



FACING 2020: THE 9 TRAITS OF SUCCESSFUL MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROME

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ABSTRACT

The distinctiveness of migrants' entrepreneurial propensity can be explained by considering both internal characteristics of the individual migrant, as well as the external environment of the host economy he/she operates in (Kloosterman et al. 1999). Migrants can perceive and seek entrepreneurial opportunities through specific sets of resources and personality-traits (Kloosterman/Rath 2001, Kloosterman 2010). Despite of this, the topic is vastly under-studied compared to its economic importance. After an in-depth study of the literature status quo about it, the paper analyses the motivation, intention, self-efficacy, culture, entrepreneurial orientation and performance of immigrant entrepreneurs. The main aim is to verify to what extent perceptions and skills of these immigrant entrepreneurs are similar to entrepreneurial psychological constructs studied in the literature. The used research instrument was the semi-structured interview consisting of 49 open-ended questions directed at the sample under examination. The results of the study showed a significant correlation between motivation and business performance (a motivated entrepreneur is more likely to succeed in business than an unmotivated entrepreneur) and a significant positive correlation between culture and motivation to start a business (a culture that is supportive of entrepreneurial activities, low uncertainty avoidance, high individualism and low power distance relates positively to a high level of entrepreneurial self-efficacy).

Keywords: Migrants, Entrepreneurs, Traits, Europe 2020



1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, entrepreneurship is seen as the driving force behind economic development. Some authors, such as Morris, Schindehutte and Lesser (2002) argue that entrepreneurship is a fundamental value-driven activity. Indeed, the phenomenon of foreign entrepreneurs in Italy is growing. The entrepreneurship of migrants, despite the economic difficulties and language and culture barriers, has grown. At the end of 2010 there were 228.540 foreign entrepreneurs, mainly in the craft sector. These companies mainly deal on the Italian market. Despite the crisis, foreign companies have registered a positive balance at the end of the year: more than 26 thousand units, in contrast to the Italian companies that are, however, declined by more than 28 thousand companies. This confirms the observations of some authors. As Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2011) highlights, only recently has the potential self-employment of migrants been considered a vehicle for their socio-economic integration and a catalyst for economic growth. Furthermore, studies reveal that these firms differ in characteristics such as market segments, growth orientation and innovativeness (see for example Constant and Zimmermann 2006, De La Vega et al. 2008, Coduras 2008, Irastorza and Pena 2007, Light 1984, Brixy et al. 2010). "Following this line of argument, migrants' higher prevalence towards entrepreneurship compared to non-migrants in innovation- and factor-driven economies is likely to result from constraints faced in the host economies' labor markets – presumably due to such conditions as language or cultural barriers, a lack of accredited educational and training qualifications, formal and informal regulations, or even outright discrimination; this, in turn, pushes them into self-employment. Perhaps, then, in efficiency-driven economies, migrants' lower entrepreneurial activities may be a consequence of better job opportunities compared to the other development levels".

As the ENTREPRENEURSHIP 2020 ACTION PLAN of European Commission highlights, migrants are more entrepreneurial than natives and a foreign-born self-employed person who owns a small or medium firm creates between 1.4 and 2.1 additional jobs. Migrants represent an important pool of potential entrepreneurs in Europe. The EU has publicly recognized the key contribution that migrant entrepreneurs can make to sustainable growth and employment. The distinctiveness of migrants' entrepreneurial propensity can be explained by considering both internal characteristics of the individual migrant, as well as the external environment of the host economy he/she operates in (Kloosterman et al. 1999). Migrants can perceive and seek entrepreneurial opportunities through specific sets of resources and personality-traits (Kloosterman/Rath 2001, Kloosterman 2010). Despite of this, the topic is vastly under-studied compared to its economic importance. Krueger (2000) says that entrepreneurs' intentions guide their goal setting, communications, commitment, organisation and work. He further says that intention is the single best predictor of any planned behaviour, including entrepreneurship. It is said that entrepreneurial intention depends on the individual's attitudes and subjective norms, as well as the perceived feasibility of the endeavour.

2. THE 9 TRAITS OF SUCCESSFUL MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS: GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this paper, we address one basic question: Considering the external environment of the host economy he/she operates in, to what extent perceptions and skills of immigrant entrepreneurs are similar to the entrepreneurial psychological constructs? The purpose is to explore whether psychological traits –need for achievement, locus of control, tolerance for ambiguity, and risk taking propensity – are correlates of migrant entrepreneurial postures. As a matter of fact, the decision to leave one's economy of birth correlates with personality-characteristic such as locus of control, self-efficacy and risk-averseness – which are also believed to have a positive effect on a person's likelihood to become engaged in entrepreneurial activity. Gupta and Muijt (2012) indicate that much of the personality-related entrepreneurial research was observed for traits to determine who is more likely to start a business. Some authors like Kuratko and Hodgets (2007) have considered factors like personality, motivation, social capital, social networks, cognitive biases and heuristics, social models, intelligence, critical thinking ability and experience in the hope that research will lead them to an evolving understanding of entrepreneurship.

According with this introduction, the objectives of the study is to find out:

- how culture, self-efficacy, motivation, entrepreneurial intention and orientation affect start-ups



- if immigrant and local entrepreneurs are affected in the same way by the entrepreneurial start-up factors (culture, self-efficacy, motivation, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial orientation, and business support and performance) when starting their businesses.

For the purpose of this study, the following constructs and concepts are used as defined below: *Self efficacy*: In order to define how the examined sample is able to implement required behavior to achieve the defined objectives and results, we analyzed Self efficacy level. Bandura (in Urban2004:6) indicates that perceived self-efficacy is the strongest single predictor of career choice and self-reported competencies which predict entrepreneurial performance. He explains self-efficacy as one's ability to organise and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations. Bandura (in Urban2004) argues that self-efficacy is influenced by different sources of information that are persuasive, depending on one's cultural values. Urban (2004) adds that a study of entrepreneurial motivation without insight into culture is an idle pursuit. *Locus of control*: To understand how the examined sample interpreters events and the ability in events perceiving and control, we studied Locus of control. Rotter 1966 defined Locus of Control as an individual's perception about the underlying main causes of events in his/her life. Shane (2003) pointed that there are two types of people: those with external locus of control, who believe that what happens to them is a result of fate, chance, luck or forces beyond their control; and those with internal locus of control who believe that for the most part, the future is in their control through their own effort. Research indicates that individuals with internal locus of control often have a more expressed need for achievement (Brockhaus 1982; Lao 1970; Gurin et al 1969). *Proactivity*: To define how the sample examined has the ability to anticipate problems, needs and future changes, we defined and evaluated "Proactivity". Venkatraman (1989) suggests that proactiveness refers to processes aimed at anticipating and acting on future needs by seeking new opportunities, introducing new products and brands ahead of competition. Majority of scholars and educators are in agreement that activities that are entrepreneurial come directly from intentions of individuals and actions undertaken subsequently over time (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004). Intentions intensely affect and determine majority of entrepreneurial conduct including the creation of new ventures as well as self-employment (Meyer, 2003). *Take opportunity*: In order to define how sample has the ability to recognize the opportunity, to take opportunity and to promote their company, we analyzed "Take Opportunity" level. Opportunity is defined here as a future situation which is deemed desirable and feasible. As a matter of fact, entrepreneurship is a process by which individuals-either on their own or inside organizations-pursue opportunities without regard to the resources they currently control (Stevenson, Roberts, and Grousbeck, 1989). *Risk Taking Propensity*: To define how the sample has the ability to manage risk and avoid it, we examined "Risk Taking propensity" as the decision-making orientation toward accepting greater likelihood of loss in exchange for greater potential reward. Entrepreneurial risk behavior has been examined in the literature by both the personality trait approach (McClelland 1961, 1965; Brockhaus 1980, 1982; Brockhaus and Horowitz 1986; Sexton & Bowman 1985; Begley and Boyd 1987) and cognitive approach (Kirzner 1973, 1979; Bird 1988; Palich and Bagby 1995; Busenitz 1999). The literature on entrepreneurship suggests the importance of risk-taking behavior in any entrepreneurial activity (Brockhaus, 1980, p.513). The usual interpretation of a risk taker is someone who in the context of a business venture pursues a business idea when the probability of succeeding is low (Smith-Hunter, Kapp, and Yonkers, 2003). *Employability*: To define how the sample has the ability to manage their personal change in the employment context, we explored "Employability". The concept of employability has gained salience in the European labour market discourse, as an official policy category, during the last decade. Moreover, the shift of focus in labour market policy discourse from "lack of employment" to "lack of employability" illustrates a shift in problem perception and in policy from demand-oriented policies to promote full employment to supply-oriented policies to promote "full employability" (Brown et al., 2001; Serrano, 2000a) *Innovation*: The perception of an entrepreneur as an innovator is based on the paradigm which puts the entrepreneur as a person involved in the identification of opportunities and employs the innovation tool for developing successfully new business (Meyer, 2003). In this study, we stressed the Innovation role in order to understand how the sample examined both innovative and productive ideas, products, processes and procedures for your business. In the opinion of Currie, et al. (2008), innovation relates to entrepreneurship as it is its particular instrument, being an act that leads to the pro-



vision of resources with fresh ability for wealth creation. *Motivation*: To define how the respondents surveyed were encouraged to embark on the road of entrepreneurship, we analyzed "Motivation". There are many variables to take into account to give one a good indication of how people might behave in various circumstances. Motivation is what drives people to behave in different ways (Smith, Cronje, Brevis & Vrba, 2007). Stokes et al (2010) explain that if the entrepreneur's reason for starting the business originated in pull or opportunity-driven motives like the desire to exploit a market opportunity, the resulting enterprise is more likely to grow. *Problem solving*: In order to determine how sample has the ability to identify and solve problem situations we decided to explore Problem solving level. The way in which the entrepreneur solves or faces business problems determines the success or failure of his or her business (Rwigema & Venter, 2004:55; Kunene, 2008:53). Problem-solving skills include the ability to handle stress and time management.

3. METHOD

Aims

As international entrepreneurship gains momentum as a significant and relevant field of research; we examine the relationship between culture and personality characteristics commonly associated with entrepreneurial mindset. By demonstrating systematic variation in entrepreneurial characteristics across cultures, we raise important questions about the boundaries of international entrepreneurship research and the challenges of transcending them.

Sample

There are fourteen participants aged between 20 and 60 years (mean age 40.425). The group is composed of 82% (N = 33) of males and 18% (N = 7) of females. The 40 subjects examined are distributed in a sample of Macedonia (5%), Egypt (25%), Bangladesh (5%), Vietnam (3%), Romania (25%); Brazil (5%); Turkey (10%), India (7%); Albania (2%), Moldova (2%); Kosovo (3%); Tunisia (5%); Iran (3%).

Procedure

The sample examined was contacted by the Chamber of Commerce. The interviews were done individually. The interviews were done individually using a grid of interview; the interviews conducted during the months of October 2013 to January 2014. The interviews recorded, transcribed and coded to be subjected to content analysis.

Tool

Being exploratory in nature, and in anticipation of cultural differences, non-quantitative methods were selected for this study in order to capture the experiences of entrepreneurs in their own words. Whereas quantitative methodologies allow a researcher the context of entrepreneurship, including the socio-cultural environment, the host society, the value therein, and how individuals become entrepreneurs. The tool used was the semi-structured interview consisting of 49 open-ended questions. Substantial information was obtained only after a personal, trusting relationship was established. The interview guide consisted of open ended questions to capture what people had to say in their own words, about how and why they got involved in their own business. The questions refer to the psychological constructs identified in the literature. The psychological constructs examined are:

Self - efficacy: a set of beliefs and convictions nourished by the person in respect of their ability to implement the behavior required in order to achieve objectives and results. Locus of control internal / external : how to interpret the events that happen according to the polarity of internal / external and indicates the perception of the subject on the ability to control events. Proactivity: the ability to anticipate future problems, needs and changes. Take opportunity: ability to grasp the right opportunities in any situation. Risk taking: entrepreneurs select the risks to avoid the most critical for the survival of their business. They are able to calibrate the level of risk and potential rewards that combines the personal ability to manage uncertainty. Employability: workers' ability to manage their personal level of change in the context of work and then refers to the availability adaptation. Innovation: intentional introduction of ideas, products, processes and procedures for new and useful for an individual, a group or an organization. Motivation is the driving impulse stimulates and causes the individual to act in view of a goal. Problem solving is the ability to identify problematic situations and develop methods for their resolution, and the development of heuristic potential, skills assessment and objective judgment;



Data analyses

The data analysis conducted through an analysis of the text which does not require textual analysis. The results compared to resolve any discrepancies, to arrive at a shared reading of the analysis.

4. FINDINGS

The sample is concentrated mostly in the age group ranging from 41 to 50 years, and that at the time of departure the country of origin 58% (N = 23) of respondents corresponded to the age group between 11 and 20 years. Concerning to education level, the 53% (N = 21) have the diploma and 10% (N = 4) are graduates. These data follows the tendency and confirm the national data of entrepreneurs. Respect the question relating to how they arrived in Italy 55% (N = 22) of respondents failed to answer. This suggests that these are probably arrived in Italy illegally. The respondents, more than 50%, said they leaved their country with his family, a cause to the dire economic conditions, already the respondents declare they haven't parents in Italy before to arrive. Most start-ups (66%), they are not family company, but 55% (N = 22) of entrepreneurs would like work their sons in their businesses.

The sample, 80% (N = 32) responded that they do not have any relatives holder in other companies nor in Italy nor in their original country. This confirms their motivation in doing business is not for genetic issues or generation but totally individual character. The majority of our sample said they had done other work both in their country of origin in Italy before starting their business (57%). The previous work are for the most part are related to the business sector. Respondents with considerable enthusiasm claimed to have integrated very well in Italy with their families, declared have not had any problems of integration, some initial problems given by the non-linguistic knowledge. The result interesting in line with the macro objectives of the research, is that almost the entire sample, 95% (N = 38) of respondents chose as the definition of the traits that characterize the entrepreneur, a person who fails to be autonomous and independent and realize their aspirations.

Self efficacy

To define how the sample examined, implementing the behavior required to achieve the defined objectives and results, behind these questions:

- Which characteristics consider yours necessary to open a business?
- How your past experiences influenced the way in which you consider yourself?
- Do you think that have started a business could lead you to a mobility of social status?

Through the analysis of the data we can say that the majority of the sample examined, strongly believes in their abilities and past experiences have been a source of motivation for future success.

Examples of responses:

"Thanks to my ability, I opened four additional activities and earn good!"

"My past experiences have motivated me, gave me courage to do better."

"Only with the desire to do you can achieve what you really want!"

Locus of control internal/external

To define how the sample examined interpreters events that happen a second polarity internal / external and how high the perception of the sample in the ability to control events, we have drawn the following questions:

- *The crisis in Italy and has influenced you in your decision to open a business?*
- *Your commitment as it affects the outcome of your business enterprise?*
- *In the face of unexpected events / problems, do you feel able to control and dominate the situation?*
- *To what extent has affected the good fortune to you?*

The results received with emphasize the external polarity affects little in the subjects studied. The majority of the sample believe in luck, but firmly point out that the results of its business all depend on a strong commitment and courage to face each day and especially fortunate that the human being, created by their own efforts.

Examples of responses:

"The crisis has affected. We have three companies with 30 employees. If I not dedicate myself 100%, at the end of the month, we can see that the result is not the same! "



"At the beginning I was lucky because I met my husband who has allowed me to get where I got. But, I must say that my commitment is impeccable and without it we would not have the results we have today ... "

"Yes, of problematic situations I have faced many risks ... there are always enough to face them with courage and determination"

Proactivity

To define how the sample examined has the ability to anticipate problems, needs and future changes. Have been defined and evaluated the following questions:

- *Do you want your future will happen in Italy?*
- *How he decision to open your business was a personal initiative?*

The results argue that the sample is absolutely certain to continue their future in Italy, despite the different culture and values ??of the host country. They feel like Italians and want to feel like these. Their entrepreneurial activity is a great satisfaction and it's percevid like opportunity to be integrated into Italian country, socially and politically way.

Examples of responses:

"Absolutely Yes! I'm in Italy for many years, I feel Italian, although I miss my country. "

"My dream has always been to open a daycare center, but in my country there was this possibility. So here I am, with everything I've ever wanted, despite the difficulties. "

Take opportunity

To define how the sample examined has the ability to recognize the opportunity to take opportunity to promote their company, were the following questions:

- *Do you think that a good network of relationships can influence in recognizing the new opportunities?*
- *Do you are inscribed for any associations?*
- *How you recognize the use of social networks like opportunity?*
- *Do you are inscribed in a cultural association?*

Respondents assert with conviction that a good network of relationships can bring about new opportunities. In contrast, the majority of the sample does not see in social networks, associations and cultural associations no opportunity for their own business.

Examples of responses:

"I do a lot of publicity, but not through social networks, I prefer the traditional advertising."

"I not use advertising, now after so many years the profits get them to customers who already have."

Risk taking

To define how the sample examined has the ability to manage risk and avoid it, we have defined the following questions:

- *What do you do to manage the risk when you open a newbusiness?*
- *How do you manage risk?*
- *Can you tell me an experience where you had to manage a risk situation?*

The results reported claim that the sample look for a risks, argue that the best way to deal with these risks is to put the maximum of the commitment, courage and determination.

Examples of responses:

"In the beginning, there were problems with the plumbing, this resulted in lost workdays and loss of profit. As soon as it was fixed, I had to commit a lot for lost time. "

"Ask the florist also means working at night, do not turn beautiful people. Many times it happened to have problems but just stay calm. "

"One evening culminated in a brawl in front of my local customers, initially did not know how to handle the situation. It 'was really an unpleasant experience, fortunately not repeated more "

Employability

To define how the sample examined has the ability to manage their personal change in the employment context , the following questions have been selected :



- *How much will fit your business to the changing labor market ?*
- *In which area of Education you are interested to receive training for you and / or your collaborators?*

Through the responses of the sample we were able to detect the start-ups are very much adapted to changes in the labor market ; the entrepreneurs not recognize the opportunity to receive to follow training courses for more opportunities.

Examples of responses :

“ Contrary to my expectations the activity fits very well, they are also able to provide jobs for some friends who needed it , so I also have help. “

“It fits very well, in fact, with the money made I was able to open another business in the same sector , is managed by my sons”

Innovation

To define how the sample examined both innovative and productive ideas, products, processes and procedures for your business, here are the following questions:

- *Are you looking for new ideas, new useful products for your business enterprise?*

With great surprise we found that the majority of the sample (67%) are not interested in searching for new ideas or useful products for your company. (see Appendix: Table 43).

Examples of responses:

“Yes, of course, are always looking for new ideas, but unfortunately it also takes money to implement them!”

“Oh yeah sure, I'm a guy who likes to create, experiment. That's why I opened my pizza, so I have the ability to create and invent new pizzas, my former employers do not allow me. “

“No, unfortunately for new ideas bear fruit and that we must also have the availability to achieve them, and unfortunately I do not have it.”

Motivation

To define how the respondents surveyed were encouraged to embark on the road of entrepreneurship , we selected four questions:

- *What drove you to leave your country?*
- *Why the decision to undertake an entrepreneurial activity ?*
- *Why the decision to choose Italy ?*
- *Why you focused in this sector-trade?*

Through the results we see that the sample they left their country to poverty and economic hardship. The situations leaved give up the motivations for new straup, and sustains with coherency their past experience.

Examples of responses :

“ Why met my current husband in Brazil ! He was a photographer , we met during a fashion show, we immediately fell in love and I followed him here in Italy. “

“ My father had construction company in Romania , but I had the dream oto opne my personal company in a different country, so me and my friends choose to open in Italy. I began work like house painter . “

“I decided to come to Italy to give economicalty support for my family, my father was very ill. Luckily I had an uncle here in Italy, he helped me .

Problem solving

To determine how sample examined has the ability to identify and solve problem situations , we selected two questions:

- *What strategies you adopt to cope with the current economic crisis?*
- *How to promote your company, in a context of high market competition?*

The sample cope to the crisis promoting and encouraging its business through promotions and offers on products, through the strategy to expansion of their clients.

Examples of responses :

“I try to always offer what others do not offer , quality always comes first!”

“I try to fidelize the clients, while maintaining the good prices. The satisfied customer comes back and maybe



someone else's door ! “

“ I do not have much competition because no one around here has a grocery store that sells exclusively Romanians. “

“There is so much competition in our field, but there is also a lot of work ... the cake is so great that enough for all . Still there are many shortcomings in the computer field .

5. CONCLUSIONS

The theoretical underpinnings for this empirical study specified that psychological traits relate positively to entrepreneurial postures. Always referring to our goals and our starting hypothesis we were able, through qualitative interviews, to verify the perceptions and skills of these immigrant entrepreneurs are similar to the entrepreneurial psychological constructs studied in the literature. In this way were examined some of the characteristics of the “entrepreneurial personality”, as these aspects in the current period are covering greater importance, because entrepreneurship is identified more and more as the engine of economic recovery and employment. From the results, we can see that the sample under examination has confirmed our hypothesis, namely that their skills and perceptions of immigrant entrepreneurs are similar to the psychological constructs of the entrepreneurial literature. The first variable tested was in reference to self-efficacy. Indeed, it was found that the sample implements positive behaviors necessary to achieve its objectives by transforming the failures and problematic situations in greater motivation and experience for future projects, as stated by Bandura (1986) and deposit (2001). The second tested variable is inside / outside Locus of control. According to the findings, in the examined sample a perception of polarity internal rather than external persists. In fact, most of the sample believe in luck, but it strongly believes that commitment is the key to success. Precisely for this reason firmly declare that the good results and the achievement of corporate objectives are the result of determination, courage and commitment and individual constant (Caggiano, 2010). The third examined variable is Proactivity. From the results it was possible to argue that the majority of respondents have a high level of proactivity. In fact, they know how to operate in the face of uncertainty in reference to the personal decision to start your own business, as well as in the choice to continue to see their future in Italy (McClelland, 1987). Take opportunity was the fourth examined variable. In this case, the results showed that the sample does not perceive social networks, cultural ad professional associations as a good opportunity to increase their business. Instead, he perceives that a good network of relationships can have a positive influence in recognizing good opportunities. According to literature “Take the opportunity” it's linked to the ability to maximize the use of networking (Kloosterman 2010) ; our sample cannot perceive this opportunities. The fifth variable is the risk taking. In this case, the results confirm the literature (Longenecker and Schoen, 2011). The sample recognizes and does not underestimate in any case the risk that may be incurred in managing a business. In fact, they state that the risks arising early for the start of their activities have been many, most bureaucratic and economic issues. Nevertheless, the experience has served to assess future risk and avoid main criticalities for their business survival. The sixth variable is Employability. Through the findings it was found that the sample has a high capacity to adapt (Ott, 1999), as adaptability of their businesses in the changing labor market proved. For the seventh variable there were some unexpected results. The sample is not very inclined to Innovation. Most of respondents said they did not search for new ideas or products relevant to their business. Only a small percentage has the intention to introduce new ideas, products, processes and procedures useful for their activity (Druker, 1985). Regarding Motivation the main reason that has stimulated our sample is mainly linked to the fear of poverty. The majority of respondents, as we have seen in the results, it is left for the poverty of the country of origin and has embarked on the new business with the hope of not falling into that situation. Motivation analysis, also considered individuals emotions, nostalgia for their country and present happiness for better living conditions indeed. The results of the study showed a significant correlation between motivation and business performance (a motivated entrepreneur is more likely to succeed in business than an unmotivated entrepreneur) and a significant positive correlation between culture and motivation to start a business (a culture that is supportive of entrepreneurial activities, low uncertainty avoidance, high individualism and low power distance relates positively to a high level of entrepreneurial self-efficacy). In conclusion, we believe that the immigrant entrepreneur has perceptions and entrepreneurial skills related to psychological constructs treated, despite his social diffi-



culties within the host country and cultural differences. Thanks to the findings we believe that the research is likely to further study in order to get results more representative of a larger sample. As a matter of fact, this explorative study has some limitation. The study was just limited to small firms. In addition, We confined our analysis to qualitative study of eight specific entrepreneurship dimensions. To evaluate immigrant entrepreneurship and validate our conclusions, we are just ongoing a quantitative research analysis by a multiple choice questionnaire to assess how and to what extent the eight entrepreneurship dimensions are related to entrepreneurship performances.

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