

# The role of knowledge-based networks in the intellectual capital and organizational performance of small and medium-sized enterprises

Networks in  
the intellectual  
capital

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This paper aims to analyze the role of a knowledge-based network (k-network) in the intellectual capital (IC) and organizational performance of Brazilian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

**Design/methodology/approach** – This paper presents a descriptive, qualitative and applied case study, developed taking into account the theories of strategy, IC, networks and finance to analyze the relationship between k-network and the generation of IC and organizational performance in a multifocal perspective (observed in terms of financial and marketing results, efficiency and efficacy and innovation and competitiveness) in Brazilian SMEs.

**Findings** – The findings showed that k-network plays a crucial role in the generation of the IC and improvements in organizational performance in SMEs. In addition, the results revealed the strategic relevance of the relationship between people and enterprises to master the process of creation and sharing information and knowledge in the analyzed network. Taken as a whole, the conclusions demonstrated the establishment of IC (in its three dimensions) as a consequence of the strategic association of SMEs in k-network, as well as the mediation role of IC as a way to promote improvements in organizational performance, considering the observed amelioration in financial results, marketing growth, efficiency, efficacy, innovation and competitiveness.

**Research limitations/implications** – This research provides theoretical contributions by broadening knowledge of the practical relationship between k-network, IC and the multifocal perspective of SMEs organizational performance – a relevant and underexplored issue in the literature, offering several avenues for future research.

**Practical implications** – The results highlight the economic, political and social relevance of SMEs and the strategic use of k-network to overcome SMEs organizational, financial and managerial difficulties. In such context, analysts, managers, businesspeople and other decision-makers are expected to use this type of



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