

The Characteristics that Assist Entrepreneurs toward being a Successful International Entrepreneurs (IE)

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Abstract

International entrepreneurship are mainly connected with the entrepreneur's characteristics like traits and attitudes as essential variables to distinguish the managerial process and activities of the entrepreneurial firm. Other researchers also indicate the importance of more exploration of this field, which needs increasing coverage and more investigation. Still, the majority of research been focused on the firm level characteristics of international entrepreneurship revealing the individual level aspects, this paper one of those very few research that has been done to discover the influential characteristics of international entrepreneurs toward firm success and recommended some methods for more investigations in this field.

Keywords

Entrepreneurship – International Entrepreneur - Entrepreneurs characteristics

I. Introduction

In order to understand entrepreneurs and the sense of entrepreneurship, it is essential to analyze the previous reviews in a historical manner and to examine the current debate on how to define the entrepreneurship domain, as there are many descriptions and definitions of entrepreneurship (Toma, Grigore & Marinescu, 2014). Naudé (2013). It's been discovered that even from the first edge of writing about entrepreneurship, there has been no consensus as to one definition since entrepreneurship consists of multiple factors. That reflects the vast numbers of definitions on entrepreneurship, and the need for exploring different aspects of the definitions. Researchers indicate that Schumpeter (1885–1950) had the privilege of clarifying the concept of entrepreneurship when he suggested in early part of the 20th century, that entrepreneurship “occurs under five conditions of newness”. New goods, new production methods, new markets, new sources of materials, or new organizations (Schumpeter, 1934).

Schumpeter (1947, p. 151), stated that an entrepreneur is connected with innovation when he classifies the entrepreneurial function as “the doing of new things or the doing of things that are already being done in a new way”. While there is a popular definition from literature in the field as defined by (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 219) which points out that the process approaches and defines entrepreneurship as “a process that involves the discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities to introduce new products, services, processes, ways of organizing, or markets”. However, Gries & Naudé (2011: 217) insist that entrepreneurship consists of three main categories: behavioural, occupational, and synthesis, Throughout the time from discovering many researchers till after that discovery, they include all three categories to define entrepreneurship as “the resource, process and state of being through and in which individuals utilize positive opportunities in the market by creating and growing new business firms.”

From previous reviews discovery, it's become clear that researchers defined entrepreneurship in many different ways and dimensions, while there are many common, primary issues in term of functions, such as innovations, risk-taking tendency and uniqueness, or newness. However, in this study, we adopt a recent, comprehensive definition that include all the possible elements of entrepreneurship, and has more focused toward individuals, written by six members of the prize committee for the 2011–2012 Global Award for Entrepreneurship Research B. Carlsson et al., (2013) define entrepreneurship as “an economic function that is carried out by individuals, entrepreneurs, acting independently or within organizations, to perceive and create new opportunities, and to introduce their ideas into the market, under uncertainty, by making decisions about location, product design, resource use, institutions, and reward systems”.

Through the increasing effort of researchers toward international entrepreneurship domain, new recent studies have been raised on international entrepreneurial orientation (Covin & Miller, 2014; Dai et al., 2013; Dimitratos et al., 2012; Jones et al. 2011; M. Gabrielsson et al., 2014). According to Covin & Miller (2014), international entrepreneurship orientation “consists of the beliefs, preferences, and behaviours that lead to, and include, acts of new international market entry”. This description proposes that there are many different elements of the international entrepreneurship orientation effecting both firms and entrepreneurs towards going international. Other researchers, however, argue that IEO are considered on an individual level because firms are reflections of their entrepreneurs (Joardar & Wu, 2011).

Many researchers, including Jones et al., (2011) and Keupp & Gassmann (2009), report that the international entrepreneurship orientation covers three main elements; innovative, proactive and risk-taking.

II. Literature Review

In a recent study, Zucchella & Denicolai (2014) illustrate that international entrepreneurship are mainly connected with the entrepreneur's characteristics like traits and attitudes as essential variables to distinguish the managerial process and activities of the entrepreneurial firm. Other researchers also indicate the importance of more exploration of this field, which needs increasing coverage and more investigation. However, the majority of research been focused on the firm level characteristics of international entrepreneurship revealing the individual level aspects, thus very little research has been done to discover the influential characteristics of international entrepreneurs toward firm success (Glavas & Mathews, 2014; Reuber & Fischer, 2011).

According to Frishammar & Andersson (2009) regarding surveying data from 188 Swedish SMEs; also based on Glavas & Mathews (2014), recent research on the relationship between international entrepreneurship characteristics and the use of internet capabilities

for the international business processes from eight international entrepreneurial focused case studies, concluded that: there are four main key characteristics influence the international entrepreneurs toward success. They are namely: international pro-activeness, international innovativeness, international network, and international risk-taking tendency.

A. International Pro-activeness

Pro-activeness described as “forward looking, first-mover advantage-seeking efforts to shape the environment by introducing new products or processes ahead of competition” (Lyon et al., 2000, p. 1056). This description indicates the importance of being proactive for entrepreneurs, which direct them to recognize forward-looking opportunities. In the same way, Glavas&Mathews(2014) report that international pro-activeness refers to leading competitors by posturing aggressively and follow up on different activities in the international market in order to achieve the firm’s international goals. Dai et al. (2013) find that international pro-activeness leads entrepreneurs to not just identify opportunities, but also to guide international entrepreneurs to lead their firms instead of being followers of other competitors, and being able to expect the future requirements of the firm in the international market in order to achieve more competitive advantages.

Furthermore, previous research indicates a strong positive impact of pro-active behaviour on international performance in many different aspects (Covin& Miller, 2014; Dai et al.2013; Frishammar and Andersson, 2009; Zhang et al., 2012). In their research, Frishammar&Andersson (2009) report that international proactive behavioural of entrepreneurs accelerated the speed of firm’s internationalization, as international proactive entrepreneurs are the most important key for firms to enlarge internationally. Zhang et al., (2012) also indicate the strong effect of pro-activeness and early movement behavioural of international entrepreneurs especially toward their relationship with their competitors in the international market. Accordingly, Covin& Miller (2014) insist in their research, that there is an agreed view considering pro-activeness as the most constantly and positively connection to the internationalization entrepreneurial approach. All that highlights, provide more understanding into why researchers draw more attention to the international pro-activeness to be considered as the first characteristic that influences international entrepreneurs toward achievement and success.

B. International Innovativeness

Innovativeness is recognized in both definitions, entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurship because of its vitality for identifying the essential entrepreneurial activities, while many researchers examined the positive relationship on innovativeness and business performance (Glavas and Mathews, 2014; Hoq and Ha, 2009). According to Hoq and Ha (2009) in their research about innovativeness and business performance, the subject of innovativeness has raised quickly all over the world, so that innovative behaviour leads entrepreneurs to create solutions to business problems and challenges, guiding them to success for present and future.

Researchers describe innovativeness as the tendency to experiment, endorse novel products or ideas from establishment and identifying innovation before others (Dai et al., 2013; Onetti et al., 2012). Thus, international innovativeness refers to the tendency to engage

in experimentation and new products and ideas internationally for achieving a firm’s international goals (Glavas& Mathews, 2014). This description reflects ongoing development and updates of ideas and product creation, to maintain the competitive performance of the international entrepreneurship firms. Eklinder-Frick et al., (2014) in their recent research about multi-dimensional social capital and innovativeness indicates that international market increases the need for international innovativeness behaviour.

According to literature, an international business environment is often dominated by rapid changes in all sectors, and especially in the technology-based ones, that needs high level of innovativeness behavioural driven by international entrepreneurs who lead to efficient and effective entrepreneurial processes and improve firm recourse in order to continue realizing opportunities and achieve international goals. Furthermore, Onetti et al., (2012) find that innovation and internationalization are more connected, and relying on the flexibility of the international entrepreneurs, in order to carry on all international business activities to survival and success.

The perception from these views is that international innovativeness not only provides a competitive advantage, but also makes improvements in the international entrepreneurial performance. Consequently, as it is a business’s skill, international innovativeness is an important and influential key for international entrepreneur’s characteristics.

C. International network

The importance of international networks behaviour in internationalization has been widely recognized in IE research. Ellis (2011) indicates that international networks have been viewed as facilitating internationalization for entrepreneurial firms to identify new opportunities in the international market (Ellis, 2011). This view is mainly relying on the ability of international entrepreneurs to control and deliver. In addition, Lindstrand et al., (2011) report that international networks support entrepreneurs to access the resources needed in the early stages of their firms internationalization process. Which represents accumulated knowledge and new valuable foreign markets information gathered by the direct aid of international networks to diminish uncertainties linked with new markets, also to discover new opportunities as mentioned in Chandra et al., (2009) on their report of the recognition of first time international entrepreneurial opportunities find that, international networks of personal and business contacts have a vital role in the discovery of the international opportunities.

In the same direction, Johanson&Vahlne (2009) state that international networks support entrepreneurs to take further penetrative positions in the international market. In addition, Liesch et al. (2011) discovered that gathering knowledge about foreign markets by international networks let entrepreneurs to have more confidence toward uncertainty about those markets and thereby minimize risks associated with internationalization. Furthermore, results from Andersson&Florén (2011) research about differences in managerial behaviour between small international and non-international firms show that international entrepreneurs use their networks in different ways, and spend a lot of time on building strategic international networks seeking more market knowledge and trustable alliances in the new markets. For the international networks relationship with international entrepreneurs’ success, Musteen et al., (2013) suggest that in

order to succeed internationally, it is important for international entrepreneurs to gain knowledge about the foreign markets they intend to enter, done via international networks capability. Similarly, Lianxi et al., (2010) on their research on international Chinese firms, report that international networks have important factors to determinant success for the new international firms.

Over all, it seems clear that international networks through the different tools and approaches, considered as influential characteristics for international entrepreneurial activities and in the same manner international entrepreneurs behaviour as well.

D. International risk-taking

International risk taking represents the tendency of the international entrepreneurs to make business decisions and use resources on projects with uncertainty results or high vitality financial profits/losses (Dai et al., 2013; Glavas& Mathews, 2014).

Many researches in the international entrepreneurship field assume that international entrepreneurs have more tendency toward international risk, and considered risk-taking behaviour as one characteristics of international entrepreneurs (McDougall & Oviatt, 2000; W. Liesch et al., 2011). This view stemmed from the wide range risk types that face international entrepreneurs going internationally, which is considered to be higher level risk types, that may affect the international entrepreneurs business drastically if they aren't able to underline and control them, especially in the first stages of going international. Those risk types include; cultural differences behaviourally, difficult governmental restrictions, confusing import/export regulations, corruption, low intellectual property rights, insecurity financial system (Dimitratos et al., 2010; Julian & Ahmed, 2012). Also, according to Julian and Ahmed (2012) the most common risk for international entrepreneurship business is the exchange rate risk, when the currency loses its value which generates financial loss, even if the business operations are profitable.

In contrast, recent researchers find that international risk-taking behaviour doesn't have a significant influence with international performance directly. This result assumed that international entrepreneurs generally manage small firms with less risky resources and with lower strategic risk-oriented, thus the entrepreneurs in this case would have more control on the risk issues in the new markets, since operating in international markets require large investment of resources and capital involved (Frishammar&Andersson, 2009; Glavas& Mathews, 2014).

While this considers the international risk-taking as a key of influential international entrepreneurs characteristics, in terms of risk controlling tendency, and in the same time agreed with the research of Covin& Miller(2014) that connects the risk-taking profile with the behavioural of the entrepreneurs who guide their firms into international markets , and reflects this behaviour toward the ability of more controlling risks than high risk taking tendency, and also supporting the consideration of different risk levels affecting international firms in different situations and levels of entry.

According to recent research findings Frishammar&Andersson (2009) and Glavas&Mathews(2014), there are four key characteristics that influence international entrepreneurs toward success. Those are: international pro-activeness, international innovativeness, international network, and international risk-

taking. While this study is detailed and goes in depth for the literature to reveal its importance for reasons beyond their selection, their influential effect on international entrepreneurs and connection with the interview questions for international entrepreneurs behaviour which need more extensive study.

Based on the objectives; the paper will answer these questions:

- What are the main key characteristics of International Entrepreneurs mentioned in literature?
- What are the additional characteristics could be affect of the International Entrepreneurs?

III. The Methodology and Model

Although the concept of Entrepreneurship is still being researched, Keupp&Gassman (2009) indicate that entrepreneurship is a dynamic procedure, consisting of well-structured behaviour, with ongoing updates according to life's evolution. A more recent emerging field that has been raised and has caught the entrepreneurship scholar's attention is the domain of international entrepreneurship (IE). The IE domain is a young field, with fast-developing knowledge that interests researchers. Many researchers have recommended further studies on IE, as it is theoretically formed by the entrepreneurship field, jointly with International Business (Jones et al., 2011; Keupp&Gassman, 2009).

According to (Covin& Miller,2014) the international entrepreneurship (IE) was first acknowledged as a distinct area of research by McDougall(1989) in an article named International versus domestic entrepreneurship and, then the domain started to become more recognized by the two pioneers McDougall and Oviatt, who introduced the first definition of IE in their research in 1994 as "a business organization that, from inception, seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and from the sale of outputs to multiple countries". That definition has been updated, as well as the domain itself. (Keupp& Gassmann,2009)

A following formal definition, also from McDougall and Oviatt (2000, p. 903) integrated three entrepreneurial characteristics: innovativeness, pro-activeness and risk-taking, with the IE description, to be defined as: "... A combination of innovative, proactive and risk-seeking behaviour that crosses national borders and is intended to create value in organizations." Later on, as the field evolved, the definition was updated again by the same researchers, Oviatt& McDougall (2005,p.540) who further highlight opportunity recognition, defining IE as "The discovery, enactment, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities, across national borders, to create future goods and services". This definition, according to M.Gabrielsson et al.(2014) focuses more on identifying opportunities to enter the international market rapidly by relying on the synergy of the three entrepreneurial characteristics described in the earlier definition. As this definition is widely accepted when describing the IE field from many researchers, researchers from the field, however, formalize this description to become the main reference for filtering incoming studies (Jones et al., 2011). Although in the recent reviews, according to Covin& Miller (2014), there are more definitions of the IE concept with more focus on international opportunity issues that fulfil the rapid evolution of the field. Our paper adopts the definition of Oviatt& McDougall in (2005,p.540) which covers all type of ventures in the field, irrespective of firm size or age.

To make our contributions, this paper is structured as follows: Having explained the method we used to review the literature, we analyzed more than 65 contributions that have been published in the journals of three scholarly areas (international entrepreneurship,

entrepreneurship, and international business); While the time frame of our research focused on recent international articles and research up to five years ago, we did include, however, research published prior to this time frame to address main definitions and concepts needed for this study.

IV. The Findings

Based on the literature we found there are four main key characteristics that influence the international entrepreneurs toward success. Where there are some region or countries may have an exceptional case or special factor that could affect international entrepreneurs toward success. For instance, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and specifically Kuwait has a special social life for example they have something called Dewaniya. It's at the heart of traditional Kuwaiti culture is the institution of the diwāniyah, a regular gathering of men (now a days a women also) usually in a tent or a separate room of the main house, which serves as a time to gather, enjoy refreshments, talk, or play games. Dewaniya has existed in Kuwait since time immemorial. In the old city of Kuwait, it was the reception area where a man received his business colleagues and male guests. Today the term refers both to a reception hall and the gathering held in it, and visiting or hosting a dewaniya is an indispensable feature of a Kuwaiti man's social life. Dewaniya became a fundamental part of Kuwaiti life. Hence, it has become a mark in their traditional daily life.

Based on this special social life, this research recommend examine the affected of social life on the entrepreneurial characteristics. Where the researchers can test this different dimension of the characteristic, which is social-style where we believe that maybe affect the international entrepreneurs. The recommended questions was added in this paper to identify how much social-style relationships affect the international entrepreneurs, and include some probing questions to discover if there are the other characteristics of international entrepreneurs.

Based on the literature review and for investigates the consistent of the characteristics of international entrepreneurs with the main four key characteristics that influence the international entrepreneurs toward success or not; we also developed some suggestion questions that could help the researcher to look for it.

Interviews with direct questions method was recommended to measure the five key characteristics that could influence the international entrepreneurs toward success. All scale questions were averaged to obtain the variable scores. Five-point scales were used for measurement, started from 1 to 5 indicated the power of participant agreement or disagreement on each question / 1= Strongly Disagree, 5= strongly Agree

PART 1 - International Pro-activeness

1. In dealing with competitors, I'm typically initiate actions, which competitors then responded to.
2. In dealing with competitors, I'm very often the first to introduce new Products/services administrative techniques, operating technologies, etc...
3. In dealing with its competitors, I'm typically seeks to avoid competitive clashes, preferring a "live and let live".
4. I am always in the midst of launching new projects.
5. I can describe myself as a proactive entrepreneur.

PART 2 - International Innovativeness

6. I am very focusing on R&D, technological leadership, and innovations.

7. During the past three years, I introduce new or significantly improved goods/services.
8. I am adaptable to change my products/services.
9. I am innovative in finding solutions to problems and challenges.
10. I find myself constantly thinking of new ideas.

PART 3 - International Networking

11. I connect with others and build International strategic relationships.
12. I have a good network of friends, professionals, and business links internationally.
13. I am good with people; enjoy creating team networks to engage in a challenging task.
14. I am a member of a professional organization and I regularly participate with.
15. I am regularly networking with others to gain information and guidance.

PART 4 - International Risk-Taking Tendency

16. I can prosper in an environment with many questions and few answers.
17. I am willing to accept both financial and career risks, even if it's not necessary.
18. In general, I have a strong emphasis for high risk projects.
19. I am comfortable with taking risks abroad.
20. I have the ability to anticipate upcoming risks and try to control them.

PART 5 - Social Style

21. I have close relatives who are entrepreneurs.
22. My country is really encouraging me to pursue my own business to go internationally.
23. My friends are encouraging me to pursue my business ownership internationally.
24. I come from entrepreneurial parents.
25. I have lots of friends who are entrepreneurs.

PART 6 - Demographics

26. Age
27. Gender
28. Educational level
29. Business sector
30. Number of company employees
31. Percentages of International sales

V. Summary and Conclusions

Recent research on the relationship between international entrepreneurship characteristics and the use of internet capabilities for the international business processes from eight international entrepreneurial focused case studies concluded that: there are four main key characteristics influence the international entrepreneurs toward success. They are namely: international pro-activeness, international innovativeness, international network, and international risk-taking tendency.

Based on that we found there are four main key characteristics that influence the international entrepreneurs toward success. Where there are some region or countries may have an exceptional case or special factor that could affect international entrepreneurs toward success. This paper present some suggestion questions that could support researcher to look for it and interviews with direct questions method was recommended to measure the main

key characteristics that influence the international entrepreneurs toward success.

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