Network of networks: Uncovering the secrets of entrepreneurs' networks

Song, Y.

Citation for published version (APA):
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
The fact that I became a PhD candidate was a coincidence which completely changed my life. I moved all the way from China to the Netherlands and started my life in Amsterdam, experiencing many things that I had never seen in China. There is no doubt that doing my PhD in a country other than my own was a challenging but worthwhile experience. Many times I felt that finishing my PhD was an impossible mission. Looking back over the past four years, the whole journey was full of both pain and happiness. I feel so grateful and lucky to be here and to have met so many new friends. There are many people I am deeply indebted to and without whom I could not have finished my dissertation.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Rik Maes, thank you for being my promoter and for your continuous support. And thank you also for creating the social environment and getting me involved in the research group.

I am also in debt to my co-promoter Dr Tsvi Vinig, who provided me with day-to-day supervision of my PhD research. He inspired me and motivated me whenever I needed help and ‘disturbed’ him in his office. He taught me to live a balanced life here, which really means a lot to me. Thank you for being the greatest supervisor and for all your practical and emotional support.

I would like to thank the other doctoral committee members, Prof. H. Strikwerda, Prof. T. Elfring, Prof. D. Schwartz and Dr P. Gloor, for taking an interest in my dissertation. I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. H. Strikwerda for all of his detailed feedback and comments, especially on the simulation model. Many thanks to Prof. T. Elfring and Prof. Schwartz for their useful suggestions on Chapter 3. Special thanks to Dr Peter Gloor for allowing me using Condor, which was developed by his group at MIT and for all the precious comments on my PhD project since we met. I would also like to express my deep thanks to Prof. Zheng Li, who has supported me since 2006. Thank you for your suggestions on my PhD research project and taking the advisory role at my defence ceremony.

I would also like to thank my colleagues from the Department of Information Management at the University of Amsterdam. Many thanks to my fellow PhD students Ileana Maris, Wietske van Osch, Saima Khan and Zhe Sun for your personal friendship and as a group. I enjoyed all the gossip sessions with all of you around lunchtime each day, which was always full of fun. Special thanks to Wietze van der Aa for translating my English summary into Dutch. And I would also like to mention Bas Smit, many thanks for his technical support on the database and for lots of useful ideas during the data collection period. I also want to thank Marlene Vock, Hung-Yao Liu and Pawan Bhansing for their useful tips on the dissertation.

Jia-ping Huang, thank you for being such a critical and inspiring collaborator and friend. You helped me so much in the last year by being so patient during our collaboration. I was lucky
to know you in the last year of my PhD. I enjoyed all of our communication and discussions. Qiang Yang, thank you for being available to me whenever I had a problem relating to my programme and for your great friendship, undoubtedly, the data collection would not have been so easy without your support.

Many thanks to my paranymps Meg Lee and Zhe Sun, thank you for arranging everything for me. Meg, thank you so much for your non-stop support during all the difficult times. You are such a thoughtful friend and make me feel so warm all the time. Zhe, thank you for being my academic younger sister and thank you for being so sweet to me in the past year.

In addition to those who directly contributed to this dissertation, I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Maarten Rottschäfer for helping me find a very nice apartment in the East of Amsterdam and for all his practical suggestions. I would especially like to thank Willem Dorresteijn for being my first Dutch friend and landlord. To Sarita Koendjbiherie, it was so nice to travel together with you in Europe and escape from our PhD life. Many thanks to Annemarie de Koning for her help when I moved to East Amsterdam. In addition, I would also like to thank Jeroen Sakkers and my other ex-colleagues at VictorMundi.

Last and most importantly, many thanks to all my great Chinese friends: Guowen Dai, thank you for your constant company both at the office and around home. I no longer felt alone once you arrived in Amsterdam. Zhao Jing, thank you for your friendship and being available for long chats on the phone at midnight when I felt down. Thanks to Mengxiao Wu for encouraging me to work on the weekends. Thanks to Chao Li and Yifan Shi for being part of my swimming group. The following people also played a critical role in my PhD: Xirong Li, Xiang Wang, Lei Liu, Ling Zhang, Hairong Li and Fangyong Tang, Liying Zhang, Yanjing Wang, Xiaolong Liu,Fengkui Ju Yin Ming, Zhang Xu, Jing Zhou, Jian Fu, Fujin Zhou and Si Yin, Chunhong Zhang and Haiying Liu, Yanbin Wang, Bo Yan and Congsen Meng, Fangbin Liu, Jianan Li, and many other. Special thanks to my friends Zhilan Huang, Ye Bie and Lei Zhang in China for their support of my PhD research. And thanks to my cat Onni for his company during my stay in the Netherlands.

I would like to express my special thanks to the Chinese Scholarship Council for their financial support of my PhD programme.

亲爱的爸爸妈妈，感谢你们对我的养育之恩，你们的支持是我在求学路上的动力和源泉。谨将此论文献给他们。

Yang Song
1 October 2012
Amsterdam, the Netherlands