the outcome from the first pilot questionnaire and focus groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online social networking barriers</th>
<th>Lack of control during the knowledge sharing process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>This barrier is related to the lack of collaboration in OSNs. There is a need to filter information and contacts in OSNs and to build collaboration and control for entrepreneurial learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The outcome from the first pilot questionnaire</strong></td>
<td>For 60% of students in Albania and 70% of students in Estonia, the main problem is the lack of online mentoring and control during their entrepreneurial learning activities in OSNs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Isolated learning**

| **Definition** | Even if entrepreneurial learning in OSNs is facilitated through different and dynamic tools that facilitate entrepreneurial learning, young students are not connected with the entrepreneurial learning process in OSNs. They do not perceive the same entrepreneurial learning experience as in offline networks. |
| **The outcome from the first pilot questionnaire** | Bachelor young students in both countries are concerned by the isolated learning in OSNs. One student in Estonia underlined that in OSN, one may feel belonging to the OSNs. |

**Lack of learning motivation**

| **Definition** | This barrier is connected with the new entrepreneurial learning environment of OSNs. Young students use basic OSNs for entertainment and leisure purposes. |
| **The outcome from the first pilot questionnaire** | In focus group discussions with Master young students in both countries, young students were critical about the use of OSNs for entrepreneurial learning as OSNs are too informal. This implies lower motivation for entrepreneurial learning and for finding cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities in OSNs. |

**Lack of time**

<p>| <strong>Definition</strong> | This barrier is associated with the opportunity cost of spending time in OSNs comparing to the time that young students can spend offline. |
| <strong>The outcome from the first pilot questionnaire</strong> | Sharing knowledge in OSNs is perceived as time-consuming by 30% of Albanian young students and 40% of Estonian young students. Young students admit that they spend a lot of time trying to find the knowledge sources in OSNs. For Albanian young students, higher education institutions should support entrepreneurial learning in OSNs. For an Estonian Master young students, even the Premium paid version of LinkedIn does not allow to get the right entrepreneurial learning on time. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of social interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The outcome from the first pilot questionnaire</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The outcome from the first pilot questionnaire</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The outcome from the first pilot questionnaire</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The outcome from the first pilot questionnaire</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The outcome from the first pilot questionnaire</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Physical Distance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Definition</strong></th>
<th>This barrier relies on the main general difference between OSNs and offline networks that imply more constant face-to-face interaction.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The outcome from the first pilot questionnaire</strong></td>
<td>The main implication shown from focus group discussions is that young students are attached to offline networks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is shown in Table 3, there is not a considerable difference between Albanian and Estonian young students. Young Albanian students refer to the higher education system in order to prepare to use OSNs in their entrepreneurial learning. Young students in both countries expressed willingness to be prepared to use OSNs, but their OSNR should be developed. Online social networking barriers that connect to the entrepreneurial learning process such as isolated learning or learning motivation direct to the need of revolutionising traditional learning culture in OSNs. Other online social networking barriers that are connected to communication process, knowledge sharing or knowledge monitoring process show that young students in order to overcome these online social networking barriers, need to have the appropriate online social networking competencies. Taking into consideration the suggestion of Johnson and Ridley (2004) in section 1.2 of Chapter 1 online mentoring and expertise is another component of OSNR.

#### 3.1.3. Online mentoring and expertise strategies

**RQ4:** What kind of online mentoring and expertise strategies are needed for OSNR for cross-border youth entrepreneurship in small developing European economies?

Online mentoring strategies and expertise identified from thematic analysis of 8 pilot semi-structured interviews connected with the two other components of OSNR, online social networking barriers, and online social networking competencies are:

- **Classical online mentoring and expertise strategy for OSNR:** corresponds to the traditional definition of mentoring. An online mentor helps young students to overcome these online social networking barriers: lack of control and communication. They can help to develop the development of online social networking competencies such as monitoring competency, technical competency, and communication.
competency. A classical mentor can be a young student experienced in the use of OSNs for cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities that has an adequate ICTs background. Classical mentors can do inverse online mentoring to adult people.

- **Collaborative online mentoring and expertise strategy for OSNR:** collaborative mentors are usually young students who mentor other young students or adults who mentor young students. They contribute to overcoming these online social networking barriers: isolation lack of time, learning motivation and lack of trust physical distance and cultural. OSNs should push young students to think in a creative and co-creative way while sharing knowledge. Young students should be able to apply critical reasoning while solving cost-related barriers. They should be motivated internally and externally from OSNs. Young students should develop relationships building competency, interpersonal competency, and storytelling competency in order to overcome entrepreneurial learning barriers focusing more on collaborative competency, which is the core competency for collaborative online mentoring strategy. More than simple e-mentoring, mentoring in OSNs refers to online mentoring which takes into consideration the particular context of OSNs as an entrepreneurial learning environment.

Online mentoring and expertise strategies enable young students to use and develop their online networking competencies and overcome their online social networking barriers. Young students should be able to distinguish the compatibility of their online mentoring and expertise needs for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities with different online mentoring and expertise strategies.

In this section RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4 were answered. The three components that describe OSNR that are online social networking competencies, online social networking barriers and online mentoring and expertise were explained. OSNR is described as an ability and willingness of young students to use and develop online social networking competencies after identifying online social networking barriers and need to overcome online social networking barriers through the appropriate online mentoring and expertise strategy.

In the next section, RQ5 will be answered to explore the support of online ties for ONSR.
3.2. Support of online ties for online social networking readiness

**RQ5:** How online social networking ties support entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurship of young students in small developing European economies?

While answering to RQ5, the focus was on the structural dimension and relationship dimensions of OSNs, which is online ties. In this section, findings and their discussion of the research will be presented based on the answer to RQ5.

### 3.2.1. Online social networking ties and offline ties preferences

The first step of this part of the study was based on the analysis through frequency analysis of the improved questionnaire. Ties’ preferences were compared between Albanian young students and Estonian young students. Comparison was made between the use of online ties and offline ties for entrepreneurial learning based on the preference of young students for cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities. Young students who expressed willingness to start an entrepreneurial project abroad use equally online ties for cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities scoring a mean that varies between 3.5-3.6 in both countries.

Family for young students in both countries is not a significant offline tie for cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities. For young students from Albania that did not express willingness to have an entrepreneurial project abroad, the most important offline tie are mentors. For Estonian young students, the most important offline ties were mentors and closest friends. There were no relevant differences in the preference between online and offline ties for young students in both countries who do not want to start their entrepreneurial projects abroad. Details can be found in Table 1 of publication 2 in Appendix 6.

Albanian young students who had entrepreneurial experience relied more on their closest friends and other entrepreneurs for cross–border entrepreneurial opportunities compared to Estonian young students who relied on mentors and entrepreneurs. Albanian young students who do not have entrepreneurial experience relied on entrepreneurs and mentors compared to Estonian young students who relied equally on closer friends, students from their university,
mentors, and entrepreneurs. There was no difference in using online ties in OSNs for entrepreneurial purposes. There was not a difference in using online ties and offline ties for cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities between Albanian and Estonian young students. Online ties that emerge from OSNs are not just simple online ties but they can be considered as an online social networking tie.

Cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities that emerge from online social networking ties were further analysed from focus group and blog analysis.

3.2.2. Cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurial learning through online social networking ties

Participants in the focus groups did not have specific preferences in using online social networking ties and offline ties for cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities. Online social networking ties are perceived as an additional tool for cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities. One participant in the focus groups admitted that if a cross-border entrepreneurial opportunity is in OSNs, the young student has just to go to catch it independently from the fact that this opportunity is in OSNs. Although young students in Albania still give priority to offline ties, one young student admitted that many opportunities that he found information about events or specific projects through his contacts in OSNs and not from his interaction with face-to-face contacts. As it was mentioned in blog posts, some applications such as WhatsApp are facilitators of communication with online social networking ties but they require certain elements such as phone number, which conflicts with privacy protection. Whereas Facebook Messenger is a facilitator in the entrepreneurial knowledge sharing process as it allows 24/7 connectivity with online social networking ties.

In terms of entrepreneurial learning, one young student participant commented on the course blog posts of the course Business in Virtual Networks that there is information is in the OSNs but it depends on how well one knows OSNs. Participants in focus groups admitted that before taking over the process of entrepreneurial learning in OSNs, it is important to identify online entrepreneurial learning priorities. Facebook and LinkedIn were the most mentioned OSNs in blog posts as well in focus groups. Facebook entrepreneurial learning was considered as an informal setting of entrepreneurial learning, which has to do with basic entrepreneurial knowledge and adapted to the start phase of an entrepreneurial project.
LinkedIn entrepreneurial learning provided more formalised entrepreneurial knowledge whereas Instagram is useful for young students who seek visualised learning.

3.2.3. Typology of online social networking ties for online social networking readiness

The structure of online social networking ties was established from a thematic analysis based on the data from the semi-structured interviews. The structure of online social networking ties what their implications for OSNR is resumed in Table 8.

Table 8. Typology of online social networking ties and their implication for online social networking readiness. Composed by the author.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online social networking tie</th>
<th>Facebook tie</th>
<th>LinkedIn tie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>A Facebook tie is an online social networking tie that is built-in Facebook without previous offline contact and through different features such as “friends of friends” or “friends suggestions”. This online social networking tie allows access to professional, entrepreneurial and personal information.</td>
<td>A LinkedIn tie is a formal online social networking tie as LinkedIn has a professional mind-set. Young students consider it a business card or CV. In Albania, this OSN is not very popular among young students compared to Estonia, although more experienced young entrepreneurs use it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implication for OSNR</strong></td>
<td>The personal dimension of this online social networking tie is important for young students in Albania. Some young students who already have an established entrepreneurial project prefer to monitor Facebook profiles for finding business partners and hiring. Young students in Albania and in Estonia perceive Facebook tie as an informal online social networking tie. It can be useful to share knowledge and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities especially in the pre-start or start phase of an entrepreneurial project. Monitoring Facebook ties implies access to knowledge and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities although young students admit that scrolling down a news feed must not be sufficient. A young student should carefully filter information constantly. Interaction with Facebook ties and communication is facilitated through tools of this OSNs such as Facebook Messenger.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implication for OSNR
Support from LinkedIn contacts in terms of OSNR can be limited through limited tools of contact searching, cost for premium access service. This is relevant for young students in Albania. Skill endorsement tool increases visibility and access to cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities.

Group tie

Definition
Group feature on Facebook is a tool that enables young students to create a group with other contacts in OSNR. A group tie is an online social networking tie that is created between members of a Facebook group. It allows members of the group to assess information and knowledge for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities.

Implication for OSNR
One example mentioned by one participant is the Start-Up Albania group where members share cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities and knowledge. One participant from Albania admitted that he assisted many times other young students from other countries that seek cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurial learning. Other groups are more specialised. For example, one young student that operates in retail sector follows a Facebook group which is Shopnewbies that provides solutions for online sales from different entrepreneurs.

The support from the different typologies of online social networking ties for OSNR is offered through Facebook tie which is an online social networking tie that is formed in Facebook and it is considered to be more informal, although young students in both countries use it for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border opportunities. LinkedIn tie offers formal support for OSNR as this OSN is considered to be formal. Support from group tie for OSRN is offered the group tool in Facebook and through the tie that is formed within these groups that are specialised entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities.

As it was explored in the two previous sections of this subsection, young students in both countries do not make have a preference between online social networking ties and offline ties for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities.

In the next section development of OSRN will be presented through answering RQ6.
3.3. Development of online social networking readiness

| RQ6: How entrepreneurial learning in OSNs can be used for developing OSNR of young students in small developing European economies? |

The analysis of the final questionnaire shows, 47% of young students in Albania use Facebook for entrepreneurial learning purposes. In order to answer to RQ6, data from the final questionnaire were used to find a structure of factors from the items from the final questionnaire through EFA.

3.3.1. Structure of factors of items of the final questionnaire

EFA was used to analyse the data from final questionnaire in order to find a structure of factors of items of components of OSNR such as online social networking barriers, online social networking competencies, online mentoring and expertise analysed in the first part the study and added items in questions of the final questionnaire such as online social networking advantages and Facebook as an OSN used for entrepreneurial learning purposes.

Elements to take into consideration from EFA analysis are Kaiser –Meyer-Olkin Test (KMO), Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity and commonalities. KMO measures the adequacy of the sample for EFA. KMO values vary from 0 to 1. Kaiser (1974) considers the values of KMO above 0.5 as unacceptable and values between 0.8 and 1 as highly acceptable. KMO of the sample from the final questionnaire has a value of 0.82 (above the recommended value of acceptance of 0.5). The sample is adequate for EFA. The Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity is another measure of adequacy that shows the validity and suitability of responses. It is significant because it has a value of p<0.05.

Communalities indicate the degree with which each factor explains a percentage of the variance Varimax rotation (Kaiser, 1958). It reduces and groups items into factors. Varimax rotation is orthogonal because it allows maximisation of the variance of squared loadings of each factor on all items in factor matrix. Details from the structure of factors from EFA is presented in Table 9.
Table 9. Structure of factors.  
Composed by the author based on EFA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Communalities</th>
<th>Loading</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online social networking competencies</strong></td>
<td>creative competency</td>
<td>.491</td>
<td>.600</td>
<td>.827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>storytelling competency</td>
<td>.419</td>
<td>.619</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collaborative competency</td>
<td>.523</td>
<td>.741</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>communication competency</td>
<td>.646</td>
<td>.769</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relationship building competency</td>
<td>.606</td>
<td>.765</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>social monitoring competency</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td>.751</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interpersonal competency</td>
<td>.480</td>
<td>.647</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facebook learning environment</strong></td>
<td>access to entrepreneurial information and knowledge</td>
<td>.485</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td>.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parallel processing of information and multitasking</td>
<td>.449</td>
<td>.628</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>multimedia and text diversity</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td>.673</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relevant entrepreneurial learning</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.677</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>social monitoring of information</td>
<td>.422</td>
<td>.573</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>updating group activities</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.672</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Need for a friendly online learning community</strong></td>
<td>lack of time</td>
<td>.417</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td>.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>physical distance</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>.829</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>isolated learning</td>
<td>.646</td>
<td>.808</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lack of interaction</td>
<td>.551</td>
<td>.682</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lack of collaboration</td>
<td>.533</td>
<td>.634</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Communalitites</td>
<td>Loading</td>
<td>Cronbach Alpha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operational benefits</strong></td>
<td>time efficiency</td>
<td>.663</td>
<td>.446</td>
<td>.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>speed and reactivity</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cost efficiency</td>
<td>.789</td>
<td>.639</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>international opportunities</td>
<td>.645</td>
<td>.534</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities for collaborative learning</strong></td>
<td>easiness in team building</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>.615</td>
<td>.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>autonomy</td>
<td>.800</td>
<td>.644</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>easiness in relying in support and help</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>.628</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support from online mentors</strong></td>
<td>Expert/mentor helps to enhance online entrepreneurial contacts</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>.570</td>
<td>.756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expert/mentor makes learning process comfortable</td>
<td>.658</td>
<td>.468</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback is immediate</td>
<td>.715</td>
<td>.527</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboration is more flexible</td>
<td>.703</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Need to adapt to virtual learning reality</strong></td>
<td>technical problems</td>
<td>.645</td>
<td>.499</td>
<td>.719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lack of working culture</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>.662</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lack of appropriate virtual tools</td>
<td>.804</td>
<td>.674</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factors were retained based on Pallant (2007) having as a general rule of acceptance a loading of 0.3 and confirming that most of the items shared some common variance with other items. Items: gratification and instant reward, communication flexibility, flexibility, privacy, lack of trust, technical competencies, expert/mentor offers entrepreneurial learning guidance online, expert/mentor needs to have online experience did not meet the requirement and analysis was carried out without these elements.
The seven factors retained for analysis explain 54% of the variance. The explained variance of a factor in social sciences should be of a level of 50% -60% (Field, 2009). The researcher labelled these factors as online social networking competencies, Facebook learning environment, need for a friendly online learning community, operational benefits, opportunities for collaborative learning, support from online mentors and need to adapt to virtual learning reality. Cronbach alpha for each factor was superior to 0.7 assuring the reliability of the factor.

Factors emerged from EFA were used during focus group discussions in the third part of the study for the development of OSNR as it is explained in the next subsection.

3.3.2. **Online social networking readiness development from Exploratory Factor Analysis**

Factors emerged from EFA were used in focus groups discussion in the third part of the study for the development of FR through online social networking challenges and online social networking opportunities in the entrepreneurial learning process in OSNs. As Facebook is the most widespread OSN among young students FR can be generalised to OSNR.

Online social networking challenges and online social networking opportunities are presented in Table 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OSNR challenges</th>
<th>OSNR Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Need for a friendly online learning community</strong></td>
<td><strong>Online social networking competencies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The challenges for young students in OSNs are physical distance, lack of time, isolated learning and lack of interaction and collaboration. Young students feel connected and disconnected at the same time in OSNs.</td>
<td>This component is composed of the dimension of communicating, collaborating, building and maintaining relationships. It is important to maintain online social networking presence through storytelling competency, creative competency, and monitoring competency. Technical competency was not relevant; it can be assumed that this is related to the fact that this competency is perceived as basic ICTs skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Digital transformation of the entrepreneurial learning process needs the appropriate tools, learning culture and problem-solving. This is complicated with technical problems that young students face in OSNs.

Facebook is an entrepreneurial learning environment. It provides possibilities of knowledge sharing, monitoring information. This is made possible through the appropriate text and multimedia tools and group features.

**Operational benefits**

They refer to relational operational features of Facebook such as real-time feedback and costless services.

**Opportunities for collaborative learning**

They raise from the fact that through Facebook team activities can be built and maintained easily.

**Support from online mentors.**

An online mentor is that “Facebook friend” that gives immediate feedback and access to contacts. He/she is more an online friend rather and a guru that knows everything.

In addition to OSNR challenges and ONSR opportunities in the entrepreneurial learning process in OSNs presented in Table 10, in focus groups conducted with Estonian Business School in Tallinn and Helsinki with young students, it was stressed that the main challenge is to develop an online learning entrepreneurial culture. This can be through online networking competencies and online mentoring and expertise. Support from online mentors is not just simple knowledge transfer but it should be combined with building a consistent and durable online relationship.

In the next section application of OSNR will be explained through answering to RQ7.
3.4. Online entrepreneurial learning orientations

**RQ7:** What kind of online entrepreneurial learning orientation in OSN are necessary for young student OSNR in small developing European economies?

The data analysed for the application of OSNR in online entrepreneurial learning orientations were from focus groups realised in Estonia during Spring semester 2017/2018 and semi-structured interviews realised with Albanian and Estonian experienced young entrepreneurs. The theoretical background used to respond this RQ was based on entrepreneurial orientations as defined by Elenurm (2007) which are imitative entrepreneurial orientation, individual entrepreneurial orientation and co-innovative and co-creative entrepreneurial orientation as suggested in section 1.4.

Three types of online entrepreneurial learning orientation were identified through thematic analysis of focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Online learning entrepreneurial orientations are solo online learning entrepreneurial orientation, online collaborative learning entrepreneurial orientation, and influencer online entrepreneurial orientation.

- **Solo individual online learning entrepreneurial orientation** - in focus groups realised in Estonia, young students usually to have a “solo experience” in the entrepreneurial learning process at the beginning of the process of entrepreneurial learning in OSNs. “Solo experience” as one young student mentioned has to do with the fact that everyone is for its own in OSNs and the outcome from the online learning process is individual. There are limits in knowledge sharing and support from online social networking ties to closed circles. Individualist orientation does not imply constant collaboration. With the intensification of connection in OSNs young students extends their contacts. Consequently, online learning collaborative orientation can be developed. As one participant of the semi-structured interviews specified during the first steps of online entrepreneurial learning one might be guided. He remembers that he could not understand some basic features of OSNs such as hashtags and he had always and constantly the need to ask for help from his ties in OSNs.

- **Online collaborative learning entrepreneurial orientation** - a participant from focus groups underlined the more one is involved in OSNs; one realises that is not alone. As specified during semi-
structured interviews, young students constantly use features of online entrepreneurial learning such Facebook groups where online collaborative learning orientation can be identified. One participant of semi-structured interviews estimates that in Facebook groups everyone has a collaborative attitude and contributes to a certain extend to situations of problem-solving. An example is illustrated from the activity in some Facebook groups related to Start-Up activities in Albania where even foreign young students post to clarify dilemmas about the country and different steps of business models. One participant in the semi-structured interviews admitted that even he has had a business intent that it failed, he is still active and very willing to collaborate in such groups that provide a sense of belonging. A participant in Albania from the tourism sector estimated that the field of activity is very important for collaboration in OSNs. Some young entrepreneurs tend to have a B2C (Business to Consumer) approach while using Facebook for example and they neglect collaboration and online entrepreneurial learning opportunities. For another participant from Albania collaboration in OSNs allowed him to manage the transition of his entrepreneurial project from Facebook to Instagram and learn for marketing and sales. For a participant from Estonia only through collaborative strategy in OSNs, he could achieve synergy for his entrepreneurial project.

- **Influencer online entrepreneurial orientation** - As mentioned by an influencer in the field of e-commerce and retail, influencing does not mean having some more likes on a Facebook page or some more follows on Instagram. It means constantly collaborating with other influencers. This was a lesson he learned from a period of stagnation as an influencer. People used to ask why he did disappear. He had to reinvent himself and he needed to have lessons about different aspects of his entrepreneurial project especially by another Indian influencer that he found in a Facebook group about sales. One participant from Albania mentioned than while leaving Albania because of her studies she constantly felt that the interaction with her audience changed and there was a need to put more effort into this kind of interaction. Another participant from the ICTs field thinks that even though people are coming back constantly especially in Facebook groups such as Start-Up Albania he does not feel the main guru of his field. An influencer orientation in online entrepreneurial learning is challenging as is requires generating appropriate content in order to maintain your audience the areas of influence. It implies pressure from the fact that an influencer should
know everything. In general, all participants agreed that they might have influenced others but they are still influenced by others and there is not a need of idolisation of the influencer.

OSNR is applied through solo online entrepreneurial learning orientation, collaborative online entrepreneurial learning orientation and influencer online entrepreneurial learning orientation. Online collaborative online entrepreneurial orientation is privileged.

3.5. Conclusion

Findings and their discussions were presented in the four sections of the Chapter 3 based on the answers to RQs and explaining the implications that these findings have in the main concept of OSNR. While responding to the seven research questions details quantitative and qualitative data analysis were given. In the figure below, Figure 3 findings related to the answers of different RQs are summarised. The answers of each research question are detailed starting from the components of OSNR, development of OSNR through factors established from EFA, typology of ties for the support of OSNR and application of OSNR through different online entrepreneurial learning orientations.
Figure 3. Findings from the answers of RQs. Composed by the author.
**FINAL CONCLUSIONS**

In this conclusive section firstly is given a general overview of the results based on the answers to different RQs. Conceptual contribution based on the gaps identified in Chapter 1 will be highlighted followed by practical contributions and concluding with the limitations of the study and further research avenues.

### 4.1. Main conclusions

The main conclusions of this research are:

- When answering **RQ1**, OSNR was described through its main components online social networking competencies, online social networking barriers and online mentoring and expertise as components of OSNR.

- Consequently, when answering **RQ2** online social networking competencies were mapped. They are composed of technical competency, collaborative competency, storytelling competency, monitoring competency, relationship building, interpersonal competency, creative competency, and effective communication competency.

- Through answering **RQ3** online social networking barriers that are lack of control during the knowledge sharing process, isolated learning, lack of time, lack of trust, culture, lack of learning motivation, lack of social interaction, technical aspects and physical distance were identified. Online social networking competencies help to overcome these barriers.

- In answering **RQ4**, strategies of online mentoring and expertise for OSNR that are classical online mentoring strategy and collaborative online mentoring strategy were explained. They are useful as well to overcome online social networking barriers through online social networking competencies.

- When answering **RQ5**, it was explored support online social networking ties for OSNR. The role of OSNR support of specific online social networking ties build in OSN as the Facebook tie, LinkedIn tie, and Group tie was explained.
• **RQ6** focused on entrepreneurial learning used in developing OSNR based on the most widespread OSN, Facebook. Items from the answers of the improved questionnaire were employed for EFA. EFA was used to find a structure of factors OSNR concluding with the elaboration of entrepreneurial learning for the development of OSNR from focus groups with OSNR opportunities (online social networking competencies, Facebook entrepreneurial learning environment, operational benefits, opportunities for collaborative learning and support for online learning) and OSNR challenges (need for a friendly online learning community and need to adapt to a virtual learning reality).

• Through **RQ7**, three main online entrepreneurial learning orientations were identified as useful to apply OSNR. They are solo online entrepreneurial learning orientation, online collaborative entrepreneurial learning and influencer online entrepreneurial learning orientation. Online collaborative entrepreneurial learning should be prioritised from a young student in entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities.

The concept OSNR for young students for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities in small developing European economies can be defined as a combination of online social networking competencies and the support from online mentors and expertise in order to overcome online social networking barriers. OSNR is an ability to embrace online collaborative entrepreneurial learning orientation even when having a solo online entrepreneurial learning orientation or influencer online entrepreneurial learning orientation in order to overcome OSNR challenges and to take advantages from OSNR opportunities while being supported from the different typologies of online social networking ties such as Facebook tie, LinkedIn tie or Group tie.

There was not a relevant difference between Albanian and Estonian young students. The only difference identified was the familiarity with different OSNs where Estonian students used to greater extent LinkedIn compared to Albanian students. Young students in both countries need to have an online networking culture, which can be established through improving curricula and integrating OSNs elements in entrepreneurial learning for young students.
4.2. Conceptual contribution

This research focused on the development of the main concept of OSNR for young student entrepreneurship. Therefore current gaps in the development of OSNR were identified through analysing entrepreneurial education field and OSNs field. The major conceptual contribution is the contribution of different concepts of OSNR to the entrepreneurial education field and OSNs field.

4.2.1. Conceptual contribution of online social networking readiness to the entrepreneurial education field

Entrepreneurial learning in OSNs goes beyond exploring virtual learning or e-learning. When OSNR is applied to entrepreneurial education, it can be useful for entrepreneurial learning. The role of one of its main components which is online mentoring and expertise was clarified. This research elaborated classical online mentoring and expertise strategy and collaborative online mentoring and expertise strategy. They are beneficial for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities following the suggestions of Martin (2015).

The application of OSNR through online entrepreneurial learning orientation within the context of OSNs was unclear (Elenurm et al., 2007; Forbes, 2016). This research provided the identification of three online entrepreneurial networking orientations: solo online learning entrepreneurial orientation, online collaborative entrepreneurial learning orientation, and influencer online entrepreneurial learning orientation.

Empirical evidence is provided in the field of entrepreneurial education. There are not yet relevant studies in this field in Albania.

4.2.2. Conceptual contribution of online social networking readiness to online social networks field

OSNs is a novel field of research where theory is still developing. Exploration from a different perspective of online social networking ties as suggested by Granovetter (1973) and developed as by (Brzozowski et al., 2009). A novel typology of online social networking ties is elaborated which is composed by a Facebook tie, LinkedIn tie and Group tie that support OSNR.
When describing OSNR, online social networking competencies were identified as one of its components. This is an important element for young student entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities (Purvis et al., 2014). A map of online social networking competencies for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities is defined together with explaining online social networking barriers.

There was a need to develop entrepreneurial learning for OSNR. This research sets a structure of OSNR challenges and OSNR opportunities. It develops FR for entrepreneurial learning that is further extended to OSNR.

4.3. Practical contribution

There are three practical contributions to this study. Firstly, this study affects the young student as an entrepreneurial learner or as a potential or current entrepreneur, secondly, its affects higher education institutions and thirdly it can be useful for policymaking.

4.3.1. Implications for young students as entrepreneurial learners or entrepreneurs

For the personal and professional development of young students, impactful use of OSNs is necessary. A young student as an entrepreneurial learner or entrepreneur should be equipped with online social networking competencies to understand OSNR challenges and OSNR opportunities, online mentoring and expertise and support from the three kinds of online social networking ties. Impactful of OSN means that young students take advantage in terms of OSNR when they apply it for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities.

There are two other practical implications of this study: for higher education institutions and for policymakers. Even in the case of Estonia, young students should be able to use impactful OSNs. There were some differences compared to Albanian young students but in general, findings converged.

4.3.2. Implications for higher education institutions

There are three practical implications for higher education institutions:
• **Raising awareness about OSNR** - In Albania entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities should be combined with the traditional approach of entrepreneurial education that dominates currently in curricula. There is a need for raising awareness in terms of OSNR through a bottom-up approach that departs from young students. In this research, young students expressed the concern about the role of higher education institutions in educating not only young entrepreneurs but as well in capacity building in OSNR.

• **OSN education** – it should be integrated into business-related curricula and more specifically to entrepreneurship curricula in higher education institutions in small developing European economies. OSNs are not just a way of communication and maintain relationships with young students and alumni, they are a learning tool. An example comes from Albania where the researcher is attempting to redesign the course of Business Communication with the use of OSNs having as learning outcomes the use of online social networking ties such as a Facebook tie or Group tie through assessing online social networking competencies, OSNR challenges and OSNR opportunities.

• **Reinforcing mentoring and online mentoring** - one element that is missing in the Albanian higher education system is that even in Start-Up competitions organised inside universities lecturers act as mentors or online mentors whereas peer-to-peer online mentoring can be more fruitful. Former students who tried succeeded or failed in their entrepreneurial projects can serve as online mentors.

### 4.3.2. Implications for policymakers

There are two practical impactions for policymakers:

• **At the EU level** - the EU is putting a lot of emphasis on digital competencies. Online social networking competencies are an extension or complement of digital competencies. They can be useful in drafting the general framework of capacity building for young people especially in terms of digital transformation. This affects not just for entrepreneurial education but as well as it can prepare smart citizens for the future of work and digital literacy.
• **In small developing European economies** - there is an implication for youth policies and especially youth entrepreneurial policies and youth education policies. Describing, developing, supporting and applying OSNR can facilitate elaborating and implementing policies in innovative youth entrepreneurship. In small developing European economies, entrepreneurship generally is issued from needs and not from innovation. In a more holistic level general instruments in educating young students about an impactful use of OSNs can be developed. They can enable the establishment of an online social networking culture. The importance and necessity of OSNR for young students are also evident through the growing numbers of OSNs groups and OSNs events created by various private voluntary organisations, independent of state-supported agencies, in recent years. The findings of this study indicate that young students in small developing economies have established such initiatives at an individual level. There is a need for support of formal structures for entrepreneurship education where OSNR helps the young student to combine formal and informal perspectives of entrepreneurial education as suggested by Faite et al. (2004).

### 4.4. Limitations of the study and further research avenues

Taking into consideration that this study employs an interpretative/constructionist approach, a mixed-methods approach was considered appropriate. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Triangulation was assured as suggested by Creswell and Miller (2000). Even though triangulation was assured, it has repercussions in generalisability of the study. This repercussion is linked with the nature of exploratory studies that usually do not have transferable results outside of their context. This research does not focus on the generalisability of the findings but rather in exploring OSNR for entrepreneurial learning and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities in small developing European economies (Saunders et al., 2009).

Another concern is the geographical perspective and the cultural perspective of the study. This study is focused on one specific cultural context of small developing European economies which does not represent all developing European economies. Cultures may differ and generalisation in a cultural context can be challenging.
Respondent bias is another limitation of this study as all participants in the data collection process were young students and the researcher has had daily interaction with them. This is justified by the interpretative/constructionist approach where some social interaction is always involved as suggested by Bryman and Bell (2011). The level of objectivity is obtained with data analysis as explained in Chapter 2.

The main directions of further research avenues consist of extending the application of OSNR in real action-research with young students’ teams that use it for entrepreneurial learning or cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities. It can further explore how can a team tie created in the context of OSNs. Courses such as Business Communication can entirely be built-in OSN and they can be used to analyse further implications of OSNR. Comparative perspectives within the Western Balkans context or wider CEE region can be developed. Another ultimate ambitious research avenue is to analyse the concept of OSNR in longitudinal studies. Quantitative studies can be further operationalised.
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# APPENDIX 1: PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

## 1. Network building

1. I would be more likely to find a business partner/discuss business ideas/get and share business information with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my family members</td>
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<tr>
<td>my closer friends</td>
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<td>other students at my university</td>
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<tr>
<td>other students in other universities</td>
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<tr>
<td>with serial entrepreneurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>social networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>other ................</td>
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</table>

2. If could start a business, I would rather be more involved:


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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In my university´s networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>In universities´ networks of my country</td>
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<tr>
<td>In international universities´ networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>In youth associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>In national other student networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>In international non-students´ networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would try to create my own networks by participating in training/conferences/workshops/start-up weekends/other events or through social media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other........</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. Specify three disadvantages of using online networks social for business compared to face-to-face networks:
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

4. Asses your online networking priorities 1-the most important 9-less important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative Competencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storytelling Competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Competencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring Competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building Competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Do you have any professional experience: Yes No
   If yes specify:

6. Do you have any entrepreneurial experience: Yes No
   If yes specify:

7. Would you love to work or build your project abroad: Yes No
   If yes specify two reasons:
   1) 
   2) 

8. How old are you?

THANK YOU!
APPENDIX 2:
PILOT SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GRID

Semi-structured interview grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Surname</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Online Social Networking Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Topic 1: Online Social Networking for Business Perception**
What does come in your mind when you think about using effectively for business one of those online social networks? :
- a) Facebook
- b) LinkedIn
- c) Google +
- d) Instagram
- e) If you are involved in any other online social network for business how do you use it effectively?

**Topic 2: Barriers to Online Social Networking Business**
How can you build trust in online social networks?
How can you share effectively knowledge in online social networks?
What are the main problems of effective communication in online social networks?

**Topic 3: Online Social Networking Mentoring Assessment and Expertise**
a. When you think about yourself networking in online social networking for business:
   1. What are your main networking companies?
   2. Give a practical example in using it effectively
b. What can be improved in your entrepreneurial learning experience in online networks through online mentoring?
c. How important is an online mentor in this process?
APPENDIX 3: IMPROVED QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is elaborated to study the role of international networks in establishing a youth entrepreneurial culture in Estonia, Albania. You are asked to answer some questions concerning the leverage you get from using online social networks for business purposes focusing in learning priorities, the need of an expert/e-mentor, which assists your online business networking activity and the international perspective of the network. Thank you for your collaboration.

Your name: …………………………………………………… Your age………

1. Which three online networking sites are most useful for young entrepreneurs that want to develop International business?
   1) 
   2) 
   3) 

2. Can you describe your priorities while using online social networks for international entrepreneurial projects?
   1) 
   2) 
   3) 

3. Taking into consideration your own national culture why would it be interesting for you to be assisted virtually by a foreign expert for your own international project?
   1) 
   2) 
   3) 

4. You would be more likely to find a business partner/discuss business ideas/get and share business information with:

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<tr>
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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>family members</td>
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<tr>
<td>closer friends</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other students at my university</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
other students in other universities
other entrepreneurs
mentors
e-mentors
wider contacts in social networks
Other specify .............

5. If you could start a business, you would rather be more involved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In my university’s networks</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In universities’ networks of my country</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In international universities’ networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>In youth associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>In national other student’s networks</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In international non-students’ networks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

you would try to create your own face-to-face networks through participating in training/conferences/workshops/start-up weekends/other events

in online social networks

Other...

6. the most relevant social network in initiating and maintaining a business relationship 1-the most important 9-less important:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Google +</th>
<th>Instagram</th>
<th>Xing</th>
<th>Zoominfo</th>
<th>Spoke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

7. How often do you use online social networks for business purposes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>All the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
8. Assess competencies you need for online networking 1-the most important 9-less important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Competencies</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative Competencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Storytelling Competencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative Competencies</td>
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<td>Communication Competencies</td>
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<td>Monitoring Competencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship Building Competencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Competencies</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Assess your preferences on for learning and exchanging entrepreneurial knowledge because (1-the most important 6-less important):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>it offers the possibility to assess to information quickly from multiple knowledge sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parallel processing of information and multitasking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allows multiple access to multimedia and text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allows multiple interactions with others in my network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allows learning what is relevant and fun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offers gratification and instant reward</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social monitoring of information</td>
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<tr>
<td>updating group activities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

10. The main disadvantages of using online social networks for business compared to face-to-face networks purposes are:

1. Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

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<tr>
<th>1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Privacy and confidentiality concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical distance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isolated learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of interaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication problems</td>
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</table>
11. The main advantages of using online social networks for business compared to face-to-face networks:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time efficiency</td>
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<td>Communication flexibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speed and reactivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost efficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>International opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easiness on team building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easiness on assessing expertise and e-mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easiness on relying on expertise and e-mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other...</td>
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</table>

12. Do you have any entrepreneurial experience: Yes No
If yes, specify:

13. Would you love to work or build your entrepreneurial project abroad: Yes No
If yes, specify two reasons:

14. Do you have any mentoring experience Yes No
If yes specify:
15. Do you have any e-mentoring experience Yes No
If yes specify:

16. Have you ever had a mentor? Yes No
If yes specify:

17. Have you have ever had an e-mentor? Yes No
If yes specify:

| Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | All the time |

18. Overall online social networks prepare young entrepreneurs for virtual team projects: Yes No

19. Overall are you satisfied are you with using Facebook for business/entrepreneurial purposes. Yes No

20. Overall how satisfied are you with using online social networks for business/entrepreneurial purposes? Yes No

THANK YOU!
APPENDIX 4:
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GRID VIA OSN

1. What was the first social network that used for entrepreneurship, and did you find it useful?

2. What kind of benefits did you have? Did you learn something new? Did you find any kind of opportunities?

3. Did you have any social network transition for example before you were using one social network too much now you prefer using something else?

4. How do you find LinkedIn for your business?

5. Did you have any kind of help in using social networks for business?

6. How can your experience in the networks improve?

7. What kind of advice can you give to some young entrepreneur in order to use social networks for business?

8. Do you feel that one can be easily an influencer through online networks? Do you aspire to be one?

9. Are you involved at any kind of FB group for entrepreneurship? Can you mention some? What did you gain from there?

10. Did you have any kind of opportunities from your friends of friends contacts on Facebook?

11. Did you have any kind of barriers while using online networks for entrepreneurship?

12. Have you had any international opportunities for your business through online networks? What about co-creative projects?
APPENDIX 5: FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your Name

2. Your Age

3. Your Nationality

4. You would be more likely to find a business partner/discuss business ideas/get and share business information with:
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>family members</td>
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<td>closer friends</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>other students at my university</td>
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<tr>
<td>other students in other universities</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>other entrepreneurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>mentors</td>
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<tr>
<td>e-mentors</td>
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<tr>
<td>wider contacts in social networks</td>
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</table>

5. If you could start a business, you would rather be more involved:
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In my university´s networks</td>
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<td>In universities´ networks of my country</td>
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<td>In international universities´ networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>In youth associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>In national other student´s networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>In international non-students´ networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>you would try to create your own face-to-face networks through participating in training/conferences/workshops/start-up weekends/other events</td>
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<tr>
<td>in online social networks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
6. The competencies you need for online networking for your entrepreneurial project


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical competencies</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative competencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storytelling competencies</td>
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<td>Collaborative competencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication competencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring competencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship building competencies</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal competencies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

7. Facebook is useful for entrepreneurial learning because it offers:


| it offers the possibility to access information quickly from multiple knowledge sources | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| parallel processing of information and multitasking | | | | | |
| allows multiple access to multimedia and text | | | | | |
| allows learning what is relevant and fun | | | | | |
| offers gratification and instant reward | | | | | |
| social monitoring of information | | | | | |
| updating group activities | | | | | |
| Allows multiple interactions with others | | | | | |

8. The main disadvantages of using online social networking for an entrepreneurial project are:


| privacy and confidentiality concerns | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| lack of trust | | | | | |
| lack of time | | | | | |
| physical distance | | | | | |
| isolated learning | | | | | |
| lack of interaction | | | | | |
| lack of collaboration | | | | | |
| communication problems | | | | | |
9. The main advantages of using online social networks for your entrepreneurial project:

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<td>technical problems</td>
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<td>lack of working culture</td>
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<td>lack of the appropriate virtual tools in social media</td>
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10. A mentor (expert) can be useful for you while using online social network tools for entrepreneurial purposes because:

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<td>he/she can offer me entrepreneurial guidance and expertise</td>
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<td>feedback is more immediate</td>
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11. Do you have any entrepreneurial experience? Yes No

12. Would you love to work or build your entrepreneurial project abroad? Yes No
13. Have you ever had a mentor? Yes No

14. Have you ever been a mentor Yes No

15. Overall online social networks can help you with your entrepreneurial project


16. Do you think that education at the university is giving you entrepreneurial skills?


17. Describe your own perception/experience in using online social networks for entrepreneurial purposes (3-4 sentences).

18. Other comments
APPENDIX 6: PUBLICATIONS
Publication 1. Strategic Role of Social Networking and Personal Knowledge Management Competencies for Future Entrepreneurs

Oliana Sula
Tiit Elenurm
INTRODUCTION

Social networking sites are known to facilitate socializing and networking. Entrepreneurial literacy, learning skills and innovation skills are considered important soft skills (Benson et al., 2010). Social media can be used to enhance these skills. Business students from former command economies, including Albanian and Estonian business students, are part of this globalization’s generation Y that is familiar with online communication (Dawn and Valerntine, 2013). Their networking priorities for business development remain unclear (Bolton et al., 2013). Economic development increasingly depends on knowledge-based entrepreneurship. Co-creative orientation and co-innovation are intertwined with networking readiness and knowledge sharing. Stakeholders are the basis of co-creative thinking (Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2013). The objective of this chapter is to explore the role of social networking competencies in developing networking strategies for co-creative entrepreneurship.

The concept of social networks as entrepreneurial knowledge networks is discussed. Integration of networking competencies, entrepreneurial business development process and entrepreneurial orientations are presented; the strategic role of social networking for different types of entrepreneur focusing on co-innovation and business co-creation is described. Competencies for social networking, innovative learning barriers in social networks and e-mentoring as a tool that contributes to overcoming those barriers are discussed. The chapter presents empirical evidence from a comparative study of Albanian and Estonian business students that combined the analysis of 180 questionnaires and 8 in-depth interviews. Experience of action learning applications that prepare students for cross-border virtual networking is analyzed. This chapter concludes with some recommendations for educational policy, practice and its implications for economic growth.

APPLYING SOCIAL NETWORKS TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Social networking, learning communities and collaborative innovation networks are essential business development tools (Gloor, 2006) that help in overcoming distance and time obstacles. The academic impact of online social networking is however still an issue for debate among educators in developed and in developing countries (Ahmed and Qazi, 2011). Networks
are a distinct organizational form, they are hybrid form composed by independent actors operating at a market and stable organizational structures which imply an exchange of knowledge that is difficult to codify (Powel, 1990). Exchange of knowledge in networks is determined by relational social mechanisms. Networks are characterized by an open nature, consequently, they may provide new business opportunities influencing the development of knowledge through dynamic processes and through bringing to networks new competencies (Powel et al., 1996).

Earlier research shown that start-up success depends on the personal networks hypothesis (Birley, 1985; Aldrich et al., 1987; Johannisson, 1996). This approach is justified by the fact that through networks entrepreneurs can gain access to new resources more effectively compared to market transactions and more flexibly than in hierarchical forms of organizations (Dubini and Aldrich 1991). According to Von Krogh and Kahne (1998), networking can occur at different contexts: physical, virtual (virtual teams) or cognitive (common values, ideas, ideals) “places”. Networks can formalize as formal and/or informal. They link knowledge to work processes and facilitating work conditions. Knowledge transfers inside networks can be efficient and effective. Online social networking has radically increased knowledge-sharing opportunities of early-stage entrepreneurs in cross-border networks (Elenurum, 2008).

Social networks as entrepreneurial knowledge networks

Latour (1987) defines network as an interlinked web of “knot and nodes”. In a knowledge network these “knot and nodes” are loaded with knowledge. Knowledge networks are not a new concept, they came together with the development of the history of humanity. Many formal or informal networks existed between artists, tradesmen and artisans already centuries ago. Knowledge network’s members share a common goal, their relationship is not contractually determined enabled by the existence of a formal hierarchy of the firm. Knowledge dimension of networks influences innovative perspectives in business (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). New knowledge emerging from networks is crucial in a context where innovation expectations are high. Knowledge and networks are related through two dimensions: structural dimension and relationship dimension (Granovetter 1973; Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998). The structural dimension defines a network as a system of interconnected relationships that are not isolated from the
external environment (Håkansson and Snehota 1989). Every relationship reflects a connected structure.

Networking behaviour can be perceived as opportunistic, but it means primarily a long-term relationship building. Trust is essential in networking for knowledge sharing, it strengths the ties of the network. Trust implies also that the relationship is predicted to be long term (Blau, 1964). Networking is a social skill, people interconnect with each other. Social skills approach is applied mostly in political science that focus on social astuteness (the ability to identify and understand social interactions), interpersonal influence (how powerful are you in order to influence others), apparent sincerity (appear to others as having high levels of integrity) and networking ability.

In social networking websites, individuals can construct public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, a list of other users with whom they share a connection and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system can be articulated (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). In social networks different actors give different contribution to knowledge: “the communicator” serves as “a gatekeeper” that links to external networks, “the collaborator” is a task organizer, “the creator” has a vision of a “salesman” and “knowledge expert” serving as a source of explicit knowledge. These contributions can be transformed to corresponding roles in entrepreneurial start-up teams.

Knowledge networks are important in knowledge management because they link different areas of current and present knowledge. It is necessary to mobilize different types of knowledge through networking (explicit, implicit); networking between different levels occurs (individual, group networking, and organizational networking) (King, 2008).

Online social networking tools include blogs, social networking sites including Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Instagram and other specialized social networks. Social networks imply user-generated content that is co-created by users through comments, evaluations, editing in the online social networks (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). O’Reilly (2007) defines a content generation in social networks as the principle of “harnessing collective intelligence”. It is easier to share superficial situational feelings but more difficult to share deep knowledge through social networks. Social networks are generally user-friendly as their use does not require high technological proficiency. They are generally open and cost-effective. Users can benefit
from a variety of dynamic creative and practical features that benefit knowledge sharing (Zheng et al., 2009).

Pugh and Prusak (2013) estimate that due to technological evolution we experience the presence of virtual networks that help to share codified knowledge for a lower cost; the four dimensions of a knowledge network are coordination, learning/innovation, translation/local adaptation and the support of the individual. It can be combined with Parsons’ (2001) definition about networks that adds to these four dimensions interactions between the members of the networks and to feed to common goals. Networking among young people and especially among students is intensified by interpersonal and personal relationships that students have.

Entrepreneurship is defined as a “learning process” (Minitti and Bygrave, 2001). Individual learning skills determine entrepreneurial behaviour. Entrepreneurial learning is a life-long process, universities have a crucial role in introducing to potential entrepreneurs learning business opportunities in social networks (Benson et al., 2014). Business school students’ are familiar with some social networks and they use social network tools’ in their everyday lives (Baird and Fisher, 2005). Ho et al. (2013) used action research, where they instructed students to use knowledge sharing through blogs and Facebook. They coded online knowledge management processes (knowledge capture- knowledge sharing and dissemination and knowledge acquisition and application) and also socio-emotional expressions such as emotional expressions and social support). Facebook was found more common in sharing knowledge and information because of student interaction. Blogs were considered diaries.

Social media supports the bottom-up building of new networks. New online social networks are continuously emerging but Facebook remains the most popular (Wright and Hinson, 2014). The results of a survey about the use of social media by US college students conducted by Ezumah (2013) demonstrated the dominant position of Facebook, raising the popularity of Twitter and low popularity of LinkedIn. 32% of respondents answered that they had never heard of LinkedIn. 98% of respondents mentioned keeping in touch with friends as the number one reason for using social media networking sites. Making professional and business contacts were mentioned only by 27% and learning by 26% of respondents.

Benson et al. (2013) in their research on UK business graduates usage of professional networks give evidence that undergraduate students are mostly
engaged in Facebook and postgraduate students, while also using Facebook, are significantly more active users of LinkedIn. According to this study, peer pressure from friends appears to be the least influencing factor for joining a professional online network in order to explore new career opportunities and to build social capital. Benson et al. (2013) recommend that students develop their skills for assessing and updating profiles online but also for researching information about organizations and jobs online and critically analyzing information that is available in social networks.

In the context of entrepreneurship opportunities, students should do more than simply create a personal profile to be accessed by employers. They should monitor information about new business opportunities based on technology and market trends and increase their social capital by finding new friends that could in future be their business partners or investors addressing to the empirical evidence of this domain.

Social networking competencies in co-creative processes

Professional network building is influenced by social structures and by the holistic perception of networks (Hakansson and Snehota, 1995). Human action is a key factor in the development of networks. Networks and especially innovative networks add an original dimension to business and to entrepreneurship. Business networks are a particular conceptualization of entrepreneurship, where different actors can participate and exchange information and services. These networks incorporate formal and informal relationships are socialization and business transaction-oriented. Entrepreneurship is one hand is characterized by independence and individualism but on the other hand, when it comes to networks, entrepreneurs should deal with non-individualist notions such as dependent ties of trust and cooperation. Entrepreneurs with collaborative goals tend to be more successful than those who do not have cooperative goals, assuming that they manage to use such benefits from networks as resources, equipment and competencies (Burt, 2003).

Finding business opportunities, business partners, making contacts, exchanging knowledge can be handled virtually. Online social networking for business purposes compared to physical networking for business purposes facilitates knowledge exchange, trust-building and it helps to manage long-term online co-operation even if partners do not have regular opportunities for physical meetings (Kaplan et al., 2010).
Their enrolment in higher education institutions or other formal networks that enable learning communities influence networking among students. Culture plays an important role in networking that is not limited to the university’s campus. In some cultures, students are more attached and they still live with their families, in some other cultures students are more independent (Benson et al., 2014).

Networking competencies are important for entrepreneurs as entrepreneurship is by its nature network-oriented, assuming at least contact network with customers, even if an entrepreneur prefers individual action. The main benefits of using online social networks for increasing the customer base are information sharing and knowledge exchange (Bell 2011), providing real-time Facebook feedback from consumers as customers are looking for personal attention; they want to feel valued, taken care of and, most importantly, heard and to belong to a community that shares similar consumer preferences. In order to do this, a company must understand the needs of its customers and provide them with what they are looking for. Social networking can be an amazing tool in the accomplishment of this challenging task (Sannino, 2010). Many companies use online business networking for marketing but that is only one of the networking functions for entrepreneurs.

In order to assess the networking needs of acting or potential entrepreneurs, networkers should understand different implications of imitative, individually innovative and co-creative entrepreneurial orientations.

The imitative orientation can be successful in a business environment, where empty market niches can be filled by introducing business ideas that have proved their effectiveness and efficiency in similar conditions in other markets (Elenurm et al., 2007). This orientation should not be seen simply as copying the ideas of other entrepreneurs, but also as a readiness to monitor and introduce existing best practices efficiently without losing time for inventing new “bicycles” if exiting best practices of other entrepreneurs can meet the needs of customers in the home market of the entrepreneur (Elenurm et al., 2007). Entrepreneurs that follow imitative orientation can also benefit from social networks in order to collect information about best practices and to discuss which products to import or which franchises to buy. This orientation at the same time limits their capability and readiness to contribute to the knowledge sharing for developing new business ideas in online communities.
An individual innovation orientation strategy is good for entrepreneurs operating in markets where product differentiation is the main competitive advantage. This orientation seems working for long-term research and development but if the entrepreneur is not active in co-operating with other stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem, he/she should personally afford financing, infrastructural, marketing and internationalization for innovation (Adner, 2012). Networking needs of individual innovators are mainly focused on monitoring information about new technology and market trends. Innovative entrepreneurship is a challenge in developing countries, where low production cost are the main competitive advantage but it is difficult to establish international credibility of a locally developed innovative product.

The co-creative orientation is the most evident reflection of the emerging network economy, where new innovative business models are created and commercialized in co-operation between several business partners and contributors. Software development projects that are based on open source code and voluntary communities of practice are examples of co-creative environments that may generate synergetic entrepreneurial ideas. The co-creative entrepreneurial orientation uses knowledge sharing in social and business networks and open innovation for developing new business ideas. Open innovation assumes the use of purposive inflows and outflows of knowledge to accelerate internal innovation and simultaneously to expand markets for external use of innovation (Chesbrough et al., 2006). Co-creative orientation assumes competencies for applying the knowledge received from other networking partners but also competencies for sharing the entrepreneur’s knowledge in order to create value for other network members. Co-creation and co-innovation are intertwined to networking readiness and knowledge sharing that assume networking competencies.

Networking competencies include knowledge, skills and attributes of an individual to fulfil a role through networking. A challenge is to find the right combination of physical and online networking competencies and to enhance skills of students for finding these online networking tools that support them as independent professionals and entrepreneurs.

Benjamin Bloom (1956), an educational psychologist working at the University of Chicago, developed the taxonomy of educational objectives. His taxonomy of learning objectives has become a key tool in structuring and understanding the learning process. Bloom’s Taxonomy in its revised form has been used by Churches (2008) in developing digital taxonomy of educational
objectives. Focusing on the cognitive domain, the digital taxonomy provides a comparison of old and new versions of Bloom’s taxonomy as well as an extensive, though certainly not exhaustive, list of Web 2.0 resources that could be incorporated into educational settings to help meet the objectives set out in the course and for the students. The revised taxonomy begins with the word “remembering” before moving to “understanding, “applying, “analyzing, “evaluating” and “creating”. There has been a consensus of a change at level five and six, with “evaluating” being seen as a lower level to that of “creating”. Result of creating can be a new business model that will be implemented and proven in practice after the course but it can be also social capital, including involvement in entrepreneurial networks, created during academic studies but more fully used during student’s later business activities. Bloom’s taxonomy revised later by Churches helped to identify networking competencies for Albanian and Estonian Students.

Knowledge entrepreneur is an individual that has the ability to create an economic activity that is based on creating and using new knowledge and will be able to contribute to economic and social development. Collaborative competencies are essential in co-creative processes that imply knowledge sharing and learning in social networks. Technical networking competencies are influenced by the operational configuration of the network and by its infrastructure. Students should be able to develop some basic technical skills that specific for social media and online social networks such where to use different elements and where to use them such as links, tags or hashtags. They should be able to understand the difference between different platforms for example: Facebook and LinkedIn.

Creative competencies are required to personalize business or entrepreneurial profiles. Some basic technical creative skills mostly in graphic design are sometimes needed. Students should be able to balance creativity with ethical concerns and optimize between transparency and privacy. Online storytelling competencies are useful in social networks in order to be attractive has to be short and catchy without being victims of the blogging’s style. In order to be attractive, storytelling in an online social network has to be short and catchy without being victims of the blogging’s style. Effective communication competencies in online social networks involve immediate reaction through responding quickly and in the way that avoids misunderstandings.

Relationship building competencies are needed for long-term contact building process based on trusting online social networks. Too many
contacts can at first seem to be a good thing, but students should be able to filter them periodically and constantly, taking into consideration their self-development and business development priorities. It is not only important to have contacts but also to know and be willing to discover what opportunities are associated with them. You cannot build business relationships or identify business or entrepreneurial opportunities online without taking risks and without willing to learn and exchange information.

Empathy will determine the impact of interpersonal competencies in building business relationships based on trust but will also allow building networker’s own networking capability. The first step of building interpersonal skills is the identification of the personal behavioral style. Monitoring competencies are needed for monitoring and filtering contacts and information on a regular basis. Students should learn how to apply critical thinking in order deal with myths and misconceptions about online social networks.

**DEVELOPING NETWORKING COMPETENCIES FOR OVERCOMING BARRIERS IN KNOWLEDGE SHARING FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The main disadvantages of using social media for business purposes is the fact that a lot of valuable time is consumed in social networks without real business development outcome. Potential entrepreneurs would need to prioritize their social networking activities depending on their business development needs and taking into consideration features of the network, where they are involved. Users can experience barriers to the learning process. Castells (2009) argues that knowledge network groups should be integrated also to physical meetings if there is possible. In the global business landscape it is however often impossible or too expensive to bring all relevant new business stakeholders to physical meeting in order to jump-start their co-operation.

Entrepreneurship educators have to support individual drive for discovering business opportunities but also the co-creation of business opportunities in an innovation ecosystem. Sharing in online social networks involves two types of individuals, knowledge seekers, individuals who seek for knowledge and knowledge source who shares knowledge. Effective knowledge sharing occurs, when individuals know each other and understand when to turn to each other. They do not only get information from this interaction but mainly
they are able to solve problems through knowledge sharing, individuals have timely access to each other and the whole process includes learning and creativity.

Lesser and Fontaine (2004) suggest that the main barriers to effective knowledge sharing are that the seeker and the source of knowledge are not aware and cannot access all the time to the kind of the knowledge that they respectively dispose. There is also often perception that knowledge cannot be applied and knowledge-sharing behaviors are not respected and evaluated.

E mentoring as social networking strategy in overcoming learning barriers in online social networks

Personal knowledge management has a central role for new entrepreneurs. Collaborative learning and knowledge sharing through providing assistance and building on existing knowledge of stakeholders facilitates the learning process. There is a link between new and earlier knowledge in the process of opportunity identification (Davidsson and Honig, 2003). Entrepreneurial opportunities in the domain of knowledge management differ from codified to tacit depending on uniqueness of the business field and innovativeness of the business idea. Codified opportunities are discovered through systematic research, tacit opportunities are based on previous knowledge and personal contacts.

Business students need to gain real world experience involving the utilization of online social networks. The main strategic dimensions of a network are objectives, goals, purposes of the network, student’s inclusion and participation and understanding the roles of coaches, mentors and experts. Linking business owners and managers with university students helps to overcome their respective barriers while providing real world contexts for student learning. Action learning and learning from experience, where individualized mentoring intervention are enabled, seems to be preferred by entrepreneurs (Laister, 2012).

Mentoring is a complex process that does not only offer guidance but also development of skills, judgements, professional expertise, attitudes and competencies that are transferred from a member of the organization or an external person with more experience called mentor to a newcomer
or to a less experienced individual called mentee (Johnson and Ridley, 2008). It facilitates knowledge transfer and learning process. Hamburg (2012) proposes two typologies of mentoring. Formal mentoring which is facilitated by formal organizational structure, the transferred knowledge is known at the beginning, mentors, mentees are paired based on compatibility, and the objectives of the mentoring process are predetermined. Informal mentoring is considered a spontaneous mentoring support that a mentee can ask from a mentor. Mentoring has traditionally included primarily one-to-one and physical confidential relationships between mentors and mentees (Collin, 1979). With the evolution of the digital technology accentuated by the apparition of online social networks, e-mentoring has appeared as new opportunity in mentoring strategies.

E-mentoring can be defined as a form of mentoring that is mediated through web-based technologies (Headlam-Wells, 2004). It provides very flexible communication between mentors and mentees. Mentors and mentees in different locations of the world can exchange knowledge, less experienced mentees are provided with new skills acquired from the mentors in informal context (Hunt & Michael, 1983). E-mentoring is usually considered a supplement of mentoring not a substitute (Stokes et al., 2003). Starwood (2010) would admit that most people prefer e-mentoring to mentoring because they do not have real contact with the mentor. The key success of any form of mentoring is relationship building and the key success for e-mentoring is managing relationships online (Bierema and Merman, 2002). For Homitz and Berge (2008) mentor’s skills are crucial in building and maintaining the e-mentoring relationship in the network.

Entrepreneurship is an ongoing process that requires knowledge and skills that can be offered by education institutions in interactive learning arrangements (Fayolle et al., 2006). E-mentoring can contribute to knowledge sharing and knowledge exchange. A few empirical evidence is available on the impact of e-mentoring on the entrepreneurial process. Some studies focus specifically on coaching for SMEs (Gray, et al., 2011). A mentor’s functions in the entrepreneurial context can be defined through four psychological functions: reflector, reassurance, motivation and confidant those can be combined with four career related functions such as integration, confrontation, guide and information support (St Jean, 2011). Entrepreneurs require flexible learning environment but they need to be guided, e-mentoring is compatible with entrepreneurship and learning in entrepreneurial networks (Gibb, 1997).
Applying academic faculty as mentors in e-learning is an established e-mentoring approach but social networks broaden networking approach by involving students, entrepreneurs and other resources outside a specific higher education institution as learning community members; e-mentoring as e-learning tool has advantages compared to other forms of traditional education, it can provide access to a wider and more diverse network of potential mentors (Smith-Jentsch and Scielzo, 2007). Young people are supposed to be more technically experienced and active users of social media than older generation. They can mentor older colleagues in capacity building for social networking competencies (Tapscott, 2008). Younger generation’s focus can be short-term, but learning and working are not perceived as separated processes in a social media environment. In order to build cross-border entrepreneurial networking skills and to specify needs for competency development and mentoring in this context, pre-knowledge and experience of students as social networkers in different countries has to be studied.

Comparing Estonian and Albanian entrepreneurship students as social networkers

Research on networking behavior and experience of Estonian and Albanian business students combined quantitative data collected from questionnaires that were analyzed through frequency analysis and content analysis of answers to open questions and qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews. Two parallel research sessions were carried out in Estonia and Albania from October 2013 until October 2014 in order to assess social networking competencies and possible social networking strategies based on e-mentoring. The first phase of research included parallel distribution of 90 questionnaires to Albanian, Estonian bachelor and MBA students during the classes of entrepreneurship in October 2013 and March 2014.50 pilot questionnaires were distributed respectively to Bachelor students in both countries, and 40 pilot questionnaires were distributed to MBA students in each country. They were developed based on the discussion with the participants in order to collect qualitative and quantitative data with perspective of a future action research. Students answered Likert scaled questions about their involvement in physical and online social networks and with whom they discuss their business ideas. In the questionnaire there were also two open questions about student’s perception about online social networking as business tool and their real
involvement in online social business networks. The size of the groups was small. It allowed discussing survey’s results at the end of the classes and getting student’s feedback and interpretations of survey summaries. Results of comparing networking priorities and knowledge gaps were presented. Discussion sessions focused on online networking priorities, learning in online social networks, related barriers and on the need of capacity building in online networking competencies.

In the second phase of research 8 semi-structured interviews were carried out with student entrepreneurs in Albania during August 2014, their main orientation was online networking mentoring in the innovative entrepreneurial learning process and in online networking capacity building.

Comparing knowledge sharing barriers between Albanian and Estonian students.

Questionnaire analysis from 90 pilot questionnaires collected in Estonia and 90 pilot questionnaires collected in Albania follow up discussion revealing barriers for students in both countries.

*Lack of control during the knowledge sharing process:* In both countries, students affirm that sharing knowledge through social media and especially through social networks is beneficial because it allows sharing knowledge quickly. Informal learning in social networks allows to students to be independent learners and to share the kind of knowledge that they want. The main problem for 60% of students in Albania and 70% of Estonia is the lack of control and supervision during learning activities for entrepreneurial and business purposes. Students need orientation in filtering, scanning and classifying the right knowledge in the process of identifying of the business opportunities.

*Isolated learning during the knowledge sharing process:* Bachelor students in both countries perceive that sharing knowledge in social networks, even if it is considered as dynamic process because it involves working in virtual teams for different projects and assignments, remains an isolated process because it is not as effective as physical communication and feedback is perceived differently. One student in Estonia stated that when sharing knowledge online, he felt more belonging to the online social network rather than to his own local knowledge network.
Lack of learning motivation during the knowledge sharing process: for master’s students in both countries sharing knowledge in social networks is inhibited by lack of discipline by other online networkers. Students are not very motivated to learn in such environment. When sharing knowledge for innovation and business purposes, they prefer physical networks in order to have efficient time management in projects.

Cost barriers: sharing knowledge in social networks is perceived as time consuming by 40% of Albanian students and 30% of Estonian students. Students feel that they lose a lot of time in order to get the right knowledge from social networks. For master’s students in Estonia premium paying versions of LinkedIn do not still allow them to get the knowledge they need in specific moments. In Albania students feel that there is lack of support from higher education institutions in giving the right environment to student to work and learn in knowledge networks.

Social interaction and communication barriers: there is absence of emotionally rewarding interaction in such networks; students do not feel participating emotionally. This is due also to the physical distance barrier. Students are willing for more interaction while sharing knowledge in online social networks, greater honesty and a sense of community, which provides inclusion for everyone and allows a greater sharing. Students mention that sometimes-online networking can work better than physical networks especially while exchanging routine information and numerical data. Technical problems, which are frequent in online social networks, can however block communication and interaction between students.

Cultural barriers are translated through different knowledge sharing cultures and are accentuated through intercultural communication problems. 65.3% of Students in Albania prefer to discuss business opportunities with family members and students from their university, but at the same time they would prefer to have a foreign business partner due to the instability of business environment in Albania. Students in Estonia consider that looking for foreign opportunities should be the main aim of a business. Language barrier can cause communication problems.

Mentors and social networking competencies were considered as essential in over overcoming knowledge sharing barriers and in constructing a profile of personal knowledge management for future potential student entrepreneurs. In order to develop their social and business networking competencies,
students in follow-up discussions recognized the role of both classical and collaborative mentoring strategies.

Classic mentoring strategy: mentors help students to overcome lack of control barriers and communication barriers through helping students to develop their online networking skills such as monitoring skills, technical skills and communication skills. A classic mentor can be also a young entrepreneur experienced in social networking and having some information technology background. Classic mentors can do inverse mentoring to adult people if you suppose that younger generations are more at ease with online social networking tools.

Collaborative mentoring strategy: collaborative mentors are usually young people who mentor young people or adults who mentor young. They help students in overcoming isolation barriers, cost barriers, motivation barriers and cost barriers. Online social networks should push students to think in a creative and co-creative way while sharing knowledge. They should be able to apply critical reasoning while solving cost barriers. Students should be motivated internally and externally from the networks making them clear what leverage they can get from the networks. Students should develop relationship building competencies and narrative competencies in order to overcome these learning barriers.

Action learning for developing cross-border social networking readiness

Social and business networking tools can prepare students for entrepreneurship initiatives at the global scale. Estonian Business School has applied different tools that enhance cross-border networking readiness. Cross-border online teams for assisting enterprises in their internationalization efforts bring together Erasmus exchange students and local students. During the period from 2006 to 2012, international student teams of the Estonian Business School conducted field projects for 61 Estonian SMEs in order to support their internationalization efforts. Each team consisted of 4-6 students representing different nationalities. Among the business sectors represented in these team projects, the most active were innovative entrepreneurs involved in start-ups in ICT, design, and tourism. During several years, these teams mainly worked in face-to-face communication mode, both inside classroom and visiting their project enterprises, although Moodle e-learning was applied to train students for online teamwork.
In 2013 and 2014, cross-border online teams were created that involved students studying at the Haaga-Helia School of Applied Sciences and at the Estonian Business School. Experience of these two years demonstrated challenges of online teamwork, where student teams could independently choose their project work and online communication tools. These teams that devoted more time to physical meetings with enterprise representatives have attained better results compared to teams that have mainly used online communication or have not visited the enterprise at all due to travel costs. The projects have also demonstrated that students representing Nordic low context cultures are better prepared for the use of online tools than Erasmus exchange students representing Southern European are higher context cultures. These online tools included various web sources and social media for acquiring pre-knowledge about the business context of the client entrepreneur before asking additional information from the project entrepreneur and online communication tools for efficient team collaboration. A challenge has been to agree on timing to use Skype conferences, Google Hangouts or other synchronous communication tools. Master’s students are working for their employers during office hours and prefer to have such meetings in the evening while students involved in bachelor studies prefer to have study-related online communication in such a way that their evenings are left for spare time activities. It has been difficult to match preferences and habits of using different networking tools. This action learning experience has demonstrated the need for more active involvement of faculty members as online mentors of cross-border project teams and devoting more time during class activities to reflecting and overcoming barriers in cross-border online co-operation.

X-Culture online project work was implemented at the Estonian Business School in 2013 as a pilot project in order to assess the suitability of this online co-operation tool for the international business course or for a special free elective. In 2015, it was used during the international business course for the whole 39-student group. The global X-Culture consortium connects approximately 2,500 students from 80 universities in 40 countries each semester (http://www.x-culture.org/ 2014). X-culture creates multicultural teams in order to enable action learning for overcoming cultural difference in online networking. Team members cannot choose other team members. X-Culture organizers allocate students to virtual teams following the principle of geographical and cultural diversity of each team. They have to build their team consensus on the international business opportunity example they develop together online over a period of two months. Students
have to pass pre-test in order to demonstrate their knowledge about online communication and knowledge sharing tools and X-Culture rules. During the project workweeks, students are involved in regular peer-review assessments in order to understand their pluses and minuses in online cooperation from the point of view of other online team members. Participation in X-Culture has demonstrated challenges of aligning knowledge sharing styles and online tool user experiences, including social media applications, in situations where team members never meet each other in physical contact and have no direct contact with the client enterprise in their project work.

In order to train such networking modes that will lead to generating and assessing new ideas, Tricorder www.trcider.com for online brainstorming has been used in the change management course since 2012. Tricider specifies clearly structured spaces for describing the idea, for highlighting its advantages and disadvantages and for voting in order to select the best ideas. That enabled a structured assessment of ideas. In 2013, two Italian Erasmus exchange students asked students from their Italian alma mater and their friends to check their ideas in Tricider and to vote for these ideas. That game changing initiative was a new lesson learnt for the course leader (Elenurm, 2014). He had to accept the highest rating of ideas gained by these two students as there were no regulations that ruled out the involvement of outsiders. In new creativity-focused courses, we consider explicitly allowing and encouraging all course participants to encourage their social network friends to rally in favour of their ideas in Tricider.

Action learning in online co-operation of business students that has been directly focused on business projects has given evidence that in order to increase student readiness for such cross-border teamwork; broader social networking competencies are useful. Estonian Business School has for two years conducted courses Business opportunities in social networks both in its main Tallinn campus and in its subsidiary in Helsinki. During these courses, students discuss the strategic role of social networking for their future career and business opportunities. Estonian and Finnish students and Erasmus exchange students from different countries have to create new online networking tools for cross-border student co-operation. Students have to choose and involve team members for their new network development task from another country based on online information in Facebook, LinkedIn and Tricider without physical contacts. This process has demonstrated that students have unequal readiness for using online tools in order to broaden their network for further business activities. Students
are interested in creating new networking tools for sharing information about future employment opportunities or for bringing together start-up entrepreneurs and business angels. Majority of students have regular activity in mainstream social networks such as Facebook or Instagram but they often lack pre-knowledge about existing more specialized social networks that already have similar functions to these that they intend to create. At the same time, some teams have managed to develop new social networking applications that can be used in further joint entrepreneurial initiatives.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE**

Educational policies in the field of developing competencies for entrepreneurship should take into consideration that social networking and business networking processes have become more integrated than some decades ago. Entrepreneurship education is not limited to individual skills for developing a business idea, compiling a business plan and creating an enterprise. In order to succeed in commercializing business models that depend on communications with communities or early users and on interaction with stakeholders in innovation ecosystems, social networking competencies should be essential objectives when developing skills of acting and potential entrepreneurs.

Knowledge-based networking of entrepreneurs is essential in developing economies where entrepreneurship has to become more innovative and export is essential for business growth. Both in Albania and in Estonia social media is a powerful knowledge-sharing tool for cross-border business initiatives that can help students who use the right networking competencies to overcome learning barriers and to be part of cross-border collaborative social media networks. Capacity building in online networking skills is necessary in both countries and evidently in other small open economies.

Support systems for early-stage entrepreneurs will enhance networking in the business development process in more focused way if differences between networking needs of imitative, individually innovative and co-creative entrepreneurs are taken into consideration. These entrepreneurs have different readiness to share their business ideas online and to use social networks for open innovation.
Degree programs at universities will improve cross-border entrepreneurship opportunities by developing social networking and personal knowledge management competencies of students in order to link student involvement in social networking to their self-development priorities and to creating social capital for entrepreneurial initiatives. Academic staff should increase its own awareness of new social networking trends in order to act as e-mentors. Learning barriers in online social networks such as lack of control over the knowledge sharing process, cultural, cost and other barriers can be confronted in joint efforts, where both academic staff and more experienced students act as mentors for other networkers.

Students can benefit from action learning experiences that apply both more supervised and less supervised networking in business development projects. Less structured approaches allow students to understand self-regulative features of social networking and related needs to align their priorities with other networkers and project stakeholders such as busy entrepreneurs that are less active online. More supervised and structured approaches give to student’s regular feedback from other online team members and mentors in order to understand their strengths and weaknesses in social and business networking.

**FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

Empirical evidence discussed in this chapter is limited to business students but entrepreneurship and related social networking processes involve many other specialties, including technology and arts. Social networking patterns and barriers of students and young people that have different educational background is a future research direction. There is a need to study deeper cultural learning barriers in perspective as a further research step for creating international virtual communities of practice by involving entrepreneurial students interested in business co-operation between Albania and Estonia. More qualitative and quantitative international data from different developing and advanced economies have to be collected in order to compare networking barriers and competence gaps internationally. Interviews can be extended also to adult mentors who have mentored young people online and to young people who mentored adults in social networking.

A future research path can be action research of cross-border learning teams or international learning teams in the open innovation context. The
perspective of future research is to focus on innovative cultural learning dynamics through virtual student teams.

CONCLUSION

The chapter highlights that to harness the full potential of social networks for business development, young people have to experience learning processes, where they face cross-border co-creation challenges and link international entrepreneurship opportunities to their personal knowledge management and social capital development strategy. There are differences in the networking competencies of bachelor and MBA students. Bachelor students lack knowledge for the effective use of business online networking competencies and business relationships. MBA students are older and because of their family and work obligations less active in online social networking but at the same time more clear in their self-development priorities. Even if they have experience in online network relationship building and interpersonal competencies, they prefer physical networking because of the absence of time and trust. There is a need for developing effective communication skills than combine online and physical networking opportunities. Bachelor students, who are part of this young generation evolving, use effectively technical competencies and creative competencies but they lack information monitoring competencies and relationship building competencies. General understanding of social networking trends and challenges is a prerequisite for successful business networking applications.

REFERENCES


Publication 2. Comparing Online Social Networks Ties as Tool for Entrepreneurial Learning Readiness in Small Economies

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Abstract

Online social networks such as Facebook and LinkedIn create the opportunity to expand online and face-to-face ties. A diverse online social network composed of weak and strong ties is essential for young student entrepreneurs. Online networks offer diverse learning and online expertise opportunities to the young student entrepreneur. This paper explores the entrepreneurial learning leverage that young students enrolled in higher education system can get from online ties in small economies through comparing Western Balkan region and more precisely a small developing country such as Albania with a small-developed country such as Estonia. The paper explores how online ties support young student readiness to use online networking platforms for online entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition focusing on online ties established in Facebook and LinkedIn. Further online learning strategies are explored through focus group analysis, blog analysis and interviews with young experienced entrepreneurs. Young students use online ties for entrepreneurial knowledge sharing but there a difference between the Facebook tie and the LinkedIn tie. The study concludes with the suggestion of development of entrepreneurial learning orientation strategies and tools that facilitate the online learning process in both online networks focusing in the specific online tie that is the group tie.

Keywords: Online entrepreneurial ties, Online entrepreneurial learning, Online knowledge sharing, Facebook ties, LinkedIn ties, Group ties
1Introduction

Young students enrolled in higher education institutions in developed and developing countries use online social networks such as Facebook and LinkedIn for professional and personal development, creating and maintaining business relationships of young potential entrepreneurs. Facebook tie and LinkedIn tie emerge as a new kind of ties different from the offline ties because the relationship is maintained virtually with a cross-border perspective.

Online entrepreneurial networking is essential because it provides cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities and online entrepreneurial learning opportunities. Online social networks such as Facebook and LinkedIn give the possibility to develop online ties useful for young student entrepreneurs, which are familiar with features of online social networks. For young students, which are very familiar with online social networking, Young students, however, need to assess how to relate and rely on online social networking ties to online networking tools that support discovering cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities and knowledge that is relevant for entrepreneurial initiatives.

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2012-2014 Estonian surveys have demonstrated the role of cross-border ties in developing ambitious internationally oriented entrepreneurial initiatives but also the networking needs of early-stage entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs with an international innovative have often relied on knowledge sharing with international contacts while entrepreneurs that were domestically focused use stronger ties such as relatives and friends [1].

In Albania, online social networks are accessible from young students like in every part of the world. However, awareness and implementation perspectives for integrating them in the entrepreneurial learning process and entrepreneurial opportunity hunting are lacking. The aim of this paper is to explore how to online ties can in the context of online social networks can support contribute to online entrepreneurial learning readiness for young students in small transition economy such as Albania, compared with a more developed economy such as Estonia focusing on the comparisons between two principal online networks Facebook and LinkedIn. An exploratory study with young students from University “Aleksandër Moisiu” Durrës in Albania and Estonian Business School in Tallinn Estonia is presented.
A questionnaire was distributed to 130 young students in both countries during spring semester of the academic year 2016/2017, focus groups were applied in Albania and in Estonia during spring semester 2018 of the academic year 2016/2017 and the posts of the blog of the course Business in Virtual Networks at Estonian Business School were analyzed for the year 2016 and 2017. Semi-structured interviews were realized with more experienced Albanian and Estonian young entrepreneurs during July 2018,

In the second section of the paper theoretical constructs are explored, research gaps are identified theoretical gaps in terms of online ties, online and entrepreneurial learning. Methodology and data analysis results are presented respectively in the third and fourth section; results are analyzed in the fifth section concluding in the sixth section with discussion and conclusions.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Online ties as online learning ties for youth entrepreneurship

Face-to-face social networks are characterized by diverse network ties, which are the main feature of network structure. Face-to-face ties influence business development and entrepreneurial learning of young students because entrepreneurship is a situational exchange of knowledge [2] and the relational dimension of face-to-face ties influence business development [3].

Strength of a tie depends on intensity of interaction and the diversity of relationships or the amount of time that young students spend in creating such a tie [4]. There are two main categories of face-to-face ties: weak ties and strong ties. Strong ties usually refer to closer social interaction such as friends and family with whom there is closer emotional interaction and contact, [5]. The role of weak ties is especially important in knowledge diverse environments [6]. In online social networks, weak ties are created in a virtual context without having contextual references of time and space [7]. That may be essential for early-stage cross-border knowledge sharing and business initiatives of young students.

Online networks are particularly important for small and medium enterprises and young entrepreneurs as they provide a unique opportunity to access business-related information and knowledge sources at different stages of
the entrepreneurial project [8]. Some of the benefits of using online social networks are cost, knowledge sharing and creation of the virtual teams [9].

Developing both weak and strong ties for young entrepreneurs is essential because as simple as it can be networking for and entrepreneur means basically increasing the “business friends” circle through their get from the current “friends” or contacts in order to advance in their business and achieve desirable results. The more diversified is the network in terms of ties and particularity in terms of quality of ties the more beneficial it will be for the young entrepreneur rather than a less developed network [10]. Although only certain young entrepreneurs can recognize innovative and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurial learning opportunities. For some scholars as [11], strong ties are more beneficial for entrepreneurs from a point view of knowledge sharing because they imply trust but knowledge-sharing opportunities for entrepreneurs can from other sources than family members or closer friends [12]. Stronger ties provide help to reduce the time spent in monitoring business opportunities. Strong ties are useful to entrepreneurs who face a high degree of uncertainty and insecurity especially in developing countries or small transition economies because they provide protection. On the other hand, strong ties are vulnerable to external shocks [13].

The increasing use of internet intensified the virtual connection between people worldwide, in business entrepreneurs could benefit from larger business friend circles [14]. Online social networks are as well one of the greatest consequences of the development of the internet, they provide an establishing, maintaining and mediating of relationships through online social media platforms that can be used for business purposes such as Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn or Instagram. [15] have pointed out found that Twitter users had the highest bridging social capital, followed by Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat, while Snapchat users had the highest bonding social capital, followed by Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Bridging social capital can enhance discovering new business opportunities and concept whereas bonding ties may be needed at later stages of a new business initiative when trust becomes essential for developing co-creative teamwork.

Online ties are related traditionally to virtual interaction, but they cannot be considered only as weak ties just because their virtual dimension as example LinkedIn second degree and third-degree contacts are an opportunity to wider weak contacts for entrepreneurial purposes or in Facebook the
contact that can emerge from “friends of friends” [16]. An online tie can be strong or weak depending on the intensity of interaction and diversity of relationships that they provide, an offline tie that is related to face-to-face interaction within the network can be as well weak or strong depending on the intensity of interaction and the diversity of relationships [17]. Experienced usually monitor online social networking platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn for entrepreneurial opportunities. Another dimension that counts defining online ties as entrepreneurial learning ties that influence youth entrepreneurship is cultural context; perceptions around online social networks may vary in different cultures, in individualist societies, weaker ties are supposed to persist, in collectivist societies, stronger ties are supposed to dominate [18].

Entrepreneurial knowledge sharing and opportunities sharing is the main advantage that young students benefit from online ties.

Entrepreneurial knowledge sharing and opportunities through online ties

One of the most relevant dimensions of knowledge management for the young entrepreneur involved in online social networks is knowledge sharing in order to find and use business opportunities and as well collaborative orientation in sharing entrepreneurial opportunities in online social network platforms.

Knowledge sharing is influenced by informal sharing context that includes personal relationships and networks [19]. Networking knowledge sharing is empathized through face-to-face meetings, informal communication and it influences the way that entrepreneurs cooperate and communicate.

The strength of ties can affect knowledge sharing; stronger ties would lead to interaction that is more frequent and would facilitate the process of knowledge sharing [20]. Sharing knowledge with weak ties would access of new and unique knowledge because weak ties provide information and knowledge that goes beyond the social circle [21] and even better opportunities from the young entrepreneur.

Online social networks are perceived as a new emerging paradigm, which can be integrated with entrepreneurship paradigm. Online social networking tools enable the entrepreneur to share knowledge and to get expertise in the virtual context and use appropriate skills that will facilitate online
entrepreneurial learning process [22]. For the young students, it is crucial to determine opportunity and knowledge sharing orientations in online social networks according to the different stages of its entrepreneurial projects and to the entrepreneurial orientation. The co-creative entrepreneur prefers to share opportunities in networks which allow access to open innovation, imitative entrepreneur prefers to share opportunities will closer strong face-to-face ties and individualist entrepreneur does not rely much on networks as possibility of opportunities sharing [23]. Entrepreneurial knowledge sharing and opportunity sharing process in online social networks in the context of a higher education institution is associated with young student learning.

2.2 Supporting online entrepreneurial learning with online ties

Online social networks through distance interactions allow the accumulation of content of the time, which creates a sort of collaborative knowledge networks.

Online social networks provide unique learning environments through better communication and collaboration [24]. Young students need to rely on support non-formal learning approaches and non-traditional learning through integrating online networking tools and online networking ties support from online ties in their entrepreneurial learning processes [25].

Young students are born digital process information in different settings in online networking environments, they exhibit specific

Online social networks are used both to maintain existing contact and to create a new contact, in terms of online ties; online social networks provide new ways to connect with digital natives who share their interest and their goals. Young students who rely only on strong ties for learning purposes will be deprived of knowledge and business opportunities that come from weaker ties that might be in online social networks. Recent research in learning in online social networks shows that in order to enable individuals to learn in the context of online social networks, relationships build within the online social network context and the online social network itself should topic-based and with simple ties relations [25]. Formal and non-formal education should enable young students to get to know entrepreneurial learning opportunities from online social networks as a benefit of the quick digitalization process and it provides a new flexible way of learning that can be accommodated by the young entrepreneurs, online ties can be a learning intermediary.
2.4 Youth entrepreneurship in online social networks and culture: a contextual matter?

[26] analyze the impact of culture on learning styles, high context culture tends to prefer a high degree of abstraction while learning and low context culture adopt a learning orientation influenced by concrete experimentation. In individualist low context societies, individuals will tend to have fewer but long-term intimate friendships, in collectivist high context societies individuals tends to rely more on fewer friends and enjoy more long-term intimate friendships. In highly individualistic cultures, individuals believe that holding certain information will lead them to success and in collectivistic societies, organizational success is attributed to sharing information openly [27].

Learning opportunities in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition, especially for young students involved into higher education system taking into accounting the learning environment that online social networking platforms provide, should enable online social network users for entrepreneurial purposes to have a certain degree of cultural awareness [28].

There is not yet relevant literature in the field of online social networking about to extent online networking ties of young student involved into higher education influence online entrepreneurial learning and knowledge sharing, entrepreneurial opportunity recognition in the context of online social networks and to what extent the cultural context influences learning in the context of online social networks for young student entrepreneurs especially focusing on specific ties formed in particular business platforms.

3 Methodology

The aim of this exploratory research is to determine how online ties can support online entrepreneurial learning within the context of online social networks in small transition economies in Western Balkan Region in Europe such as Albania that can be classified as high context, collectivist society.

Online social networks can be an educational tool for entrepreneurial learning that can compensate traditional curricula offered formal higher education institutions. Entrepreneurial learning through online social networks is an unexplored phenomenon in the context of Albania but it can
be a leverage for young students from online social networking. Online social networks can widen the learning opportunities and can make young students more connected especially in the context of small transition economies. Comparison can be made in order to share examples of best practices of the use of online social networks for entrepreneurial learning from Estonia, which is a small country in Europe but part of OECD and European Union with several achievements in terms of digitalization, digital policy, innovation and entrepreneurship policy.

In this study, mixed methods are used. The sample of the study is composed by 130 young business students enrolled at the third year of Bachelor Degree and first and second year of Master Degree at the University “Aleksandër Moisiu” Durrës and 43 young students enrolled at 2rd and 3rd year of Bachelor Degree in International Business at Estonian Business School, in Tallinn Estonia.

Triangulation is conducted through gathering primary data through the distribution of a survey to young business students in Durrës and in Tallinn during the spring semester of the academic year 2016/2017. Four focus groups composed of young business students were realized in Durrës during the spring semester of the academic year 2016/2017 and secondary data from the course Business in Virtual Networks which contains students posts dating from the year 2010 but for this study posts of the year 2016 and 2017 were taken into account, in total for this time period there are 130 post from students.

The questionnaire contains 24 questions that combine open-ended questions, Likert scale questions and closed questions. There are questions about online ties and entrepreneurial learning outcome from online social networks. Students were also asked to assess their online social networking priorities and their online social networking skills priorities. The survey serves just to identify the general trends; there was a need to study in-depth online social networking ties, online social network learning and online social network knowledge sharing through focus groups and posts of the blog of the course Business in Virtual Networks.

Focus groups in Durrës were organized in Spring 2017 and in Spring 2018 with three groups of eight students each from the 3rd year of Bachelor Degree in Business Administration and 2nd year of Master Degree in Business Administration based on the fact that Entrepreneurship and Small
and Medium Business Management is part of the course curricula and on the fact if they had some kind of participation in informal events connected to youth student entrepreneurship such as Startup weekends, they were moderated by an external moderator other than the lecturer in order to not bias the process. were to be effective focus group questions were open-ended and they moved from general to more specific questions about online social network usage in general, entrepreneurial learning in general, the influence that online ties have in general for students and more specifically for entrepreneurial learning and how the cultural context accommodated knowledge sharing in online social networks.

Secondary data were collected from the posts of the blog of the course Business in Virtual Networks at Estonian Business School. Students posted and commented each other posts on the use of online social networks focus on a large amount of specific and specialized online social networks that does not include traditional online social networks with massive use such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram or Google+, an emphasis is put on advantages and disadvantages of these networks for entrepreneurial purposes. 130 posts were analyzed.

3 1 Data analysis

The questionnaire was used to determine general trends or online networking orientation of young students in Albania and in Estonia, the leverage that this study gets from the questionnaire is a description of general trends in online social networking ties. General descriptive statistics are presented in order to identify trends.

Focus groups were recorded, transcribed and translated from Albanian into English, data were coded, codes were organized in themes and themes were organized in global wider themes. The same procedure was used for analyzing blog posts. There were identified 40 codes and 5 themes. Interviews with 8 experienced Albanian young entrepreneurs and 4 experienced Estonian young entrepreneurs were realized in Summer 2018 in order to further explore roles and nature of ties formed in particular online social networks defined by survey which were Facebook and LinkedIn.
4 Results

4.1 Comparing results from survey

Online ties versus Face-to-Face ties related to business opportunity recognition and knowledge sharing were compared based on questionnaire results. In Table 1, trends in using online social networks to find and discuss business ideas of young Albanian students and young Estonian students are compared considering the fact if students in both countries will have the intention to start their entrepreneurial project abroad. The scale of measurement in the survey was a five-point Likert scale where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree, mean is used to compare the two groups. As it is shown in Table 1, young students in both countries tend to rely equally to face-to-face ties and online ties. The most relevant face-to-face tie for Albanian students who want to start their entrepreneurial project abroad is students from other universities and mentors whereas for students in Estonia who want to start their project abroad the most relevant face-to-face tie mentors followed by friends. Albanian students who are not to start their entrepreneurial project abroad, the strongest face-to-face tie is entrepreneurs followed by mentors and in Estonia, close friends followed by entrepreneurs. Online social networks are perceived almost equally in both countries having a mean score that varies from 3.5-3.6 between neutral and agrees. The table shows as well that family is a face-to-face tie that is not so preferred for entrepreneurial purposes by students in both countries. In Estonia, students will rely more on upon experienced to their closest circle such as friends. Mentors are an important face-to-face tie in both countries. There is no huge difference between online, and offline ties preferences.
Table 1: Comparison of Online Ties vs Face-to-Face Ties for Young Albanian and Young Estonian students based on their willingness to start their entrepreneurial project abroad.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Ties vs Face-to-Face Ties for Entrepreneurial Readiness</th>
<th>Young Albanian Students</th>
<th>Young Estonian Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willing to start business abroad</td>
<td>Not willing to start business abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35 individuals</td>
<td>57 individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Friends</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in my university</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in other universities</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mentors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Social Networks</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 2, Online Ties and Face-to-Face Ties are compared for Young Albanian Students and Young Estonian Students based on their previous entrepreneurial experience using means of the sample. As it is shown in Table 2, there is not a significant difference in terms of using networking ties for entrepreneurial purposes between those who already have entrepreneurial experience and those who do not have entrepreneurial experience. Young students tend to rely on mentors and entrepreneurs in both countries. Young Estonian Students who have already entrepreneurial experience use more than the other sub-groups in both countries online social networks as online entrepreneurial ties.
Table 2 Comparison Online Ties vs Face-to-Face Ties for Young Albanian and Young Estonian students based on their entrepreneurial experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Ties vs Face-to-Face Ties for Entrepreneurial Readiness</th>
<th>Young Albanian Students</th>
<th>Young Estonian Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entrepreneurial Experience 11 individuals</td>
<td>No Entrepreneurial Experience 82 individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Friends</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in my university</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in other universities</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mentors</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Social Networks</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Online networking priorities for business purposes

Fig 1. Comparison between Albanian and Estonian Students

![Online social networks of entrepreneurial purposes](image)
47% Students in Albania prefer using Facebook for entrepreneurial purposes, 38% Estonian students prefer LinkedIn. This is due to the notoriety of LinkedIn as online social network in Albania. Instagram is it is becoming a relevant online social network used for entrepreneurial purposes in both countries respectively for 15% of Albanian students and 17% of Estonian students. Instagram as online social network offers the possibility not just to visualize experience in online social network but it is becoming a network where online ties can become effective for business purposes. Students in both countries tend to not prefer other online social networks for entrepreneurial purposes.

*Entrepreneurial learning in online social networks (Facebook vs LinkedIn).*

**Fig 2.** Facebook online learning priorities comparison

![Facebook online learning priorities](image)

**Fig 3.** LinkedIn Online Learning Priorities Comparison

![LinkedIn online learning priorities](image)
Knowledge sharing is the main reason that facilitates the learning process in Facebook and in LinkedIn in both countries although 52% of students in Estonia prefer to share knowledge through LinkedIn. Social monitoring is more effective in Facebook as a learning priority for 13% of Albanian students and for 16% of Estonian Students is more effective in Facebook. Teamwork is more relevant on Facebook as a learning priority for Albanian students compared to Estonian students; this can be due to the informal perception of the configuration of this online social network. Learning innovation is more relevant on Facebook for students in both countries. Interaction is more important in Facebook compared to LinkedIn for Estonian students, for Albania student interaction, as entrepreneurial learning priority is the same in Facebook and LinkedIn. Group activities are more important in Facebook for students in both countries with 10% respectively. Gratification is more important in Facebook for students in Albania with 10%, for students in Estonia, there is no difference between Facebook and LinkedIn.

Overall, from the survey, in both countries, students do not make a significant difference between online and offline ties for entrepreneurial opportunity recognition in online social networks, for starting a new entrepreneurial project or for sharing business ideas. Facebook dominates online social networking preferences for entrepreneurial purposes in both countries and LinkedIn followed up by Instagram.

As learning priorities, they focus in knowledge sharing process, teamwork, social monitoring and interaction in Facebook and LinkedIn that are connected to online ties. In focus group and blog, analysis is explored further how online ties can be explored further for entrepreneurial learning purposes in online social networks and how differently young students can strategically learn through online social ties compared to face-to-face ties and how these ties can affect entrepreneurial culture.

4.2 Comparing focus groups and blog analysis results

Four main themes were identified after the encoding process:

Cross border opportunities from online ties

Participants of the focus groups did not make any distinction between online and offline ties for entrepreneurial opportunities, as a participant would mention
“...it is true that at the end of the day the interaction is virtual but what you get from the network, after all, is real, if there is something interesting to discuss about entrepreneurial projects than why not...”

Although participants in the focus group assume that in Albania we prefer face-to-face contact traditionally but due to the specific business environment of the country that is small economy still in transition young students would rely on to also to entrepreneurial opportunities that come from online ties. One participant took as an example that many of the events where he participated with his business idea were found by him through Facebook rather than from his daily interaction with his face-to-face ties. Online ties cannot be categorized as online social ties within the context of online social networks for the young student but those ties in the context of entrepreneurial learning can be defined as online entrepreneurial ties, which are a complement to face-to-face entrepreneurial ties.

**Facebook learning vs LinkedIn learning**

“...you can get the information you need everywhere, but yet depends on the network and on how well you know the network...”

Participants in the focus group admitted that online social networks are overloaded with information, yet it is important in the process of entrepreneurial learning to assess entrepreneurial knowledge-learning priorities before you undertake the learning process. It is easy and costless to share knowledge in an online social network but it is important to assess entrepreneurial knowledge expertise in online social networking. “... It is about to know what do you know already and what do you what to need to know from the network, and if there is any kind of expert in the network...”

For some kind of knowledge about certain business ideas or when there is the pre-start phase of the entrepreneurial project Facebook is better, a simple status update is very useful, to get more formalized knowledge and expertise LinkedIn is more useful, it is like a business card network. Yet for those young people who are more involved in e-commerce or visual project, Instagram is more useful. Online entrepreneurial ties are useful in any case.

**Online entrepreneurial learning strategies**

“... Learning in online social networks means that you cannot be an egoist and you are not alone,” commented one of the participants. Online social networks facilitate distant virtual collaboration. Entrepreneurial strategic learning means learning efficiently (costless and in real-time)
for young students and effectively (when it is needed). Although there is a distinction between being a constant entrepreneurial learner in online social networks through permanently and collaboratively e-participating and sharing entrepreneurial knowledge in online social networks and relying constantly on online entrepreneurial ties or casual entrepreneurial learner in online social networks who takes advantage of learning through online entrepreneurial ties according to environment and opportunities.

**Online collaborative culture**

Online entrepreneurial learning is perceived as a complement to traditional entrepreneurial learning in higher education institutions. There is a lack of entrepreneurial culture in Albania, this is due to structural problems caused by transition by as well for participants it is a matter of national culture that traditionally is not oriented towards entrepreneurship. Although establishing an entrepreneurial culture is, feasible and entrepreneurial, learning and transferring best practices can make this process possible. Accordingly, participants agree that online learning and international online entrepreneurial ties and entrepreneurial collaborative orientation can influence positively the establishment of such an entrepreneurial culture.

**Comparing results from interviews**

Furthermore, survey results and focus groups results shown that the most used online social networks to further develop business ties were Facebook and LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a shadow network for young students in Albania, whereas young students in Estonia are more familiar with it. Distinctions can be made between the young student Facebook entrepreneurial tie and the young student LinkedIn entrepreneurial tie. As explored in interviews Facebook entrepreneurial tie can be born and build in an online context without previous face-to-face contact through different features of this online networks such as “friends of friends”, “friends suggestions”, “Facebook thematic groups” or “Facebook thematic pages” or “Facebook events”, although such features as “closed Facebook groups” are perceived to create more closed entrepreneurial communities and entrepreneurial learning perspective as knowledge is available only for the group members. Facebook entrepreneurial ties allow access not only to professional but as well to personal information of the young student user, the personal feature of the Facebook entrepreneurial ties it is important for young students in Albania as well some young students whom already have an established entrepreneurial
project prefer to monitor Facebook profiles for finding business partners and hiring. Young students in Albania and in Estonia perceive the Facebook as the informal entrepreneurial tie that can be useful especially share knowledge and learn about entrepreneurial opportunities especially in the pre-start or start phase of the entrepreneurial project. Monitoring Facebook ties implies access to knowledge and opportunities although young students empathize that scrolling down a newsfeed must not be sufficient, young student should carefully whom to follow and monitor depending on the nature the entrepreneurial project. Facebook entrepreneurial are alimented through features of instantaneous communication as shown in focus groups in Albania such as Facebook Messenger or Facebook Messenger for business. Tie hunting for entrepreneurial knowledge and opportunities as shown in the focus groups depends on the online learning strategy of the young students, online strategic learners would focus more on constant use Facebook for entrepreneurial purposes whereas online casual learners would tend typically to scroll the news feed. Collaborative ties would be beneficial for the entrepreneurial learning process, in the interviews was shown that in thematic groups there might exist such a concept as online group tie, group ties tend to strengthen over and to offer a sense of belonging.

As shown in interviews LinkedIn tie is perceived as a formal tie as the online network itself as a professional mindset, young students would consider it as a business card or CV. In Albania, the network is not very popular among young students compared to Estonia, although more experienced young entrepreneurs as shown in the interviews tend to use it. Limited access to search contact service and to limit Inmail messages if you are not amongst features that limit entrepreneurial tie hunting, added costs of premium service are a barrier especially for a young student in Albania that is the process of tie hunting. Anyways as shown by focus groups and interviews such features as skills endorsement and the possibility to business write articles accommodates entrepreneurial opportunities that come from LinkedIn.

5 Discussion and conclusions

As shown by survey results, focus groups content analysis of posts in the course blog Business in Virtual Networks results interviews with more experienced young entrepreneurs online ties established in online social networks that may include entrepreneurial ties established in an offline context and entrepreneurial ties established virtually within the context of online social networks are connected to online entrepreneurial learning,
entrepreneurial knowledge sharing and cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities. Young students in Albania and in Estonia did not show an entrepreneurial tie preference between online and offline when it comes to entrepreneurial learning and cross-border business opportunities. Online and offline entrepreneurial ties are not exclusive but mutually complementary, young students rely equally on online and offline entrepreneurial ties. A young student even in the context of small open transition economy can rely on online ties offered by Facebook and LinkedIn with no difference between online and offline ties, there are not remarkable differences compared to the Estonian context where LinkedIn tie is more common compared to Albania due to the popularity of the online network in the country.

Attention should be drawn on how to develop Facebook tie, LinkedIn and Facebook tie these concepts can be further integrated in networking theory.

References


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Publication 3. Digital natives Facebook readiness for online entrepreneurial learning in small transition economies

Oliana Sula
Abstract

Young students in small transition economies are digital natives and active users of online social networks. Entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial opportunities may arise from their activity in online social networks. In order to take advantage from the entrepreneurial education potential of online social networks, Facebook readiness must be determined. Facebook is the most widespread online social network globally even there are many recent controversies about how young people use it and how the limits and the impacts of its usage can be defined. The aim of this paper is to analyze different constructs and their respective structure, which determine Facebook readiness for entrepreneurial purposes in a small open economy such as Albania. This study employs mixed methods approach. Quantitative data from were collected from a questionnaire distributed to Albanian students and analyzed with Exploratory Factor Analysis technique where structure of seven constructs of Facebook readiness for entrepreneurial purposes were determined. Qualitative data are collected from focus groups and interviews and they are used to analyze two other implications of online social networking readiness such as support from online mentors and online entrepreneurial orientation. Focus groups were arranged in Tallinn and Helsinki with Estonian, Finish and international Erasmus+ students served to explore further on the challenges of Facebook readiness for entrepreneurial learning compared to other online social networks and focusing on the online networking mentoring dimension. 12 semi-structured interviews were realized with more experienced Albanian and Estonian young entrepreneurs in order to explore entrepreneurial learning orientation.

Key words: Facebook Readiness, Online Entrepreneurial Learning, Online Mentoring, Online entrepreneurial learning strategies

Introduction

Facebook born within the academic context with 2.23 billion users in 2018 (Statistica, 2018) is the most used online social network globally. “Being in Facebook” is not any more exceptional but it is rather more something very common and conventional even in small transition economies in South Eastern Europe such Albania. Networking in Facebook is an opportunity for young students to increase their offline and online participation in different fields of interest.
The distinctive potential of using Facebook for educational purposes has been affirmed from different scholars worldwide (Barczyk & Duncan, 2013; Joosten, 2012) putting emphasis in the knowledge sharing process that implies. Entrepreneurial education has been part of the curricula in Business Degree programs in Albania after the year 2000. The country is a small country with one of the youngest populations in Europe, the tendency of choosing business orientated academic degrees has increased especially after the fall of communism.

Public policies in Albania tend to focus more and more in incentivizing towards entrepreneurship especially for young students enrolled in Business Degree programs in higher education institutions.

Integrating online social network dimension to entrepreneurial learning can be beneficial for students (Welsh & Dragusin, 2013) because the future of internet assumes that even though young students are born digital that should be ready to embrace digital transformation.

Facebook presence overcomes geographical boarders and more than just entertainment online social networks when contacts are more than just contacts but friends it can represent an opportunity for entrepreneurial learning in a global perspective. In Albania, there are currently 1.4 million Facebook users (Statcounter, 2018). Nevertheless, young students in Albania need to be prepared for Facebook entrepreneurial learning.

The purpose of this paper is to explore how readiness to use Facebook for young student entrepreneurial learning can be developed in the context of a small open economy in Europe such as Albania having an emphasis as well as well on the dimensions on further support from online mentors and online entrepreneurial learning orientation emphasis. The methodological approach of this study is mixed methods. Quantitative data was collected from a questionnaire distributed to young Albanian students in Business Degree at the University “Aleksandër Mosiu” Durrës and at the University of Tirana during the Spring semester 2018. Qualitative data was collected from focus groups realized during the end of academic year 2018 at Estonian Business School in Helsinki and Tallinn with Estonian, Finnish and international students from Erasmus+ program with the aim to further analyze the constructs of the study and compare with another cultural context. The second part of qualitative data that focused more in exploring online entrepreneurial learning orientation was collected through semi-
structured interviews realized with more experienced Albanian and Estonian young experienced entrepreneurs during Summer 2018 and through using online social networks as interviewing tool. Quantitative data from survey was analyzed through Exploratory Factor Analysis technique in order to determine structure, seven constructs were determined, qualitative data was analyzed through manual thematic analysis, determining firstly from codes, and themes emerged.

In the second section literature in the field is review, methodology employed in the study corresponds to the third section, findings are presented in the fourth session, the paper concludes with discussion and conclusions in the fifth session.

2. Literature review

2.1 Facebook: online educational social network for international entrepreneurial learning

Online social networks and especially Facebook through merging, web technology and social and interactive characteristics have drawn the attention of educators and students. Facebook became famous as for its “social” connectivity between end users. It is considered to be the principal online social network adopted from students for educational purposes (Roblyer et al, 2010). Scholars and public opinion are more and more concerned about how to transform entertaining and online interaction dimensions in learning incentives for young student Facebook end users, according to Shannon et al (2016) Facebook is used actively and increasingly from students for academic matters and they are more likely to commit in educational learning process in Facebook and to participate in educational activities in Facebook (Al-Ralmi et al., 2014). Young students in Facebook are not only consumers of knowledge but they can be producers of knowledge, this process is facilitated by the feature of instant sharing of information. Online social networks are not anymore just a way of getting in touch with others; knowledge is created and share (Johnston, Chen & Hauman, 2013). Recent studies also show that young students value collaborative features of Facebook (Manasijevic et al., 2016), young students as learners are challenged with learning environment that they can use inside and outside formal higher education settings. As suggested by Johannessen (2018) Facebook is a relevant online social networking platform for sharing different types of content.
Entrepreneurship is a learning process as entrepreneurs and especially young entrepreneurs require information, skills and funding in order to start their business activities. International entrepreneurial learning is concerned with how young people construct the process of recognizing and acting opportunities with focus on organizing and managing the new venture (Rae, 2010). Entrepreneurial competence is by far a “hot topic” for society and academia (Young, 2014). According to Gupta and Bharadwaj (2013), business and universities education model for teaching and learning entrepreneurship should be reconsidered as this model goes beyond the higher education institution, focus should be put on the typology of learning process. Networking with others especially in online social networks is carried out because entrepreneurs depend on leverage that they can get from networks especially in promoting and shaping new ideas (Porter et al., 2005). Entrepreneurial network must add value to the nascent entrepreneur (Foxton and Jones, 2011). Benson (2010) argues that young students who are new comers in the business field are keener to use online social networks for business purposes. In small transition economies such as Albania which coincide more with the Bazar-type economy suggested by Dana et al (2008) where the most important dimension of network is the relational dimension, online social networks such as Facebook can contribute to further widen entrepreneurial learning opportunities to an international dimension and with equal chances with other digital born peers.

In the learning process Facebook, definition for some scholars would be more compatible with the construct of a learning tool for young students (Irwin et al., 2012); learning dimension of Facebook should go beyond pedagogical benefits for the students. Young students are native speakers of the “digital language” as there is a tendency to label them as digital natives or digital born, for them Facebook is more than just a tool in the learning process.

Recent studies from Buckenmeyer et al. (2016) have shown that social networks offer learning possibilities and different learning tools that facilitate their learning processes. Some Facebook features allows creating groups and groups timeline in to support the teaching and learning process of any curriculum subject through peer mentoring and tutoring support, it is as well a research tool where young students as learners can share, post content and discuss on different topics facilitated by instant communication features. With Facebook young students can be everywhere in every time, it is an engaging platform with an international outreach that can be used for personal and professional development. The sense of community through Facebook can be transferred from online to offline (Burt, 2010).
Online social networks can empower young students as digital natives to learn how to better use learning tools (Barr, 2016). Facebook cannot be considered as a “single learning tool”, it is a social educational learning network that includes different learning tools that combined with facilitation offered by networking structure. It offers to students “behind the scenes” opportunities of education that complement international entrepreneurial learning. While taking into consideration learning dimension of Facebook, it cannot be reduced just as a learning tool, Facebook as an online social educational network should be retained as a construct. Thus the theoretical construct that is more compatible to this study is social educational networking because it implies the use of online social networks for educational purposes (Davis, 2010). In entrepreneurship education networks can influence social processes which make mobilization easier (Greve, 1995) and an entrepreneur can gain different sources of information which help to develop the best business tactics (Chamlee-Wright, 2008).

Facebook remains the most popular online social network in the world. Some scholars as argue that the use of Facebook, Utomo (2015) argues that Facebook can used for entrepreneurial purposes even in collectivist societies. Facebook is not only a platform that it is easily accessible from every young student even in small transition economies such as Albania but as Room (2013) suggests Facebook and social media in general can help in promoting entrepreneurship. In collectivist contexts, using online social networks for international entrepreneurial learning from young digitally born entrepreneurs requires a certain degree of readiness that goes beyond traditional awareness about entrepreneurship education and traditional entrepreneurial learning outcomes. It is not sufficient just to be an active user of Facebook; there are other dimensions that determine Facebook readiness for entrepreneurial purposes by young students within Facebook as an entrepreneurial learning environment.

2.2 From social presence to young student online social networking readiness

Readiness is generally described as willingness or preparedness of an individual or of an organization for a particular action. Furthermore, e-readiness can be defined as with users with user’s competencies to trust on technology acceptance (Venkatesh et al., 2012); e-readiness tools help to cut time, cost and efforts (Beig et al., 2007). Social media readiness
can be defined as the extent to which an individual or an organization is willing able and prepared to use social media for professional purposes or professional development.

A current definition links social media readiness for entrepreneurship purposes especially focusing in young students. Levis and Clark (2006) elaborate a conceptual framework of youth entrepreneurship readiness taking into account the fact that young students in order to be entrepreneurs must be ready which is equivalent of possessing related knowledge and skills. Some scholars such as (Conduras et al, 2016) will focus as well in defining entrepreneurship readiness of young students as the ability of young people to explore various opportunities and the use of skills and capabilities to analyze the environment in order to channel their creative and productivity potential. Different factors may influence entrepreneurship readiness personal traits, family background, prior experience as well as social attachments and social networks (Macke and Markley, 2003).

Facebook is the most used online social network by young students, but even though much of research related to Facebook use for entrepreneurship has increased in the last years, there is not yet such a definition about entrepreneurial Facebook readiness for young students. It differs from other online social networks because it has an online and offline trend (Ross et al., 2009).

Thus it is important to clarify as well that most of the students are conscious that they have social presence in Facebook which it is traditionally composed by two elements intimacy (interpersonal) and mediated social presence (asynchronous versus synchronous) as defined by Short et al. (1976), social presence theory estimates that communication through media, in general, depend on the combination of both dimensions of intimacy and intermediacy. In terms of entrepreneurial learning young student should be able to get an advantage from their social presence in Facebook.

Several dimensions can create a puzzle of Facebook readiness for entrepreneurial learning for young as construct. Barsegian (2011) would underline that one of the main motivations of using Facebook in the learning process from young students are access to information and knowledge sharing. Živkovic et al. (2016) conclude as well that one of the main motivations of using Facebook in the learning process is material/resource sharing, exchanging practical information, sharing experiences and learning
from discussions not only with peers but the wider network. Information access and knowledge sharing as well as communication are the main component of student interaction that is generated in Facebook. Several studies confirm that social media and Facebook in particular may have a positive impact on student interaction (Junco et al., 2013, Al-Rahmi et al., 2015). On the other hand, collaborative learning is characterized not just by student connections but as well as by student interactions. Students can build learning communities through Facebook by working collaboratively (Kabilan et al., 2010) especially through multiple collaboration not just with peers but with their wider online ties in different topics, discussion and creative entrepreneurial projects (Fewkes and McCabe, 2012) which are reinforced as well by creating, updating and maintaining group activities (Aydin, 2012) especially through the Facebook group tool.

Multitasking in Facebook is characterized in engaging in several tasks while using Facebook in the entrepreneurial learning process, Wu (2015) estimates that young students although can have distraction in the learning process while using Facebook still can construct a kind of awareness through using social media notification tools for example that make them aware of selecting and processing learning-related things. Another facility that provides Facebook for young students in the entrepreneurial learning process as an online social network is online social networking monitoring that according to Kasper et al. (2011) consist in opportunity and event recognition, competitor analysis, trends and market research, influencer detection and product and innovation development. Young students just by using the right automated tools and content filters can quickly catch useful information and store knowledge, Facebook pages offer instant analytics to users (Lim et al., 2015) and to identify relevant learning outcomes for entrepreneurial purposes and learn about entrepreneurial opportunities (Lam, 2012). Although Facebook can be misperceived as just an entertainment online social network for young student, entrepreneurial learning can still be an entertaining and useful process which is facilitating by constant changing sharing Facebook features which do not include only text but as well as multimedia, audio, videos, instant messaging, instant messaging for business, documents, live videos, animated videos and instant stories. Combining the dimensions of knowledge sharing, interaction and entertainment in the entrepreneurial learning process in Facebook, these online social networks offers to young student’s instant gratification through motivating them and responding to their entrepreneurial learning needs (Kink and Hess, 2008). Facebook readiness for entrepreneurial learning puzzle cannot be completed without
exploring advantages and disadvantages of Facebook as an online social network for entrepreneurial learning among young students in a small open economy such as Albania.

2.3 Opportunities and challenges of Facebook for young student entrepreneurial learning in a small open economy

Facebook remains a fascinating online social network for young students even in small open economies such as Albania. It is has become a cliché to admit that young students are spending too much time in online social networks especially in Facebook (Gafni and Deri, 2012). On the other hand, there is an aspect of the time construct, which is real-time, and instantaneity that offers Facebook as online social network can redefine time-efficiency construct of using Facebook for entrepreneurial learning purposes from young students. Speed and reactivity are two other characteristics that can be considered as benefit while using Facebook for entrepreneurial learning purposes (Salway et al., 2008). Young students can develop their own learning identity and advance in their autonomous learning process (Pasfield-Neofitou, 2011). Autonomy and independence is essential not just in the entrepreneurial learning process but as well for the entrepreneur which should be able to be independent but at the other hand networking is essential not just for co-creative projects but as well for individual projects, Facebook does not offer the possibility to connect with strong and weak ties but it enhances as well the possibility to build effective entrepreneurial teams (Khajeheian, 2013). Reuber and Fischer estimate that online visibility and online social networks are an important source for the pursuit of international entrepreneurial opportunities. Another main advantage is overall is that Facebook is a cost-convenient especially for young students in small open economies (Wang et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, there are some barriers in using Facebook for entrepreneurial learning purposes by young students. As it was identified by a study performed with Albanian and Estonian students by Sula and Elenurm (2017) these online social networking barriers were identified: privacy and confidentiality problems, lack of social interaction and communication barriers with can be accelerated from some technical barriers that implies virtual communication, isolated learning process and cultural problems. Contextual change while using Facebook for entrepreneurial learning purposes implies as well problems connected with physical distance in the virtual context, which excludes face-to-face interaction (Berge, 2013).
Lack of time for learning and lack of appropriate tools can challenge as well entrepreneurial learning process in Facebook by young students (Al-Mashaqbeh, 2015).

In order to take advantage from opportunities and face challenges young students must rely on online networking competencies and support from appropriate expertise.

2.4 Online networking competencies and expertise and implications for online entrepreneurial learning orientation

Ala-Mutka (2011) considers that competencies are crucial for Facebook learning readiness. Within the framework of the current research, most focus is put studying digital competencies and their influence in digital readiness in learning processes in general. Digital competencies refer to sets of knowledge, skills and attitudes relating to the effective use of digital technologies, they differ from from basic ICT skills. Different frameworks have been proposed for digital skills such as the framework developed by Van Dijk and Van Deursen (2014) which focuses on functional skills of citizens in order to access government, health and entertainment information online, whilst Eshet Alklai and Chajut (2010) focused in the “thinking component” of the digital competencies that refers to those competencies that can enable people to process more diverse information and knowledge. Online networking competencies are more specific just that simple digital competencies. They combine the awareness to use online social networks and collaboration tools in online social networks that can be provided by digital competencies frameworks and the network competencies that through different relationships build within online social networks can empower young student with entrepreneurial knowledge (Kamyabi and Devi, 2011). A pilot study conducted with Albanian and Estonian students during the academic year 2013-2014 by Sula and Elenurm (2014) determined a set of online networking competencies, which include technical competencies, creative competencies, storytelling competencies, communication competencies, relationship building competencies, interpersonal competencies, and monitoring competencies.

Online social networking such as Facebook represent a new opportunity to rely and facilitate mentoring and expertise support services for students in their entrepreneurial learning process. Online social networking mentorship can help to promote and share personal, professional and entrepreneurial
development Shpigelman (2014). In the literature there are not yet specific contributions focusing on the leverage that young student can get from online social networking mentoring for entrepreneurial purposes even though guidance, feedback and the relationship build between mentor are important elements in leveraging online social mentoring in Facebook learning for entrepreneurial purposes.

Facebook remains an active actor in personal and professional development of young students especially in a small open economy such as Albania where Facebook can be considered as a window of learning opportunities for young students. This study explores how entrepreneurial learning in online Facebook can be developed in order to support readiness for young students in small transition economies and specifically in Albania.

Collaborative feature of online social networks facilitates learning process. Young student learners can take in the information that may change their type of knowledge that may be applied in new situations (Benson et al., 2010).

The approaches of action orientation focused entrepreneurial learning and collaborative context that offers online social networks can be integrated online social media readiness. Entrepreneurial learning orientation plays an important in young entrepreneurial learning processes in online social networks. As Elenurm et al (2007) suggest three types of orientation can be distinguished: an imitative entrepreneurial orientation that implies not just copying other’s entrepreneurs ideas but as well a readiness to monitor new trends and best practices in the markets, this kind of orientation limits the entrepreneur to be ready to share knowledge and opportunities in online social media settings. Individual entrepreneurial orientation would be suitable for young students that operate in domestic markets where production differentiation is the main competitive advantage, this kind of orientation can be useful for long-term research and development but when the entrepreneur is not involved with the ecosystem, there is a risk to be let out of the ecosystem.

The co-creative orientation is the most evident reflection of the emerging online social and network economy and digital transformation especially in open innovation assumes the use of purposive flows of knowledge to accelerate internal innovation and simultaneously to expand markets for external use of innovation (Chesbrough et al., 2006). Co-creative orientation assumes competencies for applying knowledge received from
other networking partners but also competencies for sharing entrepreneur’s knowledge in order to create value for other network members.

Another aspect to be considered in online social network readiness and entrepreneurial learning orientation is the influence that the young student can create in online social network in the knowledge sharing processes. Online social networking influencer orientation is not concept that is explored previously in literature. Online social media influencer is explored traditionally as according to Forbes (2016) is and kind of status can shape the attitudes, actions and opinions of other people in their network. Although individual within the context of online social networks while interacting with other peers can take leadership positions and influence with their ideas and expertise, this will determine their entrepreneurial knowledge seeking opportunities within the context of online social networks. Young people particularly tend to be influenced by other peers who have a certain reputation and high status in entrepreneurial knowledge sharing processes (Xiang et al., 2015). Influencer orientation would require a more elevated and elaborated of knowledge and higher recognition or experience in the field.

Learning orientations for entrepreneurial purposes are not explored yet theoretically in the literature and especially in the context of small developing economies.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection

There is not a specific research focusing in readiness of young students in order to use Facebook as an entrepreneurial learning platform. Especially in the context of Albanian students or South Eastern European students, more contributions are needed in the emerging field of online social networks and especially Facebook. Mixed methods approach was used in order to assure data triangulation in order to develop the concept of Facebook readiness.

Firstly a questionnaire was distributed to Albanian students enrolled in Business Degree programs at the University “Aleksandër Moisiu” Durrës and University of Tirana in spring semester 2018, secondly comparative focus groups were realized in Tallinn and in Helsinki at the end of academic year 2018 during the course of Business in Virtual Networks at Estonian Business School in Tallinn and Helsinki. Semi-interviews were realized via
online social networks with more 12 experienced young entrepreneurs (8 from Albania and 4 from Estonia) which were former students or that were connected with the higher education institutions. Semi-structured interviews were realized during Summer 2018 and the semi-structured interviews contained specific question about entrepreneurial learning orientations.

This study used an online questionnaire to explore how readiness in using Facebook as entrepreneurial learning platform for young students in Albania can be implemented. The survey was carried out during the spring semester 2018 with young students in Albania, more than 1000 questionnaires were sent having as respondents 489 students.

The survey contained 6 main sections: demographic, Facebook as an online learning network, online networking advantages for learning, online networking disadvantages for learning, online networking competencies, online mentoring and expertise. In the demographic session were students asked to specify their name, their age and their nationality. The other sessions contained 5 point Likert scale questions ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree and the 5 remaining sessions contained in total 35 items retrieved from literature review and resumed in Table 1.

Table 1 Inventory of Likert scale Items included in the survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rationale basis</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>access to entrepreneurial information and knowledge</td>
<td>Facebook entrepreneurial learning network (Al-Rahmi 2015; Aydin 2012; Barsegian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parallel processing of information and multitasking</td>
<td>2011; Fewkes and McCabe 2012; Junco et al. 2013; Kabilan et al. 2010; Kasper et</td>
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<tr>
<td>multimedia and text diversity</td>
<td>2011; Kink and Hess 2008; Lam 2012; Lim et al. 2015; Ross et al. 2009; Wu 2015;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relevant entrepreneurial learning gratification and instant reward</td>
<td>Živkovic et al. 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social monitoring of information updating group activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time efficiency</td>
<td>Advantages of entrepreneurial learning in online networks (Khajeheian, 2013;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication flexibility</td>
<td>Pasfield-Neofitou 2011; Salway et al. 2008; Wang et al., 2011;)</td>
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<tr>
<td>speed and reactivity</td>
<td></td>
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<td>cost efficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>international opportunities</td>
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<td>flexibility</td>
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<td>easiness in team building</td>
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<td>autonomy</td>
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<td>easiness in relying in support and help</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Rationale basis</td>
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<tr>
<td>privacy concerns</td>
<td>Disadvantages of entrepreneurial learning in online networks (Al-Mashaqbeh, 2015; Berge, 2013; Sula and Elenurm, 2017)</td>
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<tr>
<td>lack of trust</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>lack of time</td>
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<td>physical distance</td>
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<td>isolated learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>lack of interaction</td>
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<td>lack of collaboration</td>
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<td>communication problems</td>
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<td>technical problems</td>
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<td>lack of working culture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>lack of appropriate virtual tools</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>technical competencies</td>
<td>Online networking competencies (Al-Mutka, 2011; Eshet Alklai and Chajut, 2010; Kamyabi and Devi, 2011; Sula and Elenurm, 2014; Van Dijk and Van Deursen, 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creative competencies</td>
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<td>storytelling competencies</td>
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<td>collaborative competencies</td>
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<td>communication competencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship building competencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monitoring competencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpersonal competencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert/mentor offers entrepreneurial learning guidance online</td>
<td>Online mentoring (Shpigelman, 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert/mentor helps to enhance online entrepreneurial contacts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert/mentor makes learning process comfortable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert/mentor needs to have online experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback is immediate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration is more flexible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These items were retrieved from previous literature review, as the concept of Facebook readiness is not a construct explored from literature, there is a need of determining the structure of constructs and relevance of constructs composing Facebook readiness.

### 3.2 Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis from survey was analyzed through employing Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with the software SPSS to determine the underlying dimensional structure and validity of constructs through identifying the factors that will validate the constructs. After collected data was cleaned and it was subjected to normality and outer testing. EFA
process provides a systemic factorial technique. Varimax Rotation was applied to determine the dimensionality of the measure. Items that failed to meet the loading requirement were removed for further analysis. From 42 items, only 33 items were retained for further analysis. Each of the factors identified meet the satisfactory level of internal consistency and adequacy.

Part of focus groups discussions were conducted in class during the course of Business in Virtual Networks at Estonian Business School in Tallinn and in Helsinki. Finnish, Estonian and International Erasmus students, composed the groups. Albanian and international students in general are active users of Facebook, challenges of readiness in using online social networks for entrepreneurial learning were discussed in another cultural context where the course itself is focused in Business in Virtual Networks. Then in class discussion were lead by the instructor having as principal questions focused on student how students can take leverage from the different entrepreneurial learning opportunities in Facebook compared to other online social networks and what kind of attitude do they undertake in their entrepreneurial learning in Facebook and in online social networks in general. The other part of the focus took place in Canvas where students posted different comments about their entrepreneurial learning experience in Facebook and in other online social networks in general. Focus groups usually are analyzed with grounded theory analysis. Data coding, data in chunked into small units and the researcher attaches a small code to each unit, codes are grouped in themes. Thematic analysis was used as well for semi-structured interviews.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Results from survey

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), which measures the sampling adequacy, is .82, which is above the recommended value of .5; the Bartlet Test of Sphericity is also significant (p< .05). Communalities indicate the degree with which each factor explains a percentage of the variance Varimax rotation, which is with orthogonal nature, was applied was applied to maximize the variance of squared loadings of each factor on all items in factor matrix. Factors were retained based on Pallant(2007) having as a general rule of acceptance of .3 and confirming that most of the items shared some common variance with other items. Items : gratification and instant reward, communication
flexibility, flexibility, privacy, lack of trust, technical competencies, expert/mentor offers entrepreneurial learning guidance online, expert/mentor needs to have online experience did not meet the requirement and analysis was carried out without these elements. Seven factors that can be retained from the analysis explain 54% of the variance. These factors are labeled as: online networking learning competencies, Facebook learning environment, need for a friendly online learning community, operational benefits, opportunities for collaborative learning, support from online mentors and need to adapt to virtual learning reality.

In table, 2 there are resumed the main findings from Exploratory Factor Analysis.

Table 2 Exploratory Factor Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number and name of Factor</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Communalities</th>
<th>Loading</th>
<th>Alpha of Cronbach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Online networking learning competencies</td>
<td>creative competencies</td>
<td>.491</td>
<td>.600</td>
<td>.827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>storytelling competencies</td>
<td>.419</td>
<td>.619</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collaborative competencies</td>
<td>.523</td>
<td>.741</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>communication competencies</td>
<td>.646</td>
<td>.769</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relationship building competencies</td>
<td>.606</td>
<td>.765</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>social monitoring competencies</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td>.751</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interpersonal competencies</td>
<td>.480</td>
<td>.647</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and name of Factor</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Communalities</td>
<td>Loading</td>
<td>Alpha of Cronbach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Facebook learning environment</strong></td>
<td>access to entrepreneurial information and knowledge</td>
<td>.485</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td>.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parallel processing of information and multitasking</td>
<td>.449</td>
<td>.628</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>multimedia and text diversity</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td>.673</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relevant entrepreneurial learning</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.677</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>social monitoring of information</td>
<td>.422</td>
<td>.573</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>updating group activities</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.672</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Need for a friendly online learning community</strong></td>
<td>lack of time</td>
<td>.417</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td>.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>physical distance</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>.829</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>isolated learning</td>
<td>.646</td>
<td>.808</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lack of interaction</td>
<td>.551</td>
<td>.682</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lack of collaboration</td>
<td>.533</td>
<td>.634</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 Operational benefits</strong></td>
<td>time efficiency</td>
<td>.663</td>
<td>.446</td>
<td>.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>speed and reactivity</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cost efficiency</td>
<td>.789</td>
<td>.639</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>international opportunities</td>
<td>.645</td>
<td>.534</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 Opportunities for collaborative learning</strong></td>
<td>easiness in team building</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>.615</td>
<td>.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>autonomy</td>
<td>.800</td>
<td>.644</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>easiness in relying in support and help</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>.628</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 Support from online mentors</strong></td>
<td>Expert/mentor helps to enhance online entrepreneurial contacts</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>.570</td>
<td>.756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expert/mentor makes learning process comfortable</td>
<td>.658</td>
<td>.468</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback is immediate</td>
<td>.715</td>
<td>.527</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboration is more flexible</td>
<td>.703</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and name of Factor</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Communalities</td>
<td>Loading</td>
<td>Alpha of Cronbach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Need to adapt to virtual learning reality</td>
<td>technical problems</td>
<td>.645</td>
<td>.499</td>
<td>.719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lack of working culture</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>.662</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lack of appropriate virtual tools</td>
<td>.804</td>
<td>.674</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the seven factors show a satisfactory reliability $\alpha > .7$.

**Factor 1: Online networking competencies:** is composed primarily by competency dimension related to the dimension of communicating, collaborating, building and maintaining relationships with others whilst it is important to maintain online social presence and profile through storytelling competencies. Creative competencies and monitoring which is essential in the online knowledge management process are relevant as well. Technical competencies somehow were not relevant, it can be assumed that somehow, young students in Albania perceive them more as basic ICT skills or they consider themselves as friendly users of Facebook that is the most popular online social network in the country.

**Factor 2: Facebook entrepreneurial learning environment:** Relevant knowledge exchange, processing, and monitoring through the appropriate text and multimedia tools make Facebook an entrepreneurial learning environment, group feature allows to add the collaborative and learning community dimension.

**Factor 3: Need for a friendly online learning community** – the biggest challenges for the young student as entrepreneurial learner in Albania are physical distance, lack time, isolated learning and lack of interaction and collaboration that can be perceived as how young students perceive their entrepreneurial learning journey within the Facebook community where they can feel connected and disconnected at the same time.

**Factor 4: Operational benefits** – are mainly relation to operational features of Facebook as an online social network such as real time feedback, costless services, Facebook is everywhere and international opportunities can be everywhere.

**Factor 5 Opportunities for collaborative learning** – raise from the fact that through Facebook team activities can be build and maintained more easily.
while relying in help and support and not being stuck between independence and interdependence in the learning process.

*Factor 6 Support from online mentors* - online mentor can be considered as that “Facebook friend” that gives you immediate feedback and access to contacts through a collaborative friendly process within the Facebook learning environment. Online mentor is more a friend rather and “a know-everything guru”.

*Factor 7 Need to adapt to virtual learning reality* – is challenge due to digital transformation of the learning process that needs the appropriate tools, learning culture and problem solving that maybe complicated with technical problem that young students do not face in the physical world.

Factors from Exploratory factor analysis can be grouped in terms of challenges and for developing Facebook readiness as online social network readiness for entrepreneurial learning. Challenges for developing online social networking readiness for learning emerge from: the need to adapt to the virtual learning reality followed by the need that the student has as at any stage of the entrepreneurial process for a friendly learning community. Benefits emerge from some operational benefits, the learning environment that provides Facebook in terms of learning as mentioned in Factor 2, as well as opportunities for collaborative learning, support from online mentors and online networking competencies.

### 4.2 Results from focus groups and semi-structured interviews

#### 4.2.1 Results from focus groups

From the focus groups realized in different context from Albanian context such as Finnish and Estonian context with classes containing international Erasmus students in offline(in class setting) and online(through posting comments in Canvas) 8 codes with 2 main themes were identified: need to building an entrepreneurial learning culture in Facebook. Focus groups questions were not specifically focused in Facebook readiness but more in general to online social networks in general and Facebook came out as an answer in all the answers of students together with LinkedIn.
Table 3 Themes from focus groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: Need to build a learning entrepreneurial culture in Facebook</th>
<th>Theme 2: Support from online mentors is not just expertise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Codes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Codes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- over populated network</td>
<td>- expertise sometimes does not have focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- sharing platform mainly for entertainment purpose</td>
<td>- young students maybe can be sometimes distracted and not interested in expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- people get stuck in the “friend” perspective of Facebook</td>
<td>- Young people even though in online social networks can find many influencers; they should believe that they could be themselves influencers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Young people may are not focused or motivated to look for opportunities in this network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- there is a lack of entrepreneurial ambition in Facebook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme 1: Need to build a learning entrepreneurial culture in Facebook**

Even though the focus group sessions were conducted in Tallinn and in Helsinki in a different cultural and social context from Albania, still the use of Facebook for entertainment purposes dominates compared to the use of Facebook for learning purposes from young people. “Absence of ambition”, “absence of motivation” aspects as identified from coding processes show that students need to adapt to new online learning entrepreneurial learning culture and readiness can facilitate its building process within business school mindset while appropriating students with the adequate knowledge and skills.

**Theme 2: Support from online mentors is not just expertise**

The construct of expertise itself for many young students can be related to some kind of formal knowledge transfer, young students are more attracted from an immediate feedback that can be provided from instant interaction in online social network. Nevertheless the construct of influencer is related to online social networks but young generation is far from having idols and gurus, everyone in Facebook is a peer.

In focus groups most participants mentioned the importance of LinkedIn for their professional development because as a student pointed out:

…LinkedIn is focuses more on like-minded people ambitious people that like to post about their work and achievements in online social networks…
In Estonian and in Finnish context and maybe in a more generalized Western European context, LinkedIn is an online social network that is wide spread among young whilst in the context of South Eastern Europe and more specifically in Albania LinkedIn is not very popular among young people. It is important to define as well what important to define how learning with peers can be achieved through LinkedIn as interaction process in this platform is different from Facebook.

4.2.2 Results from semi-structured interviews

From thematic analysis of the 12 semi-structured interviews combined with some insights provided from Focus groups, three typologies of learning orientation can be determined:

Solo entrepreneurial learning orientation—this kind of orientation corresponds more to the features of individual orientation as proposed by Elenurm et al. (2007). This kind of online entrepreneurial learning usually corresponds to the process of discovery of online social networks and in particular, of Facebook as a platform that offers learning possibilities. As one participant from the semi-structured interviews would admit that at the beginning of his journey in online social networks he could not understand some simple features such as the appropriate use of an hashtag or how to appropriately search and benefit from different sources of knowledge content provided for example in the feature of Facebook groups.

…One was always feels the need to have assistance from the network in order to not get lost…

Online collaborative learning entrepreneurial orientation

As firstly it was suggested in focus groups, the more involved you are in online social networks the more you are realized that you cannot be alone. Especially as one participant in the semi-structured interviews would admit, the feature of Facebook groups is key for developing collaborative learning. In these groups, everyone is keen to share knowledge and opportunities; one example mentioned was the group of Start Ups in Albania when even foreigner young students seek for knowledge and business opportunities in the country. One participant from Albania would share its own experience of failure of its Start Up project that did not limit him from sharing knowledge and its own experience in Facebook and in other online social
networks. Collaboration in Facebook allowed to a participant from Albania to manage transition for marketing and sales from Facebook to other online social networks. A participant from Estonia admitted that collaboration generated more synergy for him and its business partner. As one participant from Albania would suggest collaboration is not just about to reach target audiences with a business to consumer approach, it is all about learning.

**Influencer online entrepreneurial orientation**

As a participant from Albania who was influencer in the field of e-commerce would share its own experience and perspective, him as influencer has had a moment of stagnation and he had to reinvent himself and its business model with the help with an Indian influencer that he managed to encounter in a Facebook group about sales. Another participant from Albania admits that while changing the country the interaction with the audience changed, the role of influencer was questioned.

…Even if people are coming back constantly to me I do not feel an influencer…

A participant from Albania that manages the Facebook group about Startups in Albania does not feel as a guru in his field. An Estonian participant suggested that even at some point everyone influenced someone or has been influenced from someone, in entrepreneurial knowledge transfer you cannot be a guru.

In terms of readiness collaboration will always be the ultimate destination even for the young student or the young entrepreneur whom has a solo entrepreneurial orientation or an influencer entrepreneurial learning orientation.

**5. Discussion and Conclusion**

In the literature there are not yet contributions that studies that analyze Facebook perspective as an entrepreneurial learning network for young people in small open economies in Southern Europe and more specifically in the case of Albania. In general, even in a more generalized global context literature focuses in the educational potential of Facebook without considering the entrepreneurial learning potential. This study explored through quantitative and qualitative methods how Facebook entrepreneurial
learning readiness. Findings from statistical analysis using with data from survey performed in Albania shown that Facebook readiness is composed from seven constructs need for a friendly online learning community, operational benefits, opportunities for collaborative learning, support from online mentors and need to adapt to virtual learning reality. These constructs show that young students’ readiness is beneficial for entrepreneurial learning but at the other hand young students need to adapt to challenges that arise from virtual learning environment in Facebook, digital transition is even more complicated in the case of small transition economies such as Albania. Focus groups performed in a different cultural and social context in Tallinn and in Helsinki shown that in order for student to be ready to use Facebook for entrepreneurial learning purposes more effort should be put in building a friendly culture of entrepreneurial learning Facebook, in the survey it was highlighted as well through the constructs of need of a friendly online learning community and need to adapt with virtual reality.

In Albania LinkedIn is not a very well-know online social network among young students, a challenge for educators is to build capacities in online social networking tools to young people focusing in the different potential that every online social network for entrepreneurial learning purposes. Facebook readiness at one hand is a catalyst of entrepreneurial learning as it connects young students to a global accessible network but at other hand entrepreneurial learning in Facebook remains in a “taboo” in both cultural contexts, Facebook is beneficial when it comes to its instant and real-time collaborative features, young students still do not perceive clearly Facebook as a learning environment due to its informal and entertainment character. Based on the results of the semi-structured interviews collaborative orientation is key element for developing online entrepreneurial learning in the context of online social networks such as Facebook. The solo learner or the influencer learner will always tend to go towards collaboration orientation in order to establish their presence in such a network.

One recommendation for future research direction is that maybe more effort should be put in integrating Facebook and other online social network such as mentioned from young students LinkedIn as educational entrepreneurial in higher education curricula and entrepreneurial learning activities. In the process of entrepreneurial knowledge transfer in online social networks emphasis should be put on online networking competencies and support that can be provided from an online mentor that escapes the idea of the traditional expert but that at the same time is not an influencer, in the survey was shown the online mentor was more someone considered as a peer in
the learning process that offers support rather than someone that is a know-everything guru. Future research direction can be towards the kind of support that young students need in the entrepreneurial learning process and the kind of orientation that young students have in the entrepreneurial learning process in online social networks especially in small open economies such as Albania.

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6. SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

KOKKUVÖTE

Ärivaldkonnas kõrgharidust omandavad noored tudengid on diginomaadid, kuivõrd nad on kasvanud digitaalsust väärstustavas keskkonnas. Veebipõhised sotsiaalvõrgustikud (OSN) kui digitaliseerumise peamine tagajärg on pöördeliselt muutnud elamise, käitumise ja õppimise viise. OSN muudab suhtlust, ärimisi otsuseid ja ärivöimalusi, sotsiaalset ja poliitilist kaasatust, õpikeskkonda, isiklikke suhteid, meeilelahutust ja vaba aega. Tänapäeval kasutavad kõrgkoolid OSN-i turunduslikel eesmärgidel oma sihtrühma kasvatamiseks ja brändingu mõju suurendamiseks, samal ajal muutub OSN ka uurimise- ja õppimise töövahendiks.

Noored tudengid on aktiivsed ja kogenud OSN-i kasutajad isegi väärest areneva majandusega Euroopa riikides. Ettevõtlusõpe kasvab kogu maailmas, nõudes uuenduslikke õppimisvõimalusi väljaspool ülikooli. OSN täiendab ettevõtluse õpetamise keskkonda auditooriumis ja suurendab tõenäosust leida piiriülemiseid ettevõtlusvõimalusi. OSN võib noori üliõpilasi viia kõikjale vaid ühe hiireklikiga. See kehtib ka Albaania puhul; OSNi saab muuta ettevõtluse ja piiriüleste ettevõtlusvõimaluste stiimuliks.

Käesolev uurimistöö põhineb vajadusel mõista, millist kasu saavad noored tudengid ettevõtlusõppest ja piiriülesest ettevõtlusvõimalustest OSN-is; seejärel on selle uurimistöö objekt valmisolek digitaalseid sotsiaalvõrgustikke kasutada (OSNR) noorte üliõpilaste ettevõtlusalaseks tegevuseks Euroopa väikeste areneva majandusega riigi tingimustes. OSN on veel väljaarendamata kontseptsioon OSN-i kasutamiseks noorte üliõpilaste ettevõtlusõppeks ja piiriülesteks ettevõtlusvõimalusteks väikestes areneva majandusega Euroopa riikides. Sellest tulenevalt on selle doktoriväitekirja uurimisprobleem sõnastatud keskse uurimisküsimusega: Kuidas oleks võimalik OSNR-i arendada ettevõtlusõppeks ja noorte üliõpilaste piiriüleste ettevõtlusvõimalusteks väikeste areneva majandusega Euroopa riikide kontekstis.

See doktoriväitekirja keskendub väikestele areneva majandusega Euroopa riikidele, võttes aluseks Albaania ja tuues välja mõned võrdlused Eestiga, mis on väike arenenud majandusega Euroopa riik. Need riigid jagavad ühist käsukindumise minevikku, kuid neil on olnud erinevad arenguteed.
Albaania on väike areneva majandusega Euroopa riik, millele on väljakutseks Euroopa Liiduga (EL) integratsioon. Eesti on EL-i kuulunud alates 2004. aastast. Digitaliseerumise tulemusena peetakse riiki Euroopas innovatsiooni ja ettevõtluse vordialaks.

Selle doktoritöö teoreetilise tausta analüüsimiseks on ühendatud kaks uurimissuunda: OSN-i valdkond ja ettevõttelise ühenduse valdkond, mis põhinevad OSN-i teadmusvoo mõõtmetel ja OSN-i struktuursetel ja suhete mõõtmeel, milleks on sidemed digitaalsetes võrgustikes. Ettevõtlushariduse valdkond on teatud määravat võimalikunenud ja OSN-i valdkond uudne uurimisvaldkond. Pärast OSN-i ja ettevõtlushariduse valdkonna integreerimisel pole hineva teoreetilise tausta analüüsimist ning lähtudes OSN-i teadmiste vo ja suhete mõõtmest, tuvastati peamised senise uurimistöö lüngad ja formuleeriti uurimisküsimused. Esiteks, kuna OSNR on varasemates uuringutes vähe arendatud teoreetiline kontseptsioon, on oluline kirjeldada OSNRi ettevõtlusõppe ja piiriüleste ettevõtlusvõimalustega seostatult, mistõttu sõnastati 1. uurimisküsimus järgmiselt - kuidas kirjeldada OSNRi ettevõtlusõppe ja piiriülese ettevõtluse seisukohast? Kuna OSNRi esimene komponent, milleks on veebisõltuv suhtluskommunikatsioon, on vähe arendatud, sõnastati 2. uurimisküsimus järgmiselt – millised sidusvõrgustiku kompetentsid määratlevad OSNRi noorte üliõpilaste jaoks väikestes areneva majandusega Euroopa riikides? OSNR-i teist komponenti, milleks on veebipõhised suhtluskommunikatsioonide suhete mõistmine, analüüsiti 3. uurimisküsimuse kaudu – millised veebipõhised suhtluskommunikatsioonide seotud takistused noored üliõpilased koossehitavad ettevõtolusalaste teadmiste jagamisel OSNi teid kaudu vääkestes areneva majandusega Euroopa riikides? 4. uurimisküsimus - milliseid veebipõhiseid juhendamis- ja ekspertstrateegiaid on vaja OSN-i valmisolekiks piiriülese noorte ettevõtluse korral vääkestes areneva majandusega Euroopa riikides?

Varasematest uuringutes ilmnenud ebaseõnedus OSNR-i mõju osas noorte tudengite ettevõtlusõppe ja piiriüleste võimaluste toetamisel viis 5. uurimisküsimuse sõnastamiseni - kuidas sidusvõrgustikud sidemed toetavad noorte üliõpilaste ettevõtlusõpet ja piiriüleseid ettevõtlusvõimalusi vääkestes areneva majandusega Euroopa riikides?

Kuna varasemates uuringutes pole selgitatud OSNR-i arendamist tooduksega ettevõtlusõppe mõõtmeele, siis formuleeriti 6. uurimisküsimus järgmiselt - kuidas saab kasutada ettevõtlusõpet OSN-is noorte üliõpilaste OSNR-i arendamiseks vääkestes areneva majandusega Euroopa riikides? Varasematest
uuringu test jää ebaselgeks OSNRi rakendamine ettevõtlusöppes ja piiriülestes ettevõtlusvõimalustes läbi veebipõhise ettevõtlusöpppe, mis viis 7. uurimisküsimuse sõnastamiseni - millised veebipõhised ettevõtlusöpppe suundumused OSNis on noore üliõpilase OSNRi jaoks vajalikud väikestes areneva majandusega Euroopa riikides?

Uurimisküsimustele vastamiseks on käesolev uurimistöö jagatud kolme osa, mille põhiseisukohad on avaldatud ja vastavad doktoritöö kaitsmise nõuetele.


Uuringu esimese osa fookus oli uurimisküsimustel 1.-4., keskendudes OSNRi komponentidele noorte tudengite ettevõtlusöppes ja piiriülestest ettevõtlusvõimalustel. Kvalitatiivseid andmeid koguti fookusgruppide ja poolstruktuurietritud pilootintervjuude kaudu Albannias ja Eestis. Kvantitatiivseid andmeid koguti Albannias ja Eestis levitatud poolstruktuerititud intervjuude puhul temaatilist analüüsi.


Uuringu kolmas osa vastab 6.-7. uurimisküsimusele. Kvantitatiivseid andmeid koguti Albannias levitatud lõpliku küsimustiku abil ning OSNi
kaudu läbi viidud poolstruktureeritud intervjuude abil Albaania ja Eesti kogunud noorte ettevõtjatega. Kvantitatiivsete andmete analüüsimeks kasutati faktoranalüüsi ja kvalitatiivseid andmeid analüüsiti temaatilise analüüsi abil.


OSNR-i toetamist analüüsiti 5. uurimisküsimusega. Albaania noorte üliõpilaste ja Eesti noorte üliõpilaste vahel ei ilmnenud oluliselt erinevusi veebipõhiste ja võrguühendusega ettevõtlusõppe ning piiriülestest
ettevõtlusvõimaluste eelistuste osas. OSN-is selgus uus sidemet tüüpide osas. OSN-i jaoks on Facebooki kontaktid isiklikud kontaktid, mis on kasulikud noortele üliõpilastele nende ettevõtlusprojekti alguses või enne seda, LinkedIn kontaktid on ametlikud seosed, mis on loodud LinkedInis. See OSN pole Albaania noorte tudengite hulgas populaarne, küll aga võib seda populaarseks pidada Eesti noorte üliõpilaste seas vaatamata selle tasuliste funktsioonidele. Facebooki gruppides moodustatud rühmasidemed võimaldavad noortel üliõpilastel õppida ja otsida piirirühleseid koostöövõimalusi spetsiaalsetes Facebooki gruppides.

Vastates 6. uurimisküsimusele selgus, et ettevõtluse OSNR tugineb Facebooki kasutamise valmidusele, kuivõrd Facebook on noorte üliõpilaste seas kõige levinum OSN kogu maailmas. Faktoranalüüs määrates lõplikust küsimustikust lähtudes oluliste faktorite struktuuri - sidusvõrgustike kompetentsid, Facebooki õpikeskkond ja vajadus söbraliku veebipõhise õpikogukonna järele, operatiivsed eelised, koostöööppe võimalused, tugi veebimentoritele ja vajadus kohaneda virtuaalse, Facebooki gruppides moodustatud rühmasidemed võimaldavad noortel üliõpilastel õppida ja otsida piirirühleseid koostöövõimalusi spetsiaalsetes Facebooki gruppides.


Selle uurimistöö üks peamisi piiranguid on kvalitatiivsete andmete kasutamine, kuna see piirab uuringu üldistatatavust. Teiseks piiranguks on vastajate eelarvamused, kuna uurija on ka ise õppejõud ja suhtleb igapäevaselt intervjuueeritud üliõpilastega, samas eeldavad kvalitatiivsed uuringud alati teatavat interaktiooni. Viimane piirang on seotud geograafilise ja kultuurilise vaatenuruga, kuna uuring on keskendunud vääkestele areneva majandusega Euroopa riikidele. Edaspidi võiks jätkata uurimistööd OSNRi kasutamise osas läbi tegevusuurtingute, longitudinaalsete uuringute, operatiivsete kvantitatiivsete uuringute ja võrdlivate uuringute kaudu teiste Kesk- ja Ida-Euroopa või Lääne-Balkani riikidega.

Märksõnad: sidusvõrgustiku kompetentsid, veebipõhine juhendamine ja ekspertiis, sidusvõrgustike sidemed, veebipõhine orienteeritus ettevõtlusele, sidusvõrgustike kasutamise valmisoleku väljakutset, võimalused sidusvõrgustike kasutamise valmisolekuks
7. CV

General Information

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Education

2013-2019 Doctor of Philosophy in Management (Research Area: Online social networks and Youth Entrepreneurship in Small European Economies) Sup Tiit Elenurm, Estonian Business School

09.2015-10.2015 Visting PhD Student at Instituto de Admininstration des Empresas IAE Buenos Aires, Universidad Austral, Buenos Aires,Argentina

2008-2011 Master of Science (Orientation Research) in International Management, Institut d’Administration des Entreprises, Universite “Jean Moulin” Lyon III, Lyon, France with hons.

Erasmus student at the University of Bergamo Italy (2008-2009) with a scholarship from the Region Rhone-Alpes.

Research Dissertation-”Establishing a Youth Social Entrepreneurship Culture in Albania”- Sup. Marina Bourgain.

2005-2008 Bachelor in Economics and Management, Universite Lumiere Lyon II, Lyon, France with hons

2000-2005 High School Diploma, Bilingual Section French-Albanian, Foreign Languages High School “Asim Vokshi” Tirana, Albania with high hons,
Other Certificates and Training Activities

20-25 October 2018 Fellowship Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers, Barcelona, Spain

24-25 May 2018 Fellowship - South Eastern European Dialogue on Internet Governance, Ljubljana, Slovenia

4-6 April 2018 Fellowship Research Reproducibly and Transparency, BITTS, University of Berkley, California, Amsterdam, Netherlands

15/12/2017–21/12/2017 Certified Remote Moderator/Fellowship from DiploFoundation Internet Governance Forum 2017, Geneva Switzerland

02/11/2017–05/11/2017 Certificate/Fellowship Hajde Da, Belgrade (Serbia) Invited speaker - at the conference “Online Learning for Youth- are we lost in online space?”

16/06/2017–18/06/2017 Fellowship Participant- Irresistible a Symposium in Corruption- Berlin, Germany

22/05/2017–26/05/2017 Erasmus + Staff Exchange Training University Danubius-Galati, Romania

30/03/2017–01/04/2017 Fellowship Speaker Youth Forum Refugees&Migrants in New Media -Skopje FYROM

03/02/2017–11/02/2017 Youth Pass Certification Hajde Da, Smreski Karlovci (Serbia) Non Formal Education

28/11/2016–01/12/2016 Certificate of Participation Democratic Control for Armed Forces, Belgrade (Serbia) 16th Young Faces Conference “Strategic Cybersecurity policy development in South Eastern Europe”


**Work experience**

**01/10/2013–Present** Lecturer/Researcher, Department of Management, Faculty of Business, University “Aleksander Moisiu” Durres, Durres Albania

**01/10/2017–Present** Part time Lecturer, Department of Management, Faculty of Economy, University of Tirana, Tirana, Albania

**2014–2017** Guest Lecturer Department of Management, Estonian Business School, Tallinn Estonia

**01/10/2012–01/02/2014** Part-Time Lecturer Department of Management, Faculty of Economy, University of Tirana, Tirana, Albania.

**01/10/2012–01/10/2013** Full-Time Lecturer Faculty of Economy and Information Technology, International University of Tirana, Tirana, Albania

**01/02/2012–01/10/2012** Lecturer, Department of Management and Economics, European University of Tirana Department of Management and Economics, European University of Tirana, Tirana (Albania)

**01/04/2010–01/10/2010** Specialist Marketing Department SIGMA Vienna Insurance Group, Tirana Albania

**01/07/2007–30/08/2007** Intern-Back Office Societe Generale, Tirana, Albania

**Voluntary work**

**November 2018 –Present** Program Committee of YouthDIG, European Dialogue on Internet Governance 2019, 16-20 June 2019 The Hague, Netherlands

**October 2018–Present** International Entrepreneurship Scholars Ambassador for Southern Europe

**2–6 June 2018** – YouthDIG Program Committee, Organizer of Flash session on Managing Creative Industries, Organizer and Focal Point of the session
on Digital Inclusion and Digital Literacy for Adults, EuroDIG 2018, Tbilisi, Georgia

24-25 May 2018 - Co-Focal Point on the session on Digital Skills, SEEDIG 2018, Ljubjana, Slovenia

September 2018 – Present Editorial team at the monthly SEE summary

2-7 June 2017 – Focal point for Internet Governance at YouthDIG and organizer and speaker at the Flash Session on Online Competencies for Millennials, EuroDIG
Young Students’ Online Social Networking Readiness for Entrepreneurship in Small Developing European Economies

Young students are active and experienced users of online social networks (OSNs) which transformed their way of communicating, behaving and learning. Young students even in small developing European economies can benefit from using OSNs from entrepreneurial learning and cross-border opportunities. Therefore this doctoral thesis explores the necessity to understand online social networking readiness for young student entrepreneurship in small developing European economies such as Albania. This research is divided into three parts which focus in exploring how OSNR for young student entrepreneurship can be developed in the context of a small developing European economy using the theoretical background from the entrepreneurial education field and OSNs field. In this study, it is added a comparative perspective with Estonia a small developed European economy. Mixed methods are used combining qualitative data from pilot semi-structured interviews, final semi-structured interviews, focus groups, blog posts from the course Business in Virtual Networks at Estonian Business School and quantitative data from a pilot questionnaire, improved questionnaire and final questionnaire. Data collection was realised in Albania and in Estonia from 2013 to 2018. The first part of study analyses components that describe and define OSNR such as online social networking competencies, online social networking barriers, online mentoring and expertise. In this part of the study online social networking barriers were defined, online social networking barriers implication for OSNR was explained and online mentoring and expertise strategies were identified. In the second part of the study, the role of online social networking ties is explored a typology of online social networking ties was identified. In the third part of the study OSNR was developed through OSNR challenged and OSNR opportunities together with the application of OSNR through online entrepreneurial learning orientations. This study gives a conceptual contribution to the entrepreneurial education field and OSNs field. Its main practical contributions are for the young student, higher education institutions and policymakers.

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