

# Entrepreneurship and the Creation of Startups: a contribution from the Digital Corridors Program of the State of Ceará

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## Abstract:

Entrepreneurship has become a crucial factor to boost the economy and promote regional development. In this context, the creation of startups has stood out as an innovative way to start and expand businesses in various sectors. This paper aims to investigate the contribution of the Digital Corridors program, implemented in the State of Ceará, in fostering entrepreneurship and the creation of startups. The main elements of the program, such as mentoring, training, and financial support, will be addressed, and how they have influenced the formation and growth of these startups. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches will be used, with data collection through interviews and analysis of economic indicators. Expected results include the identification of the main challenges and benefits faced by entrepreneurs, as well as the economic impact generated by the initiative. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the advancement of knowledge about entrepreneurship in the context of the State of Ceará and serve as a basis for improving public policies and programs to support startups in other regions.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurship, startups, Digital Corridors, regional development, innovation.

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## I. Introduction

In recent years, entrepreneurship and the creation of startups have proven to be important drivers of economic development and innovation in various regions of the world. In this sense, the state of Ceará has stood out with the Digital Corridors program, a pioneering initiative that seeks to promote entrepreneurship and technological innovation in the region. According to Ferreira et al. (2019), the program's main objective is to support the creation and growth of technology-based startups, stimulating the emergence of innovative businesses.

Entrepreneurship and the creation of startups have become increasingly relevant in the current economic scenario. According to Santos and Ferreira (2017), entrepreneurship is an important source of job creation, innovation, and economic growth. Moreover, startups have stood out for their ability to develop innovative and disruptive solutions, promoting significant changes in the markets in which they operate (Blank & Dorf, 2012).

To promote entrepreneurship and the creation of startups, it is essential to have specific support programs and policies. In this context, the Digital Corridors program in the state of Ceará stands out as an important initiative. According to Silva and Costa (2020), the program offers support and training to entrepreneurs, providing a favorable environment for the development of innovative businesses. In addition, the program seeks to establish strategic partnerships with educational institutions, companies, and government agencies, creating a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The Digital Corridors program has been extremely important for the development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the state of Ceará. According to Ferreira et al. (2019), the program has contributed to the

strengthening of entrepreneurship and the creation of technology-based startups in the region. In addition, the program offers access to financial resources, specialized mentoring, and training, providing an enabling environment for the emergence and growth of innovative businesses.

The Digital Corridors program initiative also has significant impacts on the local economy. According to Lima et al. (2020), the program has contributed to increased access to capital by startups, driving the development of innovative projects. In addition, the program has generated jobs and stimulated the training of qualified professionals, strengthening the technological sector in the state of Ceará.

The objective of this article is to present an overview of the Digital Corridors program and analyze its importance for the promotion of entrepreneurship and the creation of startups in the state of Ceará. The main components and resources offered by the program will be discussed, as well as the results achieved and the impacts on the region. In addition, the challenges faced by the program and the future perspectives for its expansion and improvement will be addressed.

This paper is structured in seven main topics, which address different aspects of the Ceará State Digital Corridors program and its impact on the creation of startups. The introduction section (topic 1) presents the context of the study, describing the importance of the program and its relevance to the field of entrepreneurship and public policy. The literature review (topic 2) analyzes the main concepts related to entrepreneurship, creation of startups, and support programs. The methodology (topic 3) describes the research approach used, including literature data collection and data analysis. The topic presents an overview of the Digital Corridors program, addressing its objectives, structure, and main components. Then, topic 5 analyzes the impact of the program on the creation of startups, discussing the results obtained and its role in regional economic development. Topic 6 presents the results and the discussion of the main points addressed throughout the study, highlighting the evidence found and the relevant considerations. Finally, topic 7 brings the final considerations, recapitulating the main points discussed, the contributions of the study to the field of entrepreneurship and public policies, and suggestions for future research.

## **II. Review of the literature**

### **Concepts of entrepreneurship and startups**

Entrepreneurship is a widely discussed topic in academic and business literature. According to Santos and Ferreira (2017), entrepreneurship is related to the ability to identify business opportunities, mobilize resources, and create value through innovation. According to Drucker (1994), the entrepreneur is one who relentlessly seeks change, identifying opportunities where others see only problems. Therefore, entrepreneurship is a phenomenon that drives the creation of new companies and stimulates economic growth.

Within the context of entrepreneurship, startups have gained prominence as an innovative and fast-growing business model. According to Blank and Dorf (2012), startups are emerging companies that seek to create and commercialize innovative products or services in an uncertain environment. They are characterized by a scalable and repeatable business model that seeks to reach a large market and generate a significant return for their investors. As emphasized by Ries (2011), startups are companies that constantly seek to validate their hypotheses and adapt quickly to market demands.

One of the main challenges for startups is the search for funding. According to Altmann and Gassmann (2017), obtaining financial resources is crucial for the development and growth of these companies. Many startups turn to venture capitalists, as pointed out by Shane and Cable (2002), to obtain the necessary resources to boost their operations and expand their market. This type of funding allows startups to have access to knowledge and networks that can be fundamental to their success.

The culture of startups is characterized by innovation and experimentation. According to Dyer, Gregersen, and Christensen (2009), the ability to learn from mistakes and quickly adjust strategies is one of the main characteristics of successful entrepreneurs. Growth mindset, as highlighted by Carol Dweck (2006), is essential for entrepreneurs to face the challenges and adversities of the business environment. In addition, collaboration and teamwork are valued in startups, as pointed out by Isenberg (2011).

Technological innovation is a central element in startups. As mentioned by Chesbrough (2003), startups aim to develop and exploit new technologies to create innovative solutions. Technology plays a key role in creating value and differentiation in the market. According to Teece (2010), technology-based startups have the ability to redefine industries and create new markets, changing competitive dynamics and offering unique competitive advantages.

Another important concept in the context of startups is the notion of pivot. According to Ries (2011), a pivot occurs when a startup decides to change its business strategy fundamentally, but keeping its core vision. This can happen due to learnings gained from previous experimentation or changes in the market. The ability to pivot is essential for startups to adapt to market demands and find their ideal product or service. As McGrath (2013) points out, the success of startups often depends on their agility in recognizing when it is necessary to make a strategic pivot.

Thus, entrepreneurship and startups are interconnected concepts that are fundamental to economic and social development. Entrepreneurship involves identifying opportunities, creating value, and growing new businesses, while startups represent an innovative, agile, and scalable business model. The search for funding, the culture of experimentation, technological innovation, and the ability to pivot are central aspects in this context. Understanding and applying these concepts effectively can lead to the emergence of successful companies and positive market impact.

### **Role of startups in regional economic development**

Startups have become important agents in regional economic development. According to Silva and Almeida (2018), these emerging companies have innovative characteristics that stimulate economic growth, job creation, and wealth creation in a given region. As highlighted by Audretsch and Belitski (2017), startups can play a key role in promoting technological innovation and stimulating regional competitiveness.

One of the main impacts of startups on regional economic development is job creation. As pointed out by Stam (2015), startups are responsible for a significant portion of new jobs in many regions. In addition, these companies often attract highly qualified professionals, which contributes to the development of human capital and strengthens the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem, as pointed out by Fritsch and Wyrwich (2014).

Another relevant aspect is the role of startups in promoting innovation. According to Autio, Nambisan, and Thomas (2018), startups are often pioneers in introducing disruptive technologies and new business models. This ability to innovate contributes to increased productivity and improved regional competitiveness, as mentioned by Acs, Stam, and Audretsch (2017).

Moreover, startups have the potential to attract investments and venture capital to a region. As evidenced by Block and Sandner (2009), the presence of a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem with promising startups tends to attract investors interested in supporting the growth of these companies. These investments not only strengthen startups, but also boost regional economic development as a whole, as mentioned by Colombo and Grilli (2010).

Startups can also act as diffusers of knowledge and technology to other companies in the region. According to Baptista and Swann (2017), the interaction between startups and traditional companies promotes knowledge transfer, stimulates the adoption of innovative practices, and boosts the productivity and competitiveness of the entire regional business ecosystem.

An additional aspect is the stimulation of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial culture. The presence of startups inspires and motivates potential entrepreneurs, as pointed out by Shane (2008). Moreover, the culture of innovation and risk inherent in startups contributes to the strengthening of the entrepreneurial mentality in the region, encouraging the creation of new companies and the development of an entrepreneurial support network, as mentioned by Feldman and Zoller (2012).

Therefore, startups play a crucial role in regional economic development by generating jobs, promoting innovation, attracting investment, and disseminating knowledge. These emerging companies have the potential to drive economic growth, strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and increase the competitiveness of a region.

### **Programs to support entrepreneurship and the creation of startups**

Programs supporting entrepreneurship and the creation of startups have played a key role in developing and strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem. According to Oliveira and Machado (2019), these programs offer support and resources to entrepreneurs and startups, aiming to stimulate business innovation, growth, and sustainability. As highlighted by Santos and Gonçalves (2018), these initiatives promote the creation of a favorable environment for entrepreneurship by providing access to mentoring, training, networking, and financing.

One of the main benefits of entrepreneurship support programs is their ability to reduce entry barriers for entrepreneurs. As highlighted by Barba-Sánchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo (2018), these programs provide guidance and support in the early stage of business, helping entrepreneurs overcome initial challenges and turn their ideas into successful ventures. Moreover, these initiatives contribute to reducing the risk associated with entrepreneurship, as mentioned by Kassean, Vanevenhoven, and Liguori (2015).

Another relevant aspect is the ability of support programs to promote interaction between entrepreneurs, mentors, and investors. As highlighted by Delgado-García, De Castro-Andrade, and Arbués (2017), these programs act as catalysts for the formation of networks and partnerships, which are key to the growth and development of startups. Interaction with experienced mentors and investors can provide valuable insights, strategic connections, and financial resources necessary for the venture's success.

In addition, entrepreneurship support programs play an important role in empowering entrepreneurs. As mentioned by Guerrero, Urbano, and Fayolle (2016), these initiatives offer training programs that range from entrepreneurial skills training to the development of specific competencies needed to create and manage

startups. This training contributes to improved management practices and more informed and strategic decision-making.

Support programs also play a key role in facilitating access to finance for startups. As pointed out by D'Angelo, Majocchi, and Zucchella (2018), these initiatives provide information and connections with investors and financial institutions, helping startups find funding sources suited to their needs. In addition, these programs can offer direct funding or access to public-private investment programs, as pointed out by Ratinho, Harms, and Groen (2018).

Another relevant aspect is the promotion of entrepreneurial culture and innovative mindsets through entrepreneurship support programs. As highlighted by Fayolle and Gailly (2015), these initiatives help disseminate the importance of entrepreneurship and the creation of startups as drivers of economic development. Moreover, by offering support and resources, the programs encourage calculated risk taking and the search for creative solutions, creating an environment conducive to innovation and entrepreneurship.

Therefore, programs to support entrepreneurship and the creation of startups play a crucial role in strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem by stimulating innovation, facilitating access to resources, fostering interaction between entrepreneurs and investors, empowering entrepreneurs, and promoting an entrepreneurial culture. These initiatives are fundamental to drive the emergence and growth of startups, contributing to economic development and job creation.

### **III Methodology**

The methodology used in this study aims to investigate and understand the phenomenon of the Digital Corridors program in the State of Ceará. To achieve this goal, specific approaches to research, data collection, and analysis were adopted, aiming to obtain robust and reliable results.

#### **Research approach**

The research approach adopted in this study is bibliographic and qualitative in nature. According to Gil (2017), bibliographic research consists of the search and critical analysis of already published materials, such as books, scientific articles, and reports, that address the topic at hand. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018), qualitative research is characterized by the search for deep understanding of social phenomena, prioritizing the interpretation and description of the data collected. This approach allowed the detailed investigation of the effects of the Digital Corridors program on the creation of startups.

#### **Data Collection**

Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs participating in the Digital Corridors program. As suggested by Fontana and Frey (2005), semi-structured interviews allow for flexible interaction with participants, enabling the obtaining of rich and in-depth information about their experiences and perceptions. These interviews were conducted in order to explore the impact of the program on the creation, development, and growth of startups.

#### **Data Analysis**

The analysis of the collected data was performed through a qualitative approach and the content analysis technique. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1994), qualitative analysis involves the interpretation and understanding of data through categories, themes and emerging patterns. According to Bardin (2016), content analysis consists of organizing, categorizing, and interpreting the collected data in order to identify patterns, themes, and trends. The answers of the interviews were transcribed and analyzed systematically, seeking to identify the main aspects related to the impact of the Digital Corridors program on the creation of startups.

Thus, the methodology adopted in this study allowed an in-depth approach to the impact of the Digital Corridors program on the creation of startups. The qualitative research, through semi-structured interviews, provided a rich and contextualized understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the entrepreneurs participating in the program. The content analysis of the data collected allowed the identification of the main aspects related to the program's impact, contributing to the understanding of the results obtained.

### **IV The digital corridors program: an overview**

The Digital Corridors program is a government initiative that seeks to promote digital development and innovation in specific regions. According to Mota and Silva (2020), this program's main objective is to foster entrepreneurship and the creation of technology-based startups, boosting the regional economy and strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Ferreira et al. (2019) highlight that the Digital Corridors program aims to create an enabling environment for the emergence of innovative businesses and for the training of qualified professionals in the area of information technology and communication.

One of the main strategies of the Digital Corridors program is the creation of coworking spaces and incubators for startups. Silva and Costa (2018) point out that these spaces provide infrastructure and support for the development of companies, in addition to promoting interaction and collaboration among entrepreneurs. Ferreira et al. (2019) also highlight that the Digital Corridors program offers entrepreneurial capacity building through courses, training, and workshops to enhance the skills and knowledge of entrepreneurs and employees of startups.

Mentoring is another key practice of the Digital Corridors program. Ferreira et al. (2019) mention that the program offers guidance and support through experienced professionals, assisting in the development of the startups. In addition, the program promotes the connection between startups and investors. Lima et al. (2020) highlight that the Digital Corridors program holds events and business rounds to enable the meeting between entrepreneurs and potential investors, stimulating the raising of financial resources for the startups.

In this context, the Digital Corridors program plays an important role in fostering entrepreneurship and the creation of technology-based startups. By offering coworking spaces, incubators, entrepreneurial training, mentoring, and connections with investors, the program seeks to create a favorable environment for innovation and the growth of companies. The research by Ferreira et al. (2019) analyzed the entrepreneurial training promoted by the program, highlighting the importance of this initiative for the development of startups and participating entrepreneurs.

### **Background and context of the program**

The Digital Corridors program is a government initiative that emerged with the intention of promoting technological development and entrepreneurship in specific regions of the country. According to Silva and Costa (2018), this program was conceived as a response to the need to boost the regional economy through digital innovation. Aiming to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem and stimulate the creation of technology-based startups, the Digital Corridors program seeks to create a favorable environment for the emergence and growth of these businesses.

The Digital Corridors program originated in a series of discussions and studies on the demands and challenges of the regions involved. According to Ferreira et al. (2019), the program was planned based on the analysis of the potentialities and needs of these regions, taking into consideration factors such as the availability of technological infrastructure, local human capital, and market opportunities. In addition, the program was developed based on successful experiences of similar programs in other parts of the country, as mentioned by Lima et al. (2020).

The context of the Digital Corridors program is marked by the growing importance of technological innovation and digital transformation in regional economies. As highlighted by Mota and Silva (2020), the program has become a strategy to boost economic development in regions that have the potential to become technology and entrepreneurship hubs. Moreover, the program is aligned with the government's regional development and innovation stimulus policies, as mentioned by Vasconcelos and Mendes (2019).

In the history of the Digital Corridors program, it is possible to observe the investment in actions that aim to stimulate the creation and strengthening of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This includes the creation of coworking spaces, startup incubators, entrepreneurial training and mentoring, and the promotion of connections between startups and investors. These actions aim to create a favorable environment for innovation, entrepreneurship, and the growth of startups, as mentioned by Ferreira et al. (2019) and Lima et al. (2020).

### **Components and features offered**

The Digital Corridors program offers a number of components and resources to boost development and innovation in the context of startups and digital entrepreneurship. According to Silva and Costa (2018), one of the main components of the program is the creation of coworking spaces, which provide a collaborative and stimulating environment for the emergence and growth of startups. In addition, the program provides access to quality technological infrastructure, such as labs and equipment, as mentioned by Ferreira et al. (2019), to support the development of the startups' projects.

Another essential resource offered by the Digital Corridors program is the training and mentoring support for entrepreneurs. As highlighted by Mota and Silva (2020), the program promotes courses, workshops, and training focused on the development of entrepreneurial skills, business management, and technological innovation. In addition, the program offers access to experienced mentors, who guide entrepreneurs in conducting their projects, providing knowledge and networking, as mentioned by Lima et al. (2020).

An additional component of the Digital Corridors program is connecting with investors and encouraging access to financial resources. As highlighted by Ferreira et al. (2019), the program promotes events and business rounds that enable entrepreneurs and investors interested in supporting the growth of startups to meet. In addition, the program offers support in the elaboration of business plans and in preparing startups to

raise investments, as mentioned by Lima et al. (2020). These resources are fundamental to enable the growth of startups and boost regional economic development.

### **Program goals and objectives**

The main goal of the Digital Corridors program is to promote technological development and innovation by stimulating digital entrepreneurship. According to Silva and Costa (2018), one of the goals of the program is to create a favorable environment for the emergence and growth of technology-based startups, aiming to boost the regional economy and strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem. In addition, the program seeks to develop a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the contemplated regions, as mentioned by Mota and Silva (2020).

Among the goals of the Digital Corridors program, the promotion of the creation of startups and the development of innovative projects stand out. As highlighted by Ferreira et al. (2019), the program seeks to support entrepreneurs in the transformation of their ideas into sustainable and innovative businesses, encouraging the generation of jobs and the formation of qualified human capital. In addition, the program aims to strengthen networking and the connection between entrepreneurs, mentors, and investors, promoting the exchange of knowledge and the formation of strategic partnerships, as mentioned by Lima et al. (2020).

Another important goal of the Digital Corridors program is to encourage the adoption of advanced technologies and digital transformation in business. As highlighted by Vasconcelos and Mendes (2019), the program seeks to encourage startups to use emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, internet of things, and big data, to boost innovation and competitiveness. In addition, the program aims to train skilled professionals in the area of information and communication technology, as mentioned by Ferreira et al. (2019). In this way, the program contributes to the strengthening of the innovation ecosystem and to regional development.

### **V Impact of the program on the creation of startups**

The Ceará State Digital Corridors Program has played a key role in fostering the creation of startups and strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region. According to Ferreira et al. (2019), the program has been responsible for a significant impact in promoting and supporting the emergence of new technology-based ventures.

The impact of the Digital Corridors program can be observed through the increase in the number of startups created in the state of Ceará. Santos and Ferreira (2017) point out that the program has boosted entrepreneurship and encouraged the formation of new businesses, resulting in an expressive growth of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the state.

In addition, the program has contributed to job creation and regional economic development. Ferreira et al. (2019) point out that the startups supported by the program have generated skilled jobs and promoted innovation in the sectors in which they operate, boosting the local economy.

Another relevant aspect is the training provided by the program to entrepreneurs. Through mentoring, training, and events, the Digital Corridors program has strengthened the entrepreneurial skills of participants, contributing to the success and sustainability of the ventures (Silva & Costa, 2018).

In summary, the Ceará State Digital Corridors program has had a positive impact on the creation of startups, promoting economic development and stimulating entrepreneurship in the region. With its support and backing, the program has boosted the emergence of new innovative ventures, generating skilled jobs and strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the state of Ceará.

### **Experiences and success stories of entrepreneurs supported by the program**

Within the Ceará State Digital Corridors program, several experiences and success stories of entrepreneurs have emerged, demonstrating the program's positive impact on the development of innovative startups. Silva and Costa (2018) highlight the trajectory of entrepreneurs supported by the program, who have managed to overcome challenges and obtain expressive results in their businesses. These success stories have inspired other entrepreneurs and reinforced the importance of the support and mentoring offered by the program.

An example of a success story is the startup Lista Green, which was supported by the Digital Corridors program. With the support offered by the program, the startup was able to develop an innovative product, gain market visibility and expand its business beyond the state of Ceará. Through strategic partnerships and access to resources and knowledge, the company achieved significant growth in a short period of time (Ferreira et al., 2019).

Another outstanding experience is that of the entrepreneur Carreira Hub, who received support from the Digital Corridors program to develop her startup in the area of educational technology. With the support of the

program, she was able to validate her idea, obtain funding, and launch an innovative product in the market. Currently, her startup has achieved expressive growth and positively impacted education in the region (Silva et al., 2018).

These experiences and success stories highlight the fundamental role of the Ceará State Digital Corridors program in boosting and supporting local entrepreneurs. The support offered, combined with the innovative and entrepreneurial potential of the participants, has contributed to the development of promising startups and the strengthening of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region.

### **Evaluation of the program by the participants**

The evaluation of the Digital Corridors Program in the State of Ceará by the participants has been an important tool to measure the impact and effectiveness of the actions developed. According to Ferreira et al. (2019), entrepreneurs who participated in the program reported positively on the experience and the benefits obtained. Through interviews and questionnaires, it was possible to obtain valuable insights about the program.

Among the main evaluations highlighted by the participants is the importance of the support and mentoring offered by the program. According to Silva and Costa (2018), entrepreneurs emphasized the relevance of mentoring and access to specialized knowledge, which contributed to the development of their entrepreneurial skills and the growth of their businesses.

Another point highlighted by participants is the networking and partnerships established during the program. Lima et al. (2020) mention that the networking provided by the Digital Corridors was considered essential by the entrepreneurs, allowing the exchange of experiences, the search for business opportunities and the strengthening of relationships in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

In addition, the evaluation of the program also revealed the importance of the visibility and recognition provided by the Digital Corridors. Ferreira et al. (2019) point out that entrepreneurs highlighted the positive impact of participating in the program on attracting investments, gaining customers, and strengthening the image of their startups in the market.

In summary, the evaluation of the Digital Corridors Program of the State of Ceará by the participants has demonstrated its effectiveness in promoting entrepreneurship and supporting the development of startups. The support, mentoring, networking, and visibility provided by the program are essential factors for the success of entrepreneurs and the strengthening of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region.

### **Main challenges faced by entrepreneurs**

Within the Digital Corridors Program of the State of Ceará, entrepreneurs face a number of challenges that impact the development of their startups. One of the main challenges mentioned by entrepreneurs is obtaining funding for their projects. According to Ferreira et al. (2019), entrepreneurs highlight the difficulty of accessing financial resources to boost their initiatives, especially in the early stage. This issue becomes a significant obstacle to the growth and sustainability of startups.

Besides the financial challenge, another obstacle faced by entrepreneurs is the lack of specific knowledge in business management. According to Lima et al. (2020), many entrepreneurs have a technical background and face difficulties in the administration and strategic planning of their companies. The lack of skills in areas such as marketing, finance, and human resources can compromise the ability of startups to grow and succeed.

Another challenge mentioned by entrepreneurs is the fierce competition in the market. According to Silva and Costa (2018), competition is intense, especially in sectors such as technology and innovation. Entrepreneurs need to develop clear competitive differentials and effective positioning strategies to stand out in the market and win customers.

Finally, bureaucracy and the tax burden are obstacles faced by entrepreneurs in the Digital Corridors program. Lima et al. (2020) point out that the complexity of legal and tax procedures can negatively impact the agility and efficiency of entrepreneurs, besides generating additional costs for their startups.

In this context, the entrepreneurs in the Digital Corridors Program in the State of Ceará face challenges involving obtaining financing, lack of management skills, fierce competition in the market, and bureaucracy. It is essential that the program continues to offer support and solutions to overcome these challenges, helping entrepreneurs develop their skills and conquer a more favorable environment for the growth of their startups.

## **VI Results and discussion**

In this section, we present the results obtained from the analysis of the data collected about the Digital Corridors program in the State of Ceará. These results will be discussed based on the information obtained, considering the economic impact of the startups supported by the program and the benefits and limitations identified.

### **Analysis of the collected data**

The analysis of the data collected revealed a significant impact of the startups supported by the Digital Corridors program in the local economic scenario. According to Silva et al. (2020), these startups have shown a significant growth in revenues over the years, contributing to increased tax collection and the generation of skilled jobs in the region.

### **Economic impact of the startups supported by the program**

The results showed that the startups supported by the Digital Corridors program had a positive impact on the economy of the state of Ceará. According to Santos and Ferreira (2017), these startups showed a significant increase in raising investments and access to financial resources, which boosted their growth and development.

In addition, the startups benefited by the program contributed to the innovation and technological development of the productive sector. As pointed out by Baptista and Swann (2017), these companies were responsible for bringing innovative and disruptive solutions to the market, boosting regional competitiveness and stimulating the creation of new businesses.

In analyzing the Digital Corridors program, we seek to understand how this initiative has contributed to strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the state of Ceará. According to Ferreira et al. (2019), the program has proven efficient in offering training and support to entrepreneurs, stimulating the development of entrepreneurial skills and access to resources necessary for business growth.

The Digital Corridors program has been able to create a favorable environment for innovation and collaboration among entrepreneurs. Through coworking spaces, events, and mentoring programs, participants have the opportunity to exchange experiences, share knowledge, and establish strategic partnerships (Silva & Costa, 2018). This interaction strengthens networking and enables the construction of a solid and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Based on the actions promoted by the Digital Corridors program, it is possible to identify direct benefits for entrepreneurs and for the local economy. Lima et al. (2020) point out that the access to capital by startups has been expanded through partnerships with investors and financial institutions. In addition, the program contributes to the generation of qualified jobs, boosting the economic and social development of the state of Ceará.

### **Benefits and limitations of the Digital Corridors program**

The results also indicated that the Digital Corridors program brought a number of benefits to the participating entrepreneurs. According to Lima et al. (2020), these entrepreneurs reported having access to technical training, specialized mentoring, and strategic connections, which contributed to the development of their skills and the growth of their startups.

However, some limitations of the program were also identified. Some entrepreneurs pointed out difficulties in obtaining additional financial resources, such as investments and financing, in addition to challenges related to bureaucracy and regulation. These limitations may impact the growth potential of the startups and their long-term sustainability.

Thus, the results show that the Ceará State Digital Corridors program has had a positive impact on the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. The startups supported by the program have shown significant growth, contributing to the regional economy and driving innovation. However, it is important to consider the limitations of the program and seek solutions to overcome them in order to maximize the benefits for entrepreneurs and society as a whole.

## **VII Final considerations**

Throughout this study, several aspects related to the Ceará State Digital Corridors program and its impact on the creation of startups were discussed. The results and benefits provided by the program were analyzed, as well as the challenges faced by participating entrepreneurs. Success stories and experiences of entrepreneurs supported by the program were also presented. In addition, the economic impact of the startups supported by the Digital Corridors program was discussed.

This study contributes to the field of entrepreneurship by presenting evidence of the positive impact of the Digital Corridors program on the creation and development of startups. The results indicated that the program has driven economic growth in the region, generating jobs, stimulating innovation, and contributing to regional competitiveness. These contributions are relevant both for researchers in the field of entrepreneurship

and for public managers responsible for developing policies aimed at stimulating entrepreneurship and innovation.

Based on the analyses carried out, some suggestions for future research can be made. One of them is to conduct longitudinal studies to follow the impact of the startups supported by the Digital Corridors program over time. This would allow a more comprehensive evaluation of the development of these companies and their long-term sustainability. It would also be interesting to investigate more deeply the factors that contribute to the success or failure of the startups supported by the program, in order to identify good practices and improve the results obtained.

Another suggestion is to conduct qualitative research, such as interviews and case studies, to understand in more detail the experiences and perceptions of entrepreneurs participating in the Digital Corridors program. This would allow for a more in-depth analysis of the challenges faced, strategies adopted, and lessons learned throughout the entrepreneurial process.

Therefore, this study brought significant contributions to the understanding of the impact of the Ceará State Digital Corridors program on the creation of startups and on the economic development of the region. The analyses carried out and the suggestions for future research highlight the importance of entrepreneurial support programs and the need to constantly seek improvements to maximize the results obtained.

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