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Legitimacy in the lens of entrepreneurial activities internationalization: a bibliometric analysis

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1. Introduction

Research on legitimacy in international business is somewhat scarce (Turcan, Marinova & Rana, 2015). Existing literature on entrepreneurs' legitimacy underlines its importance in facilitating their implementation for business activities in international contexts. More clearly, entrepreneurs' legitimacy is an essential element to gain and to consider before entering any foreign market entry decisions (Chan, Makino & Isobe, 2006). For Dumay et al. (2018), legitimacy is perceived as a social responsibility whereas for Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002), legitimacy is viewed as an important resource for gaining others. For Suddaby et al. (2017), some researchers, indeed a majority, tend to theorize legitimacy as a thing - that is, a property, a resource, or a capacity of an entity. Williams and Nadin (2010) speak about a transition towards legitimacy. Legitimization is not a single event, but rather a process of transition, much like entrepreneurship itself.

Legitimacy improves founders' ability to establish social ties with external stakeholders and initiate routines for resources transfer (Delmar & Shane, 2004). In other words, legitimacy generation enhances new venture survival and transition facilitation to other form of organizing activities. While considering few international business scholars' production for empirical publications, which explore legitimacy and legitimation strategies in overseas activities, several recent papers are trying to fill this gap of legitimacy acquisition in the aim of gaining foreign venture. Legitimacy is a strategy? Legitimacy is a behavior?

Studying entrepreneur legitimacy is important for several reasons. First, legitimacy is a key factor in determining the success or failure of new ventures. Without legitimacy, entrepreneurs may face challenges in accessing resources such as funding, partnerships, and customers. Legitimacy also affects how an entrepreneur is perceived by stakeholders, including investors, customers, and the general public. In other words, entrepreneurs without the required credentials may face a legitimacy deficit, hindering their ability to obtain the essential resources needed for the advancement of their operational activities (Radu-Lefebvre, Loué & Redien-Collot, 2019).

Second, the literature review analysis makes legitimacy a more distant concept that demonstrates a lack of a unifying concept to be tested directly on an empirical level. Two points of view make interpretation of accessing business activities on an international level. Turcan research findings (2011) indicate that entrepreneurs, motivated by intimate knowledge of innovation, prefer gradual growth; whereas VCs, once motivated by the investment cycle of their investment portfolio: in that case they will insist on a rapid internationalization. At the confluence of both directions, local and international, the literature review does not unveil entrepreneurs' reasons behind staying conservative or, where applicable aggressive, by adopting expanded overseas activities (Cheng & Yu, 2008). Entrepreneurs' convictions and desires for going international revert to legitimacy achievements (Kibler & Kautonen, 2016). Legitimacy achievements, predictors of entrepreneurial success, are defined for Radu-Lefebvre, Loué & Redien-Collot (2019) as: *"collective outcome of various social representations circulating in the public space that affects entrepreneurs' ability to develop their businesses and their identities, along with their willingness and capacity to promote the entrepreneurial spirit in society."*

For example, Sapienza et al. (2006) posit that early internationalization threatens firm survival due to the lack of necessary capabilities and positional advantages. Such view leads to underline the fact that entrepreneurs', who are willing to adopt international new venture¹ mode of entry into foreign market, are brought to follow a sequential approach to internationalization (Mudambi & Zahra, 2018). As entrepreneurs witness different approaches for creating and sustaining their activities, entrepreneurship is fundamentally a "heterotopy" characterized by a "heterogeneous" identity: so does entrepreneurial legitimacy (Radu-Lefebvre, Loué & Redien-Collot, 2019).

An identified contrast reveals number of interrogations regarding the understanding of entrepreneurs' position in a complex implementation situation, as well as on entrepreneurs' key strategic choices for accumulating legitimacy capital.

Scholars (Nagy et al. 2012), practitioners (Fayolle et al. 2016), psychologists (Turkina & Thai, 2015), yet little is known about how entrepreneurial legitimacy emerges and evolves at the social level (Radu-Lefebvre, Loué & Redien-Collot, 2019). Moreover, the research interests revert for studying legitimacy, and at the same time, in social and international contexts. Moreover, even Bibliometrix have shown little conceptual intersections between legitimacy, entrepreneurship and international keywords (clusters), scientific studies lack of identifying a unified concept to be tested directly on a given population or even to rely on a coherent theoretical framework that illustrate the entrepreneur legitimacy concept.

Therefore, to further understand how actions are taken throughout entrepreneurs' behaviors for gaining legitimacy, we need to understand the performed strategies to

¹ By new venture it is meant an innovation, new product, new technology, or new business idea.

accomplish legitimacy “goals” towards organizational achievements and success. Based on previous gaps findings, it appears judicious to investigate about legitimacy in the lens of entrepreneurial activities. Then, the main research statement consists of understanding:

“How entrepreneurs’ legitimacy is gained along organizational activities?”

2. Bibliometric outcomes and analysis

The literature, which deals with legitimacy and entrepreneurs’ internationalization, can be reflected through key words recurrence in the raw file selected from Scopus database. More precisely, Bibliometrix is a software tool for bibliometric analysis that is used to analyze publications in terms of the number of articles, citations, and co-authors. It can identify the most productive authors, institutions, and countries, and the most cited articles and journals in entrepreneurs’ legitimacy in the lens of implementing their business activities in overseas markets. Bibliometrix can also evaluate collaboration patterns among authors, institutions, and countries. It can identify the most productive research teams and collaborations, and the most frequent co-authors in a particular research field.

Citation, co-citation and bibliographic coupling mainly reflect the literature importance and the similarity between the emergent themes. Citation analysis enables scholars to understand journals, papers or authors influence in the field. While co-citation analysis simplifies complex relationship between many papers and reduce it into a relationship between documents. Keyword co-occurrence analysis explores similarities between words and infers research subject hotspots by analyzing the relationship between keywords. In addition, Bibliometrix identifies clusters of highly cited articles, important authors, and emerging topics related to entrepreneurs’ legitimacy and internationalization. In such regard, Bibliometrix analyze trends in research output and citations over time. It can identify the most active research fields, the most influential articles, and the most impactful research topics. Such scheme works establishing future research directions in the field.

2.1. Database choice and search of terms

The process of collecting data involved several distinct stages, including the identification of relevant keywords, choosing an appropriate database, and conducting a search of the query within that chosen database. Our first step was to identify relevant keywords that would help us understanding the intellectual foundation of entrepreneurs’ legitimacy and internationalization. As scholars refers to entrepreneurs’ legitimacy and internationalization by using different approaches, it was advisable to select the most imminent criteria (Scopus ones) to decide which terms to include in the search. This step was critical because even the exclusion or inclusion of a single keyword could significantly affect the initial set of contributions, making it either more comprehensive or narrower. In such stream, six

subsequent searches on Scopus database were made to select only one of the keywords that cope with the main topic for this research.

The first search with “legitim*”AND “international\$”, the second with “legitim*”AND “start-up\$”, the third one with “legitim*”AND “startup\$” and the fourth one with “legitim*”AND “entrepreneur”, the fifth one with “legitim*”AND “perception\$”, the sixth one with “legitim*”AND “venture\$”. The search was conducted with an asterisk (*) to enable the inclusion of variations. The keywords “legitim”, “international”, “startup”, “entrepreneur” and “ventures” constitute the key elements of the studied subject. However, and in order to gain an external view, i.e. from a stakeholder view, “perception” keyword has been added to consider as well scientific articles that approach legitimacy from a partnership perspective. The combination of the six searches with (legitim*) AND (international*) OR (start-up\$) OR (startup\$) OR (entrepreneur*) OR (perception\$) OR (venture\$) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "BUSI")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE, "j")) led for 1478 document results after journals selection.

2.2. Bibliometric analysis and growing interest for the topic

Throughout the 1478 publications analysis, it can be noted, as shown in Figure 1, that there has been a growing interest in entrepreneurs’ legitimacy and internationalization, particularly in the last decade. In addition, we conducted a search based on the keywords used by the authors of these articles and examined how they have evolved over time.

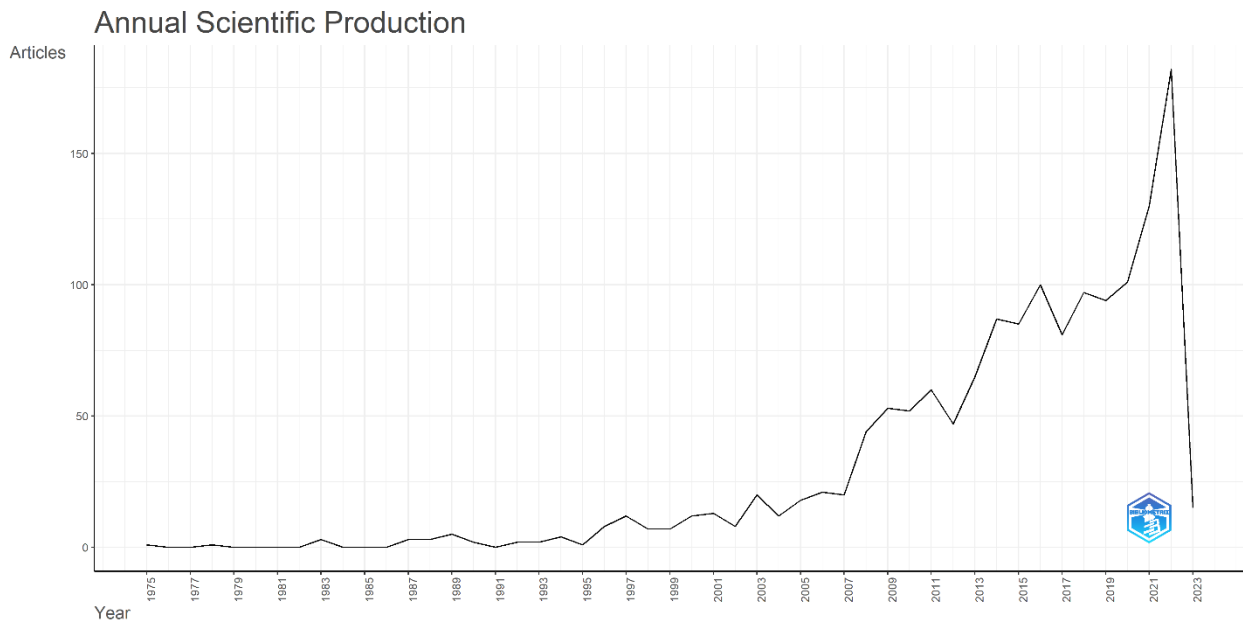


Figure 1: Number of papers per year (source: author)

Based on Figure 1, Figure 2 sheds the light on authors' keywords and trend topics. It provides a tangible evolution of 28 keywords, between 2007 and 2021, and that could possibly reveal aspects that convey with the three dimensions of the present study, namely, legitimacy, entrepreneurship and internationalization. Excluding trend keywords related to nationality and concepts that deviate from the research topic are eliminated, therefore reducing them to 39. As far as the scientific production period, from 2007 till 2022, progresses positively, as far as the word dynamics regarding the research topic illustrates a dynamic interplay as well throughout the said periods.

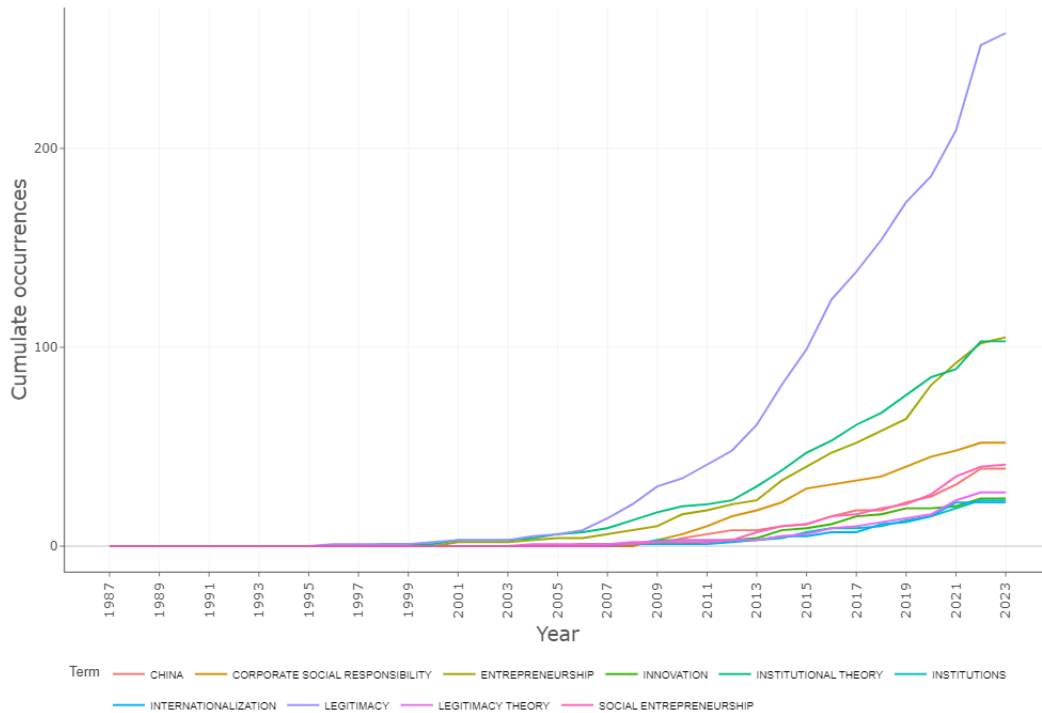


Figure 2: Word dynamics 2007-2022

Figure 3 displays how intellectual contribution are spread out among the leading ten journal sources. As shown in the same figure, most of the relevant contributions are from the Journal of Business Ethics (84), Journal of Business Venturing (45), Journal of Business Research (34), Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal (32), International Journal of entrepreneurial behavior and research (28), Journal of cleaner production (28), Entrepreneurship: theory & practice (27), Critical perspectives on accounting (26), Journal of International Business Studies (26), and Journal of Small Business Management (26).

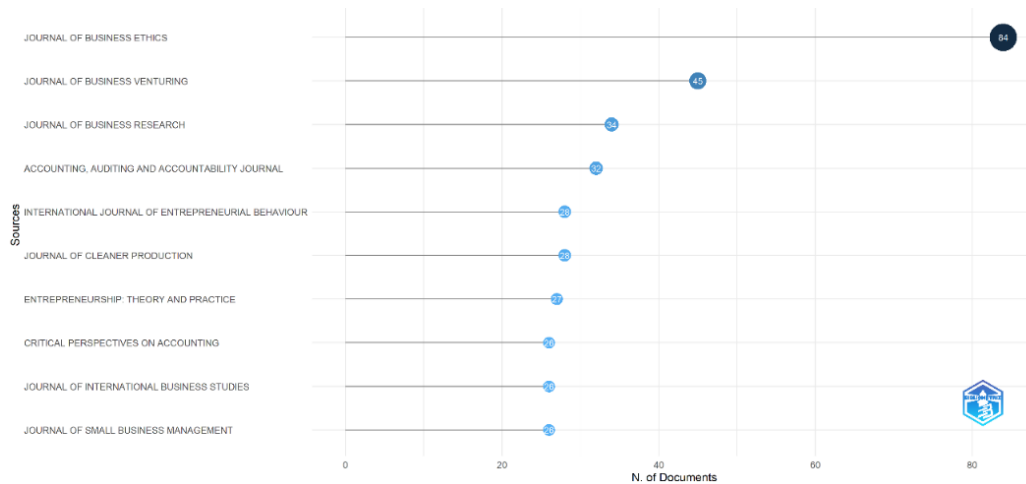


Figure 3: Top ten journals

2.3. Bibliometric coupling analysis

Using VOSViewer 1.6.19., a bibliographic coupling analysis is conducted with the objective of clustering papers based on shared references. This was done by assessing the degree of reference overlap between two papers, with a higher overlap indicating a stronger association and a greater likelihood of belonging to the same community. The software generated 5 clusters which were manually examined. Default settings for random start at 10 and iterations set at 10 were kept for reaching 69 items grouped into 5 clusters. themes: (1) internationalization (red), (2) gender (Green), (3) institutional theory (blue), (4) sustainable development (light green), and (5) Legitimacy (purple).

The same Scopus database file was treated with Bibliometrix software to have a clear identification of the most imposable clusters. For “Clustering by coupling” interpretation, it was necessary, first, to proceed with a LCS (Local Citation Score) measure with a cluster labeled by keywords, and for 30 units with 10 labels per cluster. Then for each following figure, a number of 30 units were added subsequently to reach an LCS of 60 units, then a one of 120 as shown into Figure 4. Such technique was adopted to go on three sequential times for clusters emergence and stability. Clustering methods are applied regularly in a bibliometric analysis to identify research areas or scientific fields. These methods are for instance used to group publications into clusters based on their relations in a citation network (Šubelj, Van Eck et Waltman, 2016).

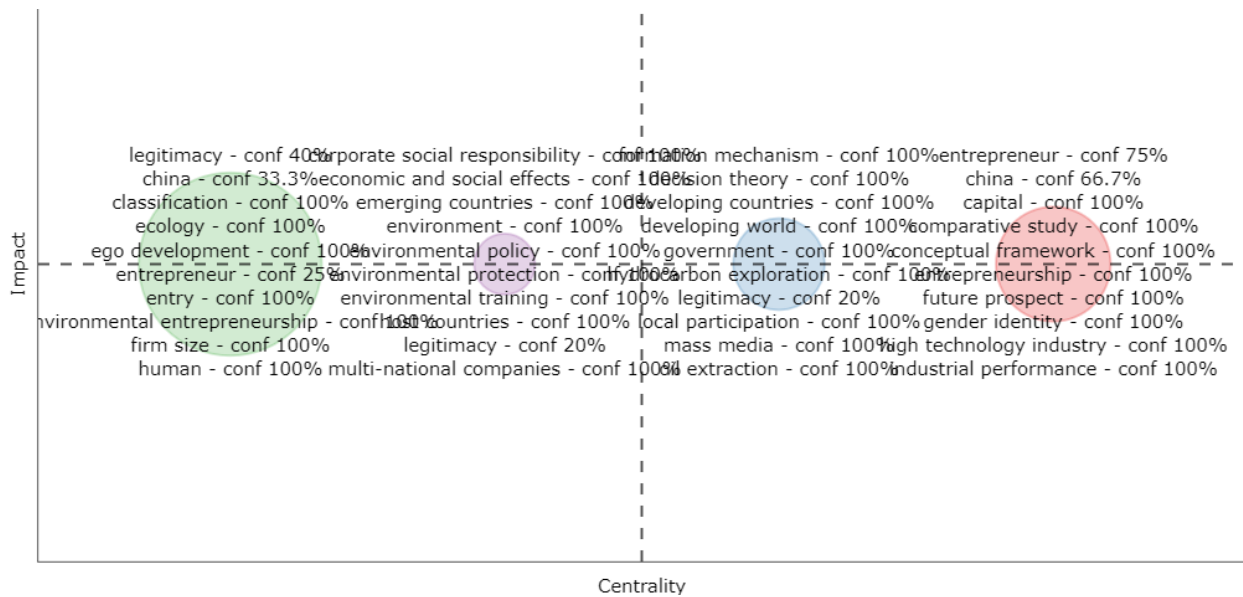


Figure 5: Third LCS with cluster of 120 units' selection

Figure 5 identifies 3 dominant clusters (Green, Red, Blue) by coupling among 4 stated ones shown in Figure 5. That means that the research, in relation to entrepreneurs' legitimacy and international activities will be focused on those 3 clusters.

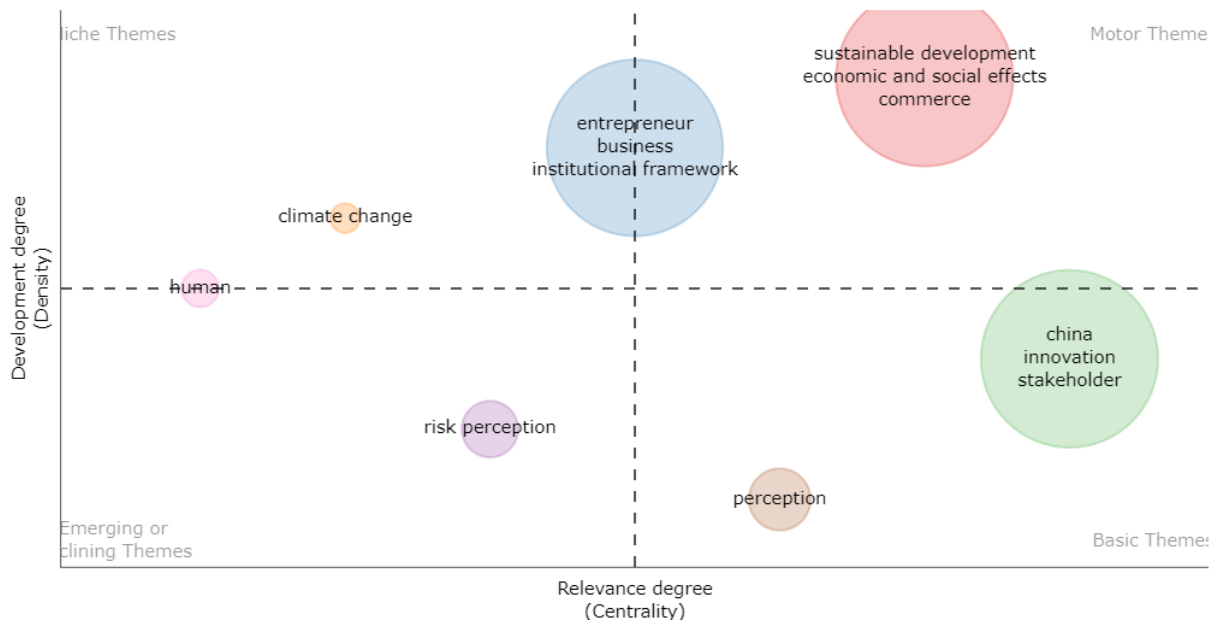


Figure 6: Thematic Map representation for entrepreneur legitimacy and internationalization (2007-2022)

Following, clusters and respective items identification, it was necessary to identify the initial intellectual source for each. That is the reason for which, it was necessary to establish the clustering by Coupling for authors and respective keywords. It appears that legitimacy in relation with entrepreneur, international, startups, ventures and perceptions is widespread concept and rare are the scientific research that view the research topic from a specific angle. Following that, and based on the research topic interests, legitimacy and strategy seems to be scarce in the field.

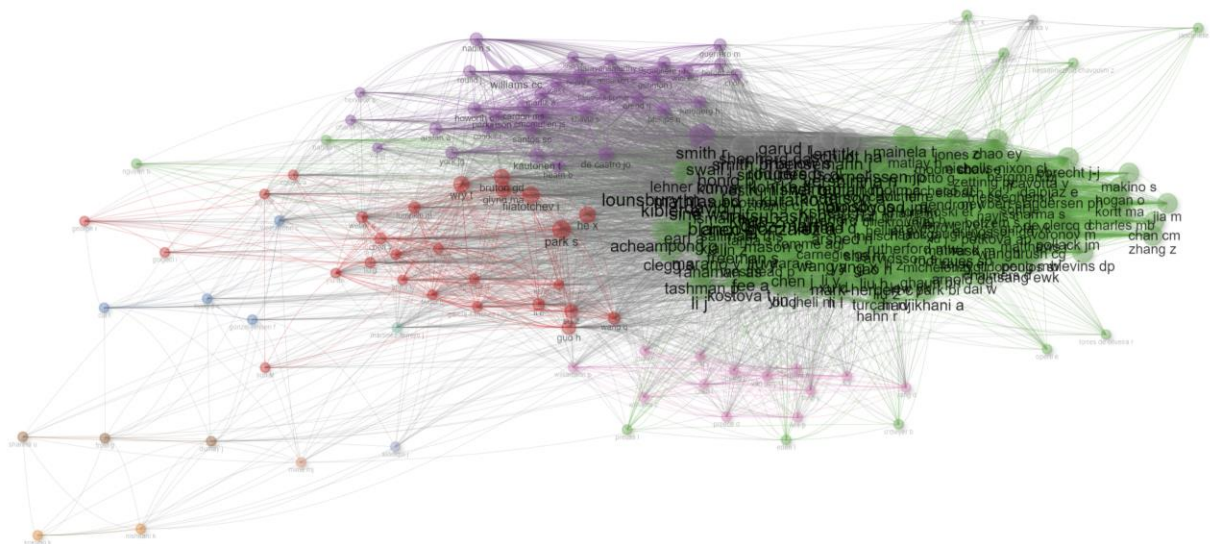


Figure 7: Clustering by Coupling for authors

2.4. Entrepreneurs' legitimacy and internationalization trend topics

To establish an analysis between the Bibliographic clustering by coupling, and respective clusters content, the following factorial analysis shows a breakdown for the referred Bibliometrix themes and sub-themes (Figure 8).

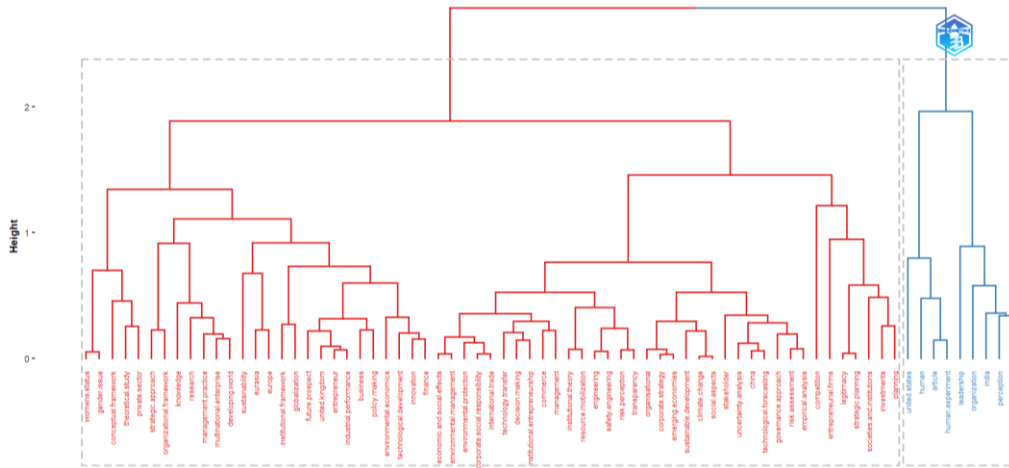


Figure 8: Topic dendrogram

In line with the topic dendrogram, the output of bibliometrix software analysis illustrates the conceptual structure map for the retained articles about legitimacy, international, start-ups, entrepreneur, perceptions, and ventures. The topic dendrogram consolidates the research gaps as it entails many themes and sub-themes that only do scatter the concept of entrepreneurs' legitimacy.

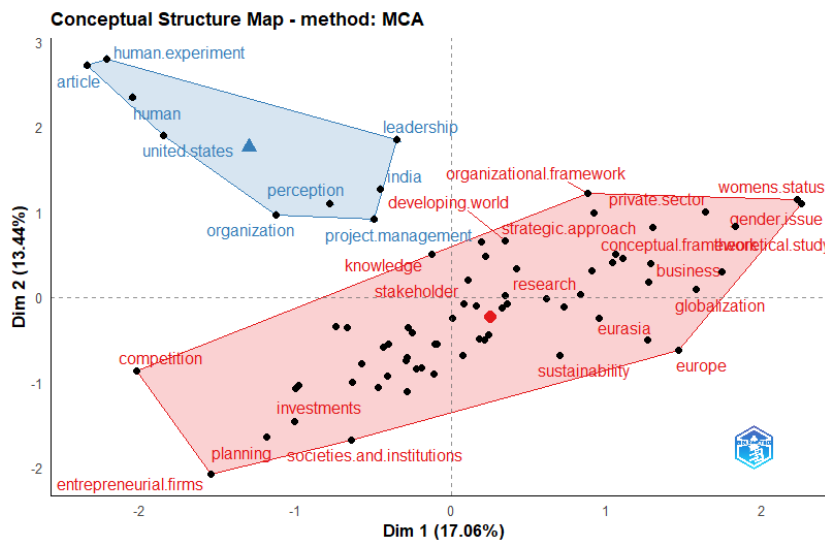


Figure 9: Conceptual Structure Map

Figure 9 shows the conceptual structure map, which results from applying Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) to the keywords of 1298 analyzed papers, reveals underlying structures that may not be immediately apparent in nominal categorical data. MCA is an effective data analysis technique for identifying and representing these structures, which can provide valuable insights into the relationships and patterns present in the data. By using co-word analysis, the keywords were analyzed with the aim of identifying the conceptual structure. An MCA was used in combination with cluster analysis to group documents that share a common theme. This approach allowed for the exploration of the relationships between the keywords and the identification of underlying patterns in the data, which in turn helped to group documents according to their shared conceptual themes.

2.5. Publication Trend

Importing data on R Software and treating with bibliometrix package, the average scientific production related for the interplay between legitimacy and international implementation context illustrate a definite intellectual interest ranging positively from 2007 till 2021. In terms of yearly scientific contribution, 20 articles were published in the field for 2007, 44 in 2008, 53 in 2009, 52 in 2010, 60 in 2011, 47 in 2012, 65 in 2013, 87 in 2014, 85 in 2015, 100 in 2016, 81 in 2017, 97 in 2018, 94 in 2019, 101 in 2020, 130 in 2021 and 182 in 2022 (c.f. figure 1.). For such reason, the top 20 authors will be selected to enhance a better literature review analysis for legitimacy interpretation in the lens of entrepreneurship internationalization. Factors or determinants will revolve around to enrich the conceptual and the theoretical framework. A primary insight can be perceived through the following illustration.

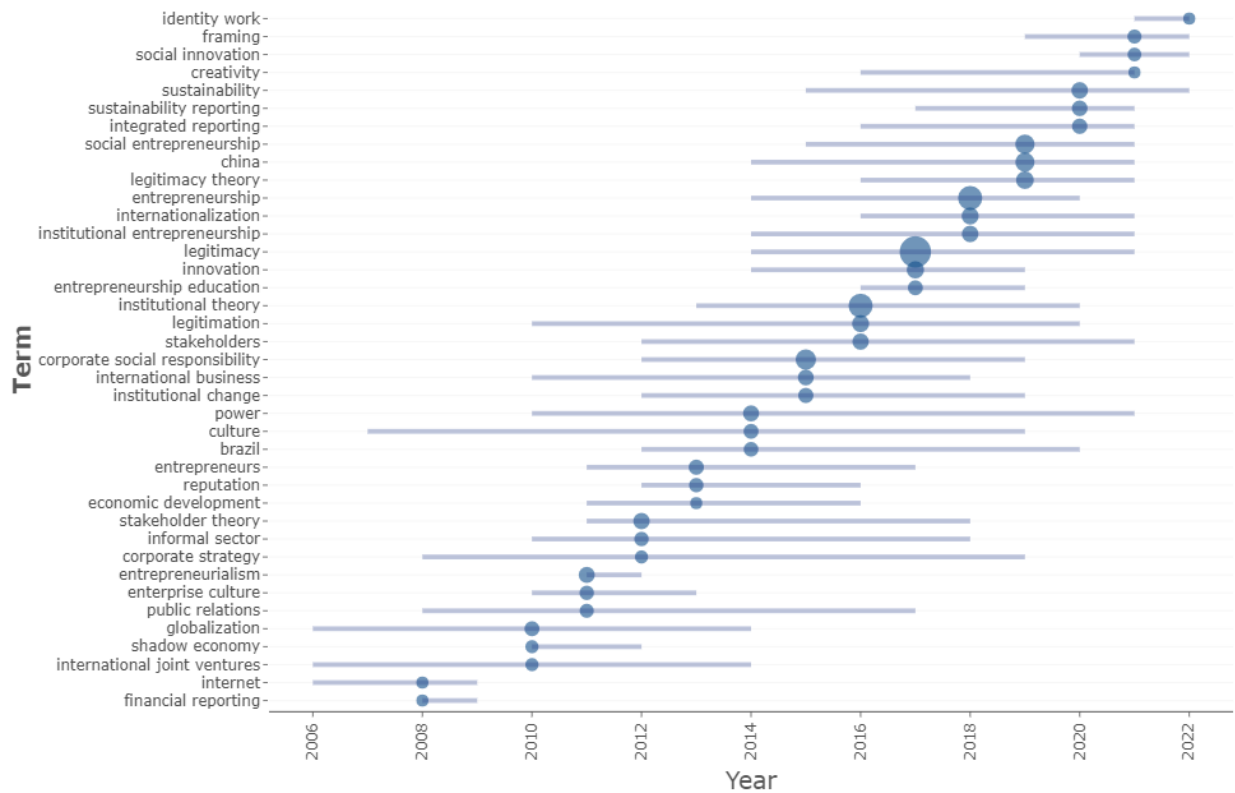


Figure 10: Co-occurrence Network

The linkage between co-occurrence network and the trend topics (Figure 10) enhances a better understanding of main thematic that convey with legitimacy theme and trend topics. That is to say that authors scientific publications that convey with each cluster should be read and analyzed separately. Following the same method for the remaining 4 clusters, an integrative framework can be established to estimate what are the missing linkages that can be related to entrepreneurs' legitimacy and internationalization. The overlapping between the 5 clusters can provide a tangible fact about the "requisites" that the literature review should be centered on for a better analysis and understanding for the integrative framework. From a practical way, topics or thematic in regards with entrepreneurship legitimacy and internationalization will consider, mainly, scientific articles ranging from 2007 till 2022. Such selection will be reduced to the most relevant authors' contribution from the said years.

In line with the literature review analysis that center on the top 20 authors contribution shown in Figure 11, it is interesting to establish a table that provides respective contributions for legitimacy definitions in the lens of entrepreneurial internationalized activities. Such literature analysis concerning legitimacy definitions will shed the light on scholars' perceptions accordingly, and the angles the latter they went through once deepening their research about their related research subject.

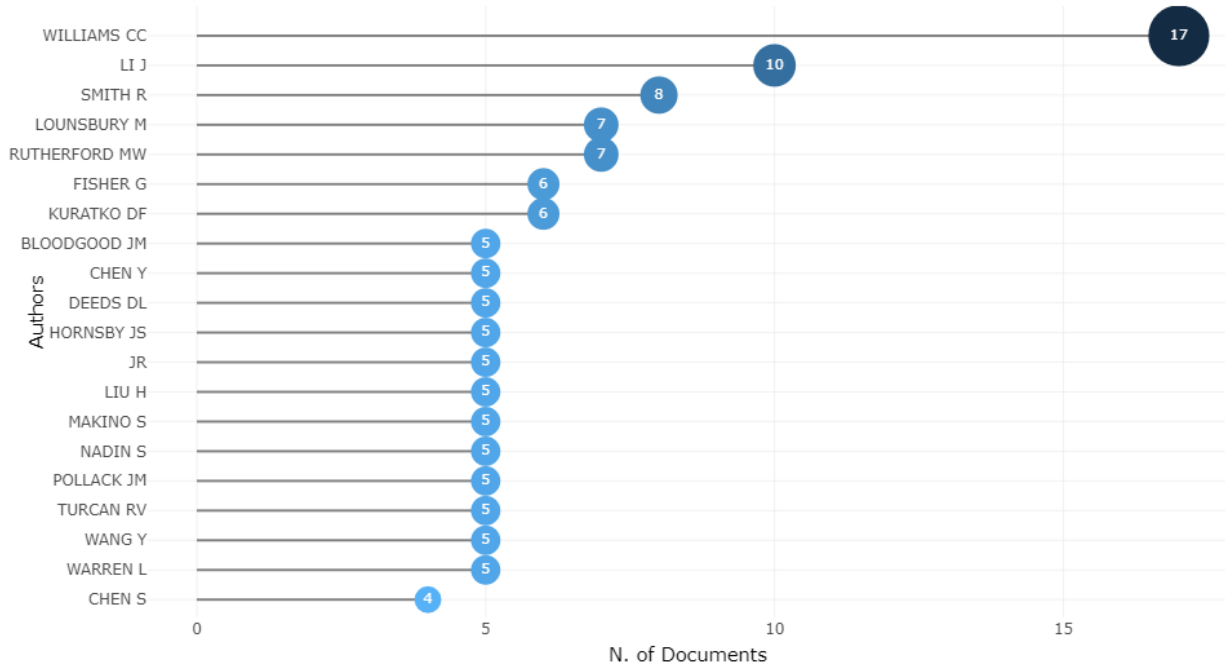


Figure 11: legitimacy, entrepreneurship, and internationalization relevant authors

Following the selected articles topic and research approaches, the scientific production analysis brought different definitions for legitimacy. It is important to note at that level, the filtered scientific articles are listed in ranked scientific journals.

Figure 12 illustrates the reviewed articles in line with their respective journals.



Figure 12: Source local impact by H index

3. Literature review

3.1. Interplay between legitimacy and internationalization: A manipulative strategy or an honest behavior?

Organization theorists have investigated the legitimacy role as a resource for improving firm operations and overall performance by gaining access to scarce resources and retaining the support of valued stakeholders (Suchman, M. C., 1995). Following Turcan, Marinova and Rana (2015) advancement for legitimacy, the authors make it clear once they state that legitimacy is considered as a strategy for an international move: *“legitimation strategies are associated with the very purpose of establishing international business operations and their formalization in a host market context.”* Legitimation is a process, much like entrepreneurship itself (Anderson, A. R., 2005).

In the same extension, Turcan et al. (2012) underline that legitimation involves legitimation strategies as applied by companies and their efforts to gain legitimation in a specific context or to de-legitimize from a specific context. As such, failing to gain perceptual legitimacy on behalf of an international recognition, entrepreneurs adopt behaviors to reveal a kind of legitimacy that seem suitable for the course of their international business activities. Scholars as Fisher et al. (2020) underline the concept of hustle for legitimacy. It is found that entrepreneurs ventures confront a liability of newness. And because they are not well known or accepted and hence have a lesser chance of garnering acceptance and strive for attracting resources and support (Fisher et al. 2017).

Acting under conditions of uncertainty, Turcan (2011) stated in his research findings that entrepreneurs will pursue a manipulation strategy to acquire cognitive legitimacy². Based on Fisher and al. (2020: 1019) qualitative research findings, it is found that : *“entrepreneurs engaged in urgent, unorthodox actions that made their ventures appear bigger, older, and more professional than what they actually were.”*

Conversely, for Dumay et al. (2018), legitimacy is perceived as a behavior and where intellectual capital (IC) explains a change in management behaviors and, so far, by revealing sensitive information in relation with their products or service. Such advancement is plausible when it comes for managers and investors to enter into contracts and to encourage a full disclosure once contracts are operate as intended (Dumay, La Torre & Farneti, 2018). As far as investors have had unanticipated consequences, non-financial information, as assumptions for *“qualifying”* entrepreneurs of being legitimate, entails a certain social responsibility for offering an assurance towards attenuation of dishonesty and of profit-seeking behaviors (Dumay, La Torre & Farneti, 2018).

² Cognitive legitimacy is defined by a *“tacit form of legitimacy, in which stakeholders make legitimacy judgments about an organization passively and not based on active evaluation”* (Pollack et al. 2012, p. 922).

Elsbach and Sutton (1992) discovered that organizations use illegitimate actions to gain legitimacy, and that institutional conformity and decoupling illegitimate actions from legitimate structures help organizations use impression management tactics to gain endorsement and support from their stakeholders.

Thus, the aim of a social responsibility promotion consists of providing a mechanism for reducing information asymmetry and for enhancing greater levels of corporate disclosure.

In a better illustrative way, Turcan (2011) stated a factor, that involves seeking legitimacy by achieving conformity with the demands and expectations of an existing social structure, helps a venture to be well established and positioned. Entrepreneurs' can be considered as agents as they can possess malicious information and aren't bought to disseminate those that convey with a collective interest scope. Conversely, entrepreneurs, acting as honorable stewards of organizational resources, emphasis in business education on how stewardship is different from agency, legitimacy, and stakeholder theories and how it impacts management behavior more positively (Dumay, La Torre & Farneti, 2018). Stewardship theory emerges from psychological and sociological roots and acknowledges that managers are motivated by collectivistic, pro-organizational and trustworthy purposes (Davis, Schoorman & Donaldson, 1997).

Considering trust as a source of social capital, investors may not support companies that do not disclose bad news. In the same stream, scholars, as Tashman et al. (2018), emphasized CSR activities as a strategy for global legitimacy. In the scope of a legitimacy strengthening, CSR reporting helps building trust between MNE's and stakeholders' as well as by creating transparency about social and environmental externalities (Doh et al. 2016). However, all along their review analysis Doh et al. (2016) indicate that CSR decoupling refers to a symbolic strategy whereby firms overstate their CSR performance in their disclosures to strengthen their legitimacy. In other words, it reverts for stakeholders and their realistic views about entrepreneurs actual behaviors and the reliability of their self-reported CSR performance.

Four symbolic action categories were identified by Zott and Huy (2007) as they facilitate resources acquisition. Those actions are related to entrepreneur's personal credibility conveyance, professional organizing, organizational achievement, and quality of stakeholder relationships. As for Zott and Huy (2007), legitimation strategies of newly formed organizations could be grouped into the following four symbolic legitimation strategies: credibility, defined as personal capability and personal commitment to the venture; professional organizing, defined as professional structures and processes; organizational achievement, defined as partially working products and technologies, venture age and number of employees; and quality of stakeholder relationships, defined as prestigious stakeholders, and personal attention.

3.2. Legitimacy threshold in the lens of stakeholders' perceptions

For Tashman et al. (2018), host country stakeholders frequently lack information about EM-MNEs and develop “*stereotypical judgments based on the legitimacy or illegitimacy of certain classes of organizations to which the MNE is perceived to belong*”. Stereotyping can result from 'general perceptions of a country's product quality or issues such as political instability, which can cast a negative shadow over a country and make purchasing its products less desirable (Rui, Cuervo-Cazurra & Un, 2016). Thus, CSR-related behaviors do assist firms in managing their legitimacy, with positive associations discovered between firms' CSR efforts and product evaluations.

Kotha and Lahiri (2016) suggest the concept of a multiple legitimacy thresholds due to entrepreneurial ventures evolution and growth, as well as their audiences' differing expectations. In other words, it is judicious to center on positive effect of external and internal legitimacy on new foreign ventures' growth and survival, where external and internal legitimacy are interdependent (Lu & Xu, 2006). Stakeholder and legitimacy theory are similar, except that they operate at different levels (Dumay, La Torre & Farneti, 2018).

Legitimacy theory operates at a higher level to understand the relationships between organizations, society and particular stakeholders, while stakeholder theory operates at the micro-level to understand how organizations interact with stakeholders in practice (Van der Laan, 2009). Entrepreneurial actions are connected with stakeholder perceptions in light with entrepreneur's venture legitimacy (Fisher et al. 2020). Hence, legitimacy theory and stakeholder theory are not separate theories but overlapping theories (Dumay, La Torre & Farneti, 2018). Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) stressed on a “single” legitimacy threshold where a venture is expected to decline, and above which it is perceived as legitimate and able to invest in needed resources for survival and growth.

3.2.1. Legitimacy consolidation through social networking

For Turcan, Marinova and Rana (2015), networks build legitimacy along three key dimensions: network as form that suggests an acceptable form of organizing, the network as entity which aims for developing a recognizable identity and network as interaction for learning from cooperative interaction. Following Fisher et al. (2020) findings analysis, a *hustle* for legitimacy has been identified as a core concept for an entrepreneurial process. It can be understood on the entrepreneur engages in activities that make a new venture appear legitimate and credible to broad audiences. In the same vein, the same authors identified, in line with Vissa findings in 2011, a *hustle* for connections – engaging in activities to establish ties and relationships with relevant partners and supporters.

3.3. Entrepreneur legitimacy and activity sector internationalization

Most of research on acquiring legitimacy for entrepreneurial endeavors has been focusing through various mechanisms (Fisher, Kotha & Lahiri, 2016). Turcan (2011) research findings suggest that new venture legitimacy is determined by the nature of the venture and the environment in which it operates. Moreover, the research data suggests that the key for understanding the process of legitimation is the 'newness' of a venture and its respective market. For Fisher et al. (2020), entrepreneurial hustle is similar to proactivity in that both concepts relate to an action orientation to enact some useful outcome. Turcan, Marinova and Rana's perceptions, in 2015, towards legitimacy in an international context is conceived around the way organizations create and legitimate their products or services in overseas (emergent) markets, or even how new industries or sectors of an economy are created.

As to the legitimation of new fields or markets around new technologies, Turcan, Marinova and Rana (2015) put forward a captivity typology whereby firms have no feasible alternative but to sell their products via a single enterprise player, or there are a limited number of customers in the identified niche market. Somehow for Yeniyurt et al. (2009), new entrants follow their competitors during the early stages of industry-level internationalization, utilizing marketing alliances as a mode of entry. Moreover, Yeniyurt et al. (2009) added that the cultural-distance experience effect is significantly stronger when forming international alliances with companies from culturally distant countries, but it is not significant when forming alliances with partners from culturally close countries.

4. Research gaps

Social legitimacy (Turcan 2012), cognitive legitimacy, strategic legitimacy: yet rare are the research studies that consider the direct impact of entrepreneurial hustle on external venture stakeholders (Fisher et al. 2020). In the context of new ventures, it appears that a trusty relationship between stakeholder and entrepreneur facilitates venture success (Pollack, Barr & Hanson, 2017). In other words, trust appears as the junction point between entrepreneurial hustle and perceptions of entrepreneur's effectiveness and with perceptions of cognitive legitimacy. Following the literature review that deal with the top 20 authors contribution, it is perceived that the main cleavage that exists, on the one hand, and the ambiguity that revolves around scientific estimation, on the other hand, is related to entrepreneurs' strategies for implementing their international activities in overseas markets.

Two research questions motivate the development of my following 2nd and 3rd Article covering future perspectives . Those research questions will shed the light on a break down answers for the main research statement. The complementarity of both can, therefore,

through a mixed research methodology consolidate the research internal and external findings validity.

To better cope with the subject Article 2 of my thesis, I will try to answer the following question:

“How entrepreneurs’ invest in differentiated strategies for gaining legitimacy?”

The second article relies on a qualitative research method. To make the research more contextual, it is understandable to approach Lebanese entrepreneurs as their discourses, through semi-structured interviews, can be elaborative for estimating the legitimacy fact through their proper and professional testimonials. Qualitative data treatment will lead, with the literature review analysis, for the establishment of research propositions. According to detected facts, through findings interpretation and analysis, it is possible to draw, upon findings discussions, the research hypotheses to be tested on a largest population.

The third article of my thesis will revolve around the following question:

“To which extent legitimacy helps entrepreneurs implementing their activities internationally?”

The third article adopts a quantitative approach. The established propositions with the literature review justification can lead for the establishment of a conceptual model that relates the variables of the study through the expression of the research hypothesis.

Following the present article sequence, and subsequent ones (2 & 3), it can be noticeable that legitimacy is approached from an experimental level to an international one.

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