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*INTERACTION OF DIFFERENT ACTORS FOR THE ORCHESTRATION OF
ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEMS PROMOTING BUSINESS
SUSTAINABILITY¹*

**INTERAÇÃO DE DIFERENTES ATORES PARA ORQUESTRAÇÃO DE
ECOSSISTEMAS EMPREENDEDORES PROMOVENDO A
SUSTENTABILIDADE EMPRESARIAL**

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ABSTRACT

This work aims to analyze entrepreneurial ecosystems and the interaction of different actors for orchestration, value creation, and the promotion of business sustainability. Entrepreneurial ecosystems are composed of actors who play interdependent roles, working collaboratively to create, deliver, and capture value through innovations in business models. The orchestration of these ecosystems is essential to assess their potential, overcome inhibiting factors, and align individual objectives with collective goals. This study highlights the importance of integrating business sustainability practices into these ecosystems, promoting not only economic competitiveness but also positive social and environmental impacts. The integration of sustainable objectives strengthens knowledge sharing, the construction of legitimacy, and the coordinated management of resources, contributing to the creation of lasting and responsible value.

Keywords: entrepreneurial ecosystems, orchestration, business sustainability.

RESUMO

Tem como objeto analisar ecossistemas empreendedores e a interação de diferentes atores para orquestração, criação de valor e promoção da sustentabilidade empresarial. Os ecossistemas empreendedores são formados por atores que desempenham papéis interdependentes, atuando de maneira colaborativa para criar, entregar e capturar valor por meio de inovações em modelos de negócios. A orquestração desses ecossistemas é essencial para avaliar seu potencial, superar fatores inibidores e alinhar objetivos individuais aos coletivos. Este trabalho destaca a importância de integrar práticas de

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sustentabilidade empresarial nesses ecossistemas, promovendo não apenas a competitividade econômica, mas também impactos sociais e ambientais positivos. A integração de objetivos sustentáveis fortalece o compartilhamento de conhecimento, a construção de legitimidade e a gestão coordenada de recursos, contribuindo para a criação de valor duradouro e responsável.

Palavras-chave: ecossistemas, empreendedores, orquestração, sustentabilidade empresarial.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial ecosystems emerge and evolve over time in response to economic and social changes, network interactions and power relations between institutions within an entrepreneurial ecosystem, and the way different actors interact to govern and create value in these ecosystems.

Entrepreneurial ecosystema

According to Thomas and Autio (2020), the main characteristics of ecosystems are the heterogeneity of participants acting in various roles, improving outcomes, where actors participate interdependently through non-contractual mechanisms. Furthermore, the author highlights that entrepreneurial ecosystems are composed of diverse actors to facilitate ecosystem production through the creation of a shared knowledge base, leveraging advances in digital technologies and infrastructures to create, deliver, and capture value through business model innovation.

For Cao and Shi (2021), entrepreneurial ecosystems have gained considerable attention over the last decade and refer to the entrepreneurial ecosystem as a community of multiple stakeholders in co-evolution that provides a supportive environment for new venture creation.

Scott et al. (2022) describe entrepreneurial ecosystems as consisting of multiple networks that present opportunities for exchanging resources and knowledge for value creation and emphasize that these factors must be



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coordinated to enable productive entrepreneurship within a given region or territory.

An entrepreneurial ecosystem is characterized by a phenomenon of the digital economy that leverages technological resources to facilitate the pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities through radical business model innovation. Cluster externalities are organized around the discovery and pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities, created by digital technologies and infrastructures where business model innovation predominates (Autio et al., 2018).

Therefore, entrepreneurial ecosystems are a combination of social, political, economic, and cultural elements within a region that support development and growth to create, deliver, and capture value, encouraging new venture creation and innovative startups, and encouraging nascent entrepreneurs and other stakeholders to take initial risks, finance, and support ventures, presenting opportunities for resource exchange.

Orchestration of the entrepreneurial ecosystem

Understanding and orchestrating entrepreneurial ecosystems is essential for assessing the potential for value creation and measuring ecosystem inhibiting factors. However, mobilizing a variety of actors for their formation, transformation, or collaboration can present challenges. Mobilizing the necessary resources requires actors to take the initiative. While actors have their own objectives for operating in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, different stakeholders must also align their individual objectives with other ecosystem actors (Tabas et al., 2023).

Based on the study by Tabas et al. (2023), eight orchestration roles and related activities are defined. The first group consists of "opinion leaders," "business facilitators," and "regulatory informants," who act as facilitators and provide resources to participants. The second group consists of "relationship promoters," "coordinators," and "commanders," who create various prerequisites



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for collaboration. Finally, "integrators" and "complementators" help create concrete offerings. These activities are related to knowledge sharing, building legitimacy, defining formal and informal norms, coordinating activities, and integrating resources from different actors to meet customer needs.

Colombo et al. (2019) highlight the importance of adopting an organizational structure and implementing governance, leadership, and management controls to manage an entrepreneurial ecosystem, whether explicitly and formally or implicitly and informally, thus leading to a "bottom-up" approach. Some actors are more essential to ecosystem performance than others, and governing an entrepreneurial ecosystem means governing relationships to achieve competitive advantages. The boundaries of an entrepreneurial ecosystem are determined by the relationships with key actors involved in specific relationship investments within the ecosystem.

Therefore, the entrepreneurial ecosystem provides a supportive environment for companies, such as start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises, because when successful, it allows them to identify untapped market opportunities and draw on local resources to develop new ventures in the face of global competition (Spigel and Harrison, 2018).

Interaction between different actors

To better understand how the interaction between different actors contributes to governance in entrepreneurial ecosystems, according to Thompson et al. (2018), actors and their interactions are fundamental to the formation of these ecosystems, which go through two distinct periods. In the first, cultural and cognitive foundations are established, while in the second period, changes occur in the type and quality of interactions, which become denser and more interconnected. These changes are important for the sustainability of the entrepreneurial ecosystem over time and for its legitimacy in the market.



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Entrepreneurial ecosystems are considered relational spaces rich in activities. While they establish conventions to sustain their activities and support their legitimacy, actors deal with conflicts, consensus, and institutional compliance using distinct approaches (Thompson et al. 2018).

Recent literature on entrepreneurial ecosystems has highlighted and studied the interactions between various actors (Scott et al., 2022; Colombelli et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2018). According to Cho et al. (2022), internal and external sources of new knowledge and the actors who utilize pre-existing knowledge are crucial for ecosystem evolution. This evolution may or may not be guided by the visible hand of government or implicitly executed by large corporations. In the study by Stam et al. (2021), there are no direct, one-to-one relationships in an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Figure 1 demonstrates how multicollinearity between individual elements is correlated and that the elements of the entrepreneurial ecosystem are mutually interdependent and co-evolve.

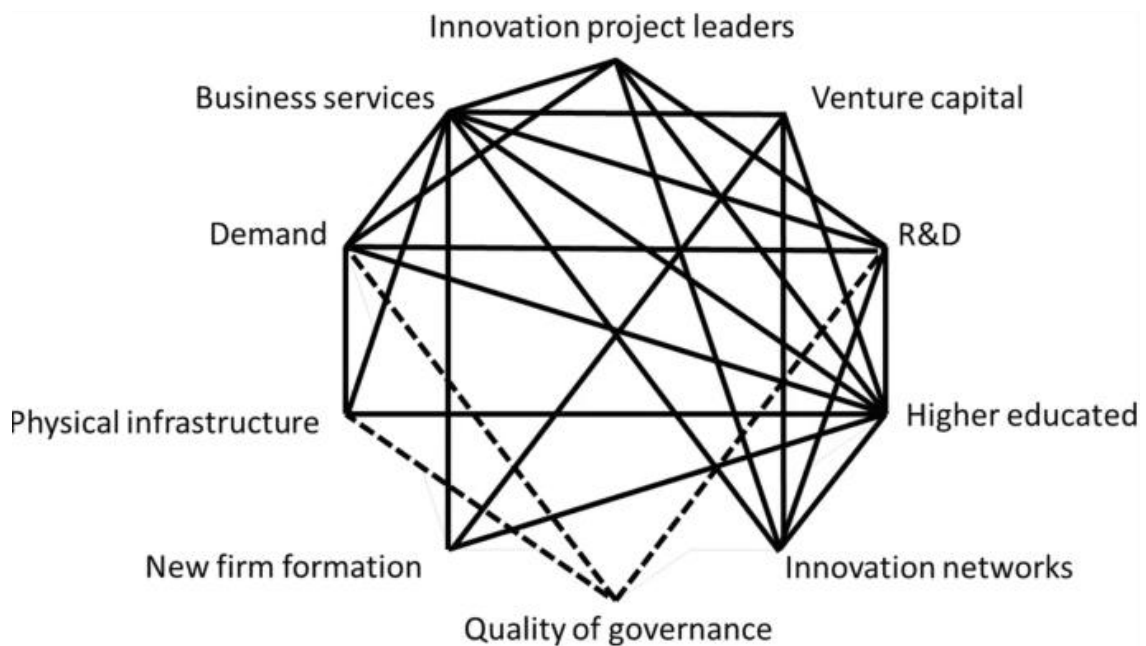


Figure 1: Web of interdependence of elements of the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Stam et al., 2021)



As discussed in many key articles, the comparison between entrepreneurial ecosystems, traditional clusters, and innovation systems explores the unique interaction dynamics and iteration of different actors in the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Spigel and Harrison, 2018; Autio et al., 2018).

According to Spigel's (2017) theoretical perspective, firms in clusters benefit from being located near other firms in the same industry. This is not necessarily the case for entrepreneurial ecosystems, which focus on knowledge exchange and mutual support among entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial ecosystems are characterized by sharing knowledge and receiving support from other entrepreneurs, which offers specific resources for the entrepreneurial process, such as startup culture and financing. This is different from the industrial benefits found in clusters, which benefit firms from proximity to one another.

This establishes a knowledge dynamic where the entrepreneurial ecosystem facilitates the creation and dissemination of knowledge about how to organize effectively, and entrepreneurs combine this cluster knowledge with their expertise in a particular technology or industry (Tallman et al. 2004).

The interaction of different actors in the entrepreneurial ecosystem is essential to its success. Entrepreneurs, investors, research institutions, and governments play distinct and complementary roles that contribute to the ecosystem's development. Collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and resources are important factors in creating value within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Iteration can also lead to the creation of new business opportunities and economic and social development.

Business sustainability

To reinforce the analysis in the context of corporate sustainability, it can be considered that the sustainability of entrepreneurial ecosystems is intrinsically



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linked to the integration of economic, social, and environmental objectives. Recent studies highlight that sustainable business practices are fundamental to fostering inclusive and resilient innovations. For example, Aguinis and Glavas (2019) argue that organizations that adopt a strategic approach to sustainability not only align stakeholder interests but also create shared value in dynamic ecosystems.

Furthermore, Elkington (2018), through the concept of the "Triple Bottom Line", emphasizes the need to integrate people, planet, and profits as pillars for thriving and sustainable ecosystems. These aspects underpin the orchestration of resources to generate long-term positive impact in a globally competitive context.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was a theoretical essay, whose approach aims to explore and integrate concepts about entrepreneurial ecosystems, stakeholder orchestration, and corporate sustainability. The theoretical essay is a widely used method in academic research to consolidate and expand knowledge, enabling the deepening of complex topics by establishing connections between theories and perspectives.

This work was based on the analysis of relevant and recent literature, selected from high-impact academic databases, prioritizing articles published in journals classified as ABS 3 and 4*, as well as books and theoretical reports fundamental to the topic in question. The literature review sought to identify gaps, convergences, and theoretical innovations in the fields of entrepreneurial ecosystems and corporate sustainability, with special attention to the interactions between stakeholders and the creation of economic, social, and environmental value.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As seen in the literature review, the field of entrepreneurial ecosystems has received significant academic attention, is relatively new, and is expanding. Many studies focus on better understanding how the interaction between different actors contributes to governance within entrepreneurial ecosystems. In this context, the incorporation of corporate sustainability practices emerges as an essential dimension for enhancing the economic, social, and environmental impacts of these ecosystems.

Addressing these research questions is important because it will contribute to clarifying a crucial topic: the evolution of entrepreneurial ecosystems and the importance of actors and their interactions. Corporate sustainability offers an integrated approach that not only favors the creation of economic value but also promotes responsible practices that generate benefits for society and the environment. Studies such as that by Elkington (1997), which introduced the concept of the Triple Bottom Line, highlight the need to balance social, environmental, and economic dimensions to ensure the long-term success of ecosystems.

Seeking to develop new governance structures and models for entrepreneurial ecosystems and integrate them into a broader context, linking them to other types of ecosystems, the emergence of HUBs has become a phenomenon in the world of business and entrepreneurship. A hub is a physical or virtual space where entrepreneurs, investors, startups, research and development institutions, and other actors in the entrepreneurial ecosystem meet to collaborate, share resources, knowledge, and business opportunities.

To enable actors in the entrepreneurial ecosystem to work together more efficiently and collaboratively, the emergence of HUBs creates a space where these actors can meet, share knowledge and resources, and collaborate on projects, overcoming these limitations and accelerating economic and social



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development. Incorporating sustainability practices into these hubs strengthens their role as catalysts for sustainable innovation, creating solutions that meet market demands while reducing negative impacts.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the text highlights the importance of developing new governance structures and models for entrepreneurial ecosystems and integrating them into a broader context, linking them to other types of ecosystems. The study of entrepreneurial ecosystems and the emergence of hubs are relevant and promising topics that deserve further exploration. These actions can help strengthen the capacity of entrepreneurial ecosystems to promote the economic and social development of a region.

Ecosystem evolution is guided by internal and external sources of knowledge, and interaction between actors is crucial to its success. Entrepreneurial ecosystems differ from industrial clusters in the dynamics of knowledge and mutual support among entrepreneurs, while clusters benefit companies by being close to other companies. Collaboration and resource sharing are important factors in creating value within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and interaction can lead to the creation of new business opportunities and economic and social development. Integrating corporate sustainability practices into this process offers a unique opportunity to align value creation strategies with global demands for responsibility and resilience, enhancing the positive impacts of these ecosystems.

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