

IDENTIFICATION OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SUCCESS OF EXPATRIATE ENTREPRENEURS IN THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL [GCC] REGION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Abstract- Whilst the entrepreneurial playfield of the oil rich G.C.C [Gulf Cooperation Council] region has several successful ethnic entrepreneurial (EE) ventures, and the extant literature on general entrepreneurship within this region is quite dense, the topic of what factors underscore the success of EE businesses has received scant attention. Our study attempts to fill this gap, and adds to the literature in this area, by attempting to isolate the factors contributing to the success of EE ventures in the GCC region. The proposed study uses qualitative methods, and shall adopt a grounded theory methodology. The results will provide potential as well as existing EE's considering entrepreneurial activity in the GCC, with a few clear indicators of what critical success factors determine the chances of their undertakings succeeding in the region. These indicators shall hold implications for policy makers too.

Index Terms- Ethnic Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Success, GCC.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region in the Middle East, boasts of several successful entrepreneurial ventures, and the academic literature on general entrepreneurship in the GCC is fairly rich. The irony however, is that whilst several of these ventures are owned by ethnic entrepreneurs, there has been little research on ethnic entrepreneurship in the GCC, and on what factors explain the success of EE owned businesses in the region. This proposed research seeks to fill this gap.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurs are described as creators of new ventures faced with uncertainty in many ways. They are individuals capable of foreseeing opportunities, gathering resources – time, energy, and money – and acting as necessary to ensure success (Meredith, Nelson and Neck, 1982). Schumpeter (1934), and Hisrich (2004) perceive entrepreneurship as companies that undertake new arrangements to produce new products and services, or, as a dynamic process of wealth creation, requiring individuals to sacrifice their time, show their commitment, and bear the financial, physiological and social risks, etc.

Ethnic entrepreneurship [EE] constitutes a major strand of the broader literature on entrepreneurship, and addresses the undertaking of business activities in a certain region, by individuals of ethnic and cultural origins different from the indigenous peoples of that region (Masurel, Nijkamp and Vindigni, 2004; De Graaff, 2002; Masurel et al.2002; Gorter et al. 2001,etc). There has been an increase in the

entrepreneurial activity of migrants in many cities in recent years (see Van Delft et al. 2000), who correlates the rise and decline of cities with successful entrepreneurship. This, according to Markusen (1996) is due to cities holding promise for new business activities of individuals of various ethnicities and cultures. Correspondingly therefore, according to a few scholars (e.g Gorter et al. 2001; De Graaf 2002; Masurel et al. 2002, etc.), the research on ethnic entrepreneurship has registered an upward swing in recent years.

The scenario described above has various implications for the G.C.C. This, since a significant portion of the region's entrepreneurial activity occurs in its major cities, and also, since the ethnic (albeit transient) migrants, several of whom constitute the ethnic entrepreneurial community comprises over 80 % of GCC's population.

The literature on entrepreneurship in the GCC is slanted towards women in entrepreneurship, and its citizens' [as opposed to EE's] entrepreneurial potential. Negligible research exists on EE's and what specific factors, i.e. environmental, contextual or personal etc., drive their success (Fisher et al, 2014; Mitchelmore and Rowley, 2010 etc.).

This is a critical gap that needs addressing, given the region's concerted in recent years to stimulate all forms of entrepreneurial activity (UAE encourages entrepreneurship, 2015).

The aim of this study is to provide existing and future EE's considering entrepreneurial activity in the GCC, with a few clear pointers regarding the chances of their entrepreneurial success in the region. The findings

would also have implications for other stakeholders, in terms of enhancing their resource allocation decisions.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We propose adopting a qualitative [emergent, inductive, grounded theory] approach. This would involve face-to-face, personal in- depth interviews with 30-40 expat entrepreneurs in the UAE (depending on availability), to explore the common –and distinct-factors that led to their success (Demographic, Environmental, Personal and Organizational functions).

Isolation and coding of core themes emerging from interview data will be affected until saturation is reached followed by further procedures consistent with methodological processes of grounded theory methodology.

CONCLUSION

This is a ‘proposed research’ that is exploratory in nature, and broad in focus, and therefore cannot offer results at this stage. At the conclusion of the study however, that is proposed to be completed within about eighteen months, we propose to present our detailed findings in a full journal article format.

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