
Necessity and Opportunity Entrepreneurship: Is Oman Differentiating both?

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ABSTRACT

This research is an attempt to differentiate the necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship in Oman. The study took data of 250 entrepreneurs, from different regions in Oman, between the age limit of 20 to 45 years, started their venture during the period of year 2000-2015 given that this interval has been recognized as Oman's 'renaissance' for entrepreneurial development. We used different criteria to distinguish the sample whether they are necessity or opportunity entrepreneurs. Since, there is no comprehensive theory on the issue of necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship, this paper is exploratory in nature. The study took five research questions; how necessity/opportunity entrepreneurs see economic development through innovation? ; what are the attitudes towards jobs, hiring, quantity of production, contribution to GDP? ; is 'size' matters for necessity/opportunity entrepreneurs? ; do they have a feeling of opportunity cost often? ; and what are their social/economic background?. Responses to these questions suggest the categorization of necessity or opportunity entrepreneurs. One of the major findings of the study is that, Oman has more necessity entrepreneurs in general while there exist gender differences as well. Further, majority of women entrepreneurs in the sample are opportunity entrepreneurs. The study will have more significance in Oman as the distinction between necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs will add value to the government's recent policy initiatives for entrepreneurial development.

Key Words – Entrepreneurship, Necessity Entrepreneurs, Opportunity Entrepreneurs, GEM

1. INTRODUCTION

Enterprise and Entrepreneurship are important factors which can create and enhance employment opportunities and economic growth (World Bank, 2009). Entrepreneurs are found, to greater or lesser extent, in every country. They help enterprises to start or grow and bear the uncertainty of market dynamics (Knight, 1921). Entrepreneurs are characterized as have desire for responsibility; preference to take moderate risk; confidence in their ability to succeed; desire for immediate feedback; high level energy; future orientation; skill at organizing; and value of achievement over money (McClelland, 1987). Young entrepreneurs have drawn more attention now – a – days because many studies have already explored the need and benefit of young entrepreneurial activity for growing economies. They suggest that a typical age often to start businesses is 30 and sometimes it is over 40. Therefore; entrepreneurship might open windows to educated young people, such as university students and graduates, in different areas and industries. The literature about young entrepreneurs suggests that entrepreneurial characteristics are more in young people than adults so they have potentialities towards entrepreneurial activity. Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2001) categorized entrepreneurs into two behavioral types; Necessity entrepreneurs and opportunity entrepreneurs. Generally necessity entrepreneurship refers to a situation where people are involved in entrepreneurship activities because they have no better choice to work and opportunity entrepreneurs are people pursuing a business opportunity or personal interest while other choices to earn a living are open to them. (Joern H. Block /M,arcus Wagner-2010) A general finding is that opportunities exploited by opportunity entrepreneurs are more profitable than are exploited by necessity entrepreneurs (Joern H. Block /M,arcus Wagner-2010). Llisterri, define young entrepreneurs into two groups of “necessity” and “opportunity” driven entrepreneurs. According to him, Opportunity entrepreneurs are those who catch opportunities to start businesses and necessity entrepreneurs are those who might take entrepreneurial activities because of their unemployment status (Llisterri et al, 2006).

Government of Oman has initiated many programs to enhance entrepreneurial activities. Value achievements are from the part of private entities too. At this juncture, it would be interesting to know what type of

behavioral patterns that Omani entrepreneurs have. This study would address the Omani entrepreneurs and try to see whether we can outline them through classification like necessity or opportunity entrepreneurs.

Academic literature shows that the intentions to start businesses are different among necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs. Apparently, there is no similarity in the world scholar's definitions of necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship. Consequently, it is fine to have a contextual definition for necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs. So, we have defined opportunity entrepreneurs are those who prefer to be self-employed after seeing the conducive business environment in Oman. Whereas, a person who searched for a job for years and failed to get one and end up with being started a business is identified as necessity entrepreneurs. We feel that this study would fill the gap in the literature on necessity/opportunity entrepreneurship in Oman. Furthermore, it would give an understanding of Oman's entrepreneurial culture. Moreover, this study will provide the right perspective of Omani entrepreneur's intentions and will help to formulate the appropriate government policies to promote entrepreneurial culture in Oman.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this section, we review research studies/papers on entrepreneurship, and moreover, we tried to introduce the reader to a considerable body of literature on necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship.

The term necessary an opportunity entrepreneurs were coined in the year 2001(GEM). Entrepreneurship is reflecting as the voluntary pursuit of opportunity and that reflecting a necessity to engage in entrepreneurship as well, when there is an absence of employment opportunities (Renolds et.al.2002).To identify the opportunity or necessity entrepreneur is through asking questions" whether he /she has started his/her business to take advantage of a unique market opportunity or because off bear necessity or it was the best option available (Renolds et..al. 2002.) This distinction has led to some interesting new insights into the entrepreneurial process:- A significant relationship between national levels of opportunity entrepreneurship and the projected economic growth is found in many countries(Acs et al, 2005; Acs and Varga, 2005; Reynolds et al., 2002). Countries with a low ratio of opportunity to necessity entrepreneurs have a low GDP per capita (Acs et al, 2005; Acs and Varga, 2005; Reynolds et al., 2002).

The average opportunity entrepreneurship prevalence rate across the GEM countries is about 6%, whilst that of necessity entrepreneurship is only about 2% (Acs et al., 2005). The pattern of necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship, however, varies considerably across GEM countries in that those with more supportive social welfare programmes tend to have lower rate of necessity entrepreneurship (Acs et al., 2005; Reynolds et al., 2002). The two extremes are Japan with 1.1% and Uganda with 14.4% (Acs et al., 2005). The occurrence rate for necessity entrepreneurship varies considerably more than that of opportunity entrepreneurship (Reynolds et al., 2002).The correlation between a country's necessity entrepreneurship prevalence rate and its opportunity entrepreneurship prevalence rate is low ($r=0.27$) and statistically insignificant, indicating different causal mechanisms underlying each type of entrepreneurship (Reynoldset al., 2002). A higher proportion of opportunity entrepreneurship is related to business services (21%) than is the case for necessity entrepreneurship (5%) and the share of male necessity entrepreneurs is slightly higher than the share of female necessity entrepreneurship (Reynolds et al., 2002).

Necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs also differ in their growth aspirations; in that case opportunity entrepreneurs want to grow faster than necessity entrepreneurs. In GEM 2001, 14% of opportunity entrepreneurs expected to create more than 20 jobs, whereas only 2% of necessity entrepreneurs had these expectations (Reynolds et al., 2002).Also, necessity entrepreneurs are less likely to have parents who were self-employed than opportunity entrepreneurs(Wagner (2005) Finally, the share of former unemployed is higher with necessity than with opportunity entrepreneurs. Yet, Wagner (2005) also shows some similarities between the groups in that they do not differ with respect to the number of fields of professional experience and the number of professional degrees obtained.

2.1 Earnings, education and other determinants

Some scholars argue that formal education matters less in the context of entrepreneurship resulting in a lower rate of return compared to paid employees (e.g. Brown and Sessions, 1998).The argument goes even further in that formal education might foster attitudes contradicting the very essence of entrepreneurship (Parker, 2004).

Another line of argument, however, predicts the opposite. If employers demand a high level of formal education from their workers e.g. for the purpose of screening, then, would-be entrepreneurs, not facing this requirement, should leave full-time education at an earlier point. If we assume decreasing marginal returns to education, the rate of return to education of self-employed should then be higher compared to that of paid employees (Riley, 1979). Empirically, Hamilton (2000) finds entrepreneurs to have lower initial earnings as well as lower earnings growth than paid employees. He seeks to explain this difference with a variety of factors, but finds none providing a convincing explanation. Therefore, he concludes that self-employment offers important non-pecuniary benefits. Evans and Leighton (1989b) find that wage experience (years of wage experience) has a significantly smaller return in self-employment, whilst the rate of return to business experience (years in a wage job) does not differ between self-employment and paid employment. It should be said that self-employed earnings equations often show poor goodness-of-fit compared to wage equations from paid employee samples (Parker, 2004).

Van der Sluis et. al. (2003) review studies regarding the impact of schooling on entrepreneurial earnings in industrialized countries and find a lower average rate of return for entrepreneurs compared to employees, which one could interpret as support for the idea that formal education matters less in the context of entrepreneurship.

2.2. Driven factors and Motives behind Entrepreneurship

The concepts of necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship are often replaced by the terms pull and push factors. There is however a big differences. The GEM sees opportunity entrepreneurship as a chasing a unique business opportunity, whereas necessity entrepreneurship is seen as the best available option. Pull and push factors stand for a broader concept. All factors that attract people towards entrepreneurship are seen as pull factors. Factors that drive people away from their initial situation are seen as push factors mostly associated with job dissatisfaction. The search for these factors drives people towards self-employment. Unemployment is mentioned as a push factor. High levels of unemployment drive people towards becoming self-employed. (Thurik, Carre, Stel and Audretsch (2008))

Necessity entrepreneurship is explained with the unemployment push or refugee effect (Thurik et al. 2008). Unemployment or bad future perspectives in the initial situation will entail someone to become an entrepreneur. The bad initial situation pushes towards life as an entrepreneur. Opportunity entrepreneurship is explained with the entrepreneurial effect (Thurik et al. 2008). A thriving economy brings in a lot of opportunities for entrepreneurs. These opportunities could lead to the entry of both unemployed and employed as entrepreneurs (Thurik et al. 2008).

Ritsilä and Tervo (2002) discuss the effects of unemployment on entrepreneurship based on Finish data. They define a “push-entrepreneur” as an individual who in the absence of personal unemployment would not start a business, which conceptually is at least very similar, if not identical to the notion of a necessity entrepreneur. Regarding the occupational decision, they find a positive but non-linear effect of personal unemployment on the propensity of an individual to become self-employed. According to Brüderl et al. (1996), business start-ups by unemployed persons are smaller and require less capital than other start-ups. Hinz and Jungbauer-Gans (1999) confirm these results. They see a deficit in financial resources as a great obstacle of start-ups out of unemployment. Interestingly, their study does not reveal a deficit in human capital, indicating that unemployed founders come from a very specific subgroup of all unemployed persons. Finally, start-ups by unemployed persons are found to have a slower pace of employment growth. Niefert and Tchouvakhina (2006) provide empirical support for the idea of unemployment being a push factor leading to self-employment. They also show that start-ups by unemployed individuals more often than other start-ups occur in industries with low market entry barriers and low capital requirements. Furthermore, these ventures are characterized by a lower number of employees. In their study, about 70% of all start-ups by unemployed individuals were one-person start-ups.

GEM (2001) took entrepreneurial motivations as independent variables. The motives to become an entrepreneur are divided in 3 categories. The necessity motive, the independence motive and the search for economic welfare. GEM argued that people who are looking for independence do not have a strong focus on growth. According another study, Lower rates of human capital, lower personal wealth and a stagnating

economy could influence the entrepreneurial activity in a negative way. (Thurik, Caree, Stel and Audretsch (2008)

Thurik, Caree, Stel and Audretsch (2008) show a negative effect of entrepreneurial activity on the unemployment level. This is caused by the overall increasing economic performance (Stel, van et al. 2005) and the hiring of employees by new firms (Pfeiffer et al. 2000). This is called the entrepreneurial effect.

Another study find that there is positive and negative relation between the unemployment level and self-employment. The effect of self-employment on unemployment and the effect in the opposite way clearly work at the same time. Both effects act in long time lags. Unemployment and self-employment levels don't adjust directly. (Thurik, Carree, Stel and Audretsch.2008).

Some studies provide us with economic reasons only (Thurik et. al 2008) where others give us psychological factors towards the reasons to become an entrepreneur. (Brockhaus & Horwitz 1986). Necessity entrepreneurs are clearly driven by economic factors. The future sights or current financial rewards are not sufficient for them. Thurik, (2008) studies the relation between unemployment and the entrepreneurial activity. These literature reviews leave us an impression that there are not much advanced distinctions between necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship in any angle. Off course, there are some overlaps among the two concepts/approaches.

3. DEFINITIONS AND RESEARCH METHODS FOR THE PAPER

We can understand from the reviews that the distinction between necessary and opportunity concepts becomes increasingly relevant in entrepreneurship research. We proposed different definitions of necessity and opportunity entrepreneur for the purpose of this study. We identify a necessity entrepreneur as, someone who searched for employment before, but he didn't get through. for this particular study. On the same time, we define an opportunity entrepreneur as someone who did not search for a job as it was his long wish to become an entrepreneur. These definitions little differ from the GEM definitions (GEM, 2001). For the operationalization of this research paper, we took few dimensions, which are: Firstly, our sample includes only those who were started their business during the period between 2000 to 2015 and the entrepreneur's age should be between 20 to 45 years. Secondly, we do ask people about their motivation behind the start-up and we assume that their responses describe them. Thirdly, we consider only Omani entrepreneurs, for whom Government Oman initiated many policies and programs. Fourthly and finally, we do not include part-time ventures. This research can be identified as a micro perspective analysis. Doing so enables us to theorize about the differences between necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship. Like so distinguishing the two types of behaviors in entrepreneurship theory and practice can be justified.

3.1 The Research Methodology

This study took a sample of 250 entrepreneurs from Al.Batinah, Al.Sharqiyah and Al. Dakhiliyah governorates in Oman. The sample consists of entrepreneurs who have started SME's for the last 15 years, which is year 2000 to 2015. The motive behind this selection is to know the attitudes/motives of Omani entrepreneurs living in the era of splendid entrepreneurial initiatives like government funding, training and policies etc. The age group of the entrepreneurs range from 20 to 45 years. Since, 70% of respondents, sample profile, are below the age of 40, as per the youth entrepreneurship literature 'youth' are more in the sample. So we can see this study in a youth perspectives as well. Actually, Oman is not having much data on entrepreneurs so we relied on random sampling primary survey for this research. The research questions were framed based on literature reviews. Surveyed entrepreneurs, 100%, are Omanis, out of 45% were women and 55% were men. Regarding the educational qualification, 50% of them having a University diploma, 10% have bachelor degree, 20% have higher secondary education and 20% finished their school only. About the duration of their start- up, 30% of them started their business in less than 1 year ,40% of them recently started (2- 4 years.) and 30% of them started their business for 5 to 10 years.

3.2 Research Questions

We framed certain questions, through the help of literature reviews, would be more significant as this is an exploratory research. Those questions are:

1. Is any 'motivational difference' among necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs?

2. Do they have any role to develop the country further?
3. Is 'size' matters for necessity/opportunity entrepreneurs?
4. Do they have a feeling of opportunity cost often?
5. What is their social/economic background?

Table 1- Research Model

Constructed variables- Distinction on Necessity /Opportunity entrepreneurs				
Motivational Difference	Role in the economic development of the country	'Size' and attitude towards job	Social /family background	Opportunity cost
1.Successs 2. Earning 3. Achievement 4.Publicity 5.Stanard of living 6 .Saving	1.Innovation 2.R & D spending 3.Job opportunities 4.Contribution to GDP	1.Number of Employees 2.Quatity of Production 3.Attitude towards job	1.Born in a business family 2.Run family business 3.Education	1.Often think to quit the business 2.Often thing to get a good job

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Through this section we would rationalize the questions we have formulated. We enquired about each respondent about each variable under concern. Their answers are carefully studied and conceptualize in this analysis part. Let us have look on average responses of entrepreneurs on the research questions.

4.1 Responses to the Research Question -1- Is any 'motivational difference' among necessity entrepreneurs and opportunity entrepreneurs?

We hypothesized that those entrepreneurs who believe that they earn more money now than being employed and whose aim is to make more earnings and growth from business are opportunity entrepreneurs. Moreover, we presume that they have the ability to save more and improve their standard of living. According to this notion, 50% of entrepreneurs admitted that they used to earn good income monthly and they can save a good amount of income as well. Almost 45% to 50% of entrepreneurs' feels that their standard of living has increased tremendously since they have started the business. We assumed that if an entrepreneur's main aim is the long term business survival, he is an opportunity entrepreneur. In addition, we think that if an entrepreneur strongly believes that he is successful, we can rate him as an opportunity entrepreneur. 50% of entrepreneurs in our sample feel that they are successful in their business and they argued that they responded to an identified market opportunity as well. 60% of entrepreneurs think only about money making so according to our rationality they are necessary entrepreneurs. However 45 % of respondents agreed that long term survival of their business is their primary aim doing so they are categorized as opportunity entrepreneurs. Feeling of achievement is very important in the long term survival of any business. As per this idea, almost 55% the respondents felt that they achieved high level of independence and they are very happy about flexibility of working time while doing business .Furthermore, they are feeling great on their self recognition as a business man/women. So we can say that 55% of our respondents are opportunity entrepreneurs.

4.2. Responses to the Research Question -2- Do they have any role to develop the country further?

According to this study's theorization, those respondents who want recognition and curious about R&D spending are opportunity entrepreneurs. 55% of our respondents believed that they are very keen in spending

for research and development of their companies 40% of them wish to continue this innovative process for many years as well. Hence, we can say 55% of them are opportunity entrepreneurs. 60% of the entrepreneurs need to get publicity for them if it comes from a job also fine for them. So we categorized them as necessity entrepreneurs. Almost 50% of entrepreneurs believe that they can introduce new product in the market. So the study took the idea that they are opportunity entrepreneurs. We can conclude that almost 45% of entrepreneurs feel that they are opportunity entrepreneurs as they believe their ability to develop Oman further.

4.3. Responses to the Research Question -3 Is 'size' and attitude matters for necessity/opportunity entrepreneurs?

The study's one assumption is that those who didn't try for a job before started their business is an opportunity entrepreneur. Moreover, those who keen to hire talented people to improve the business and always provide job opportunities for young people are come under the category of opportunity entrepreneurs. Under these specifications 35% to 40% of our respondents are opportunity entrepreneurs and the rest are necessity entrepreneurs. The definition of SME itself is not guaranteed more job opportunities. Still, in our study, 50% respondents facilitated so far a minimum of 7 jobs to 35 jobs. The study shows that entrepreneurs those who created more employment opportunities/ hiring more people for work are opportunity entrepreneurs. We found that opportunity entrepreneurs are keen to produce and market products than necessity entrepreneurs. SME's are very important in Oman but generally the contribution of SME's to GDP is less. However, we found that opportunity entrepreneurs are contributing more towards GDP.

4.4. Responses to the Research Question – 4 – Do entrepreneurs' have a feeling of opportunity cost often?

We hypothesises that those entrepreneurs feel more opportunity cost while doing his business is necessary entrepreneurs and on the same time those who wish to quit the business often also is categorized as necessary entrepreneurs. According to this point 55% of our respondents are necessity entrepreneurs. In addition 50% of entrepreneurs admitted that they are happy in doing business and not having any opportunity cost as well. So we can label them as opportunity entrepreneurs.

4.5. Responses to the Research Question 5 - What kind of social back ground/family the entrepreneur's belongs to?

One of the presumptions of the study is that' those respondents who belong to business families, or family already run business, tend to be opportunity entrepreneurs. Our sample shows that 50% entrepreneurs coming from business families. However, 15% of male respondents only come from business families. But, 35% of female's run businesses are from business families. Furthermore, female entrepreneurs are feeling happy about their start up as well. We found from the sample that the necessity entrepreneurs are educated more than opportunity entrepreneurs.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Apparently, this study has great significance since it is the first academic study in Oman on necessity/opportunity behaviors. Moreover, it has addressed gender differences in necessity/opportunity criteria as well. A surprising findings is that almost 65% women entrepreneurs are really happy and feel enthusiastic about doing business and they want to promote their business further than their male counterparts. So we labeled those Omani women as opportunity entrepreneurs. On the same time, according to our definition, almost 75% of Omani male entrepreneurs in the sample are necessity entrepreneurs – The review of literature even shows that the share of male necessity entrepreneurs is slightly higher than the share of female necessity entrepreneurship (Reynolds et al., 2002). So our study supported Raymond's study in 2002. Literature reviews revealed that those countries have facilitated more supportive social welfare programmes tend to have a lower rate of necessity entrepreneurship (Acs et al., 2005; Reynolds et al., 2002). Our research shows that Necessity entrepreneurship is noticeably higher in Oman than opportunity entrepreneurship. So Oman should rethink about its 'supportive social welfare programs'! On the same time as per the literature review, a country promotes entrepreneurship through programs and policies should have less necessary entrepreneurs. (Acs et al., 2005; Reynolds et al., 2002). How about 'Oman's entrepreneurship promotion' through policies and programs? Higher proportion of opportunity entrepreneurship is related to business services (Acs et al., 2005)

our study also acknowledged this as majority of our women opportunity entrepreneurs are doing business in services.

Thurik (2008) studied the relation between unemployment and the entrepreneurial activity. The refugee effect described in the study could be seen as necessity entrepreneurship. This idea is not valued in our study findings at the contextual points of view. The argument goes that formal education might foster attitudes contradicting the very essence of entrepreneurship (Parker, 2004). Another line of argument, however, predicts the opposite. If employers demand a high level of formal education from their workers e.g. for the purpose of screening, then, would-be entrepreneurs, not facing this requirement, should leave full-time education at an earlier point. The necessity entrepreneurs are educated more than opportunity entrepreneurs in our study sample. In that sense our study findings are against the Parker's view in 2004.

According to Thurik, it is harder to state which type of motivation is involved in opportunity entrepreneurship. For him, the definition of opportunity entrepreneurship itself involves the market opportunities; it is clearly driven by economic factors alone. (Thurik, 2008). Our study results reject this idea, which stressed that opportunity entrepreneurs are only driven by economic factors, for us there are many push, pull motives behind the selection of 'opportunity' entrepreneurship.

Since, development economics theoretically proved (Schumpeter, 1995) that those enterprises/entrepreneurs have innovation ideas will be suitable for the further development of a country, hence, Oman require to encourage 'opportunity' entrepreneurs rather than 'necessity entrepreneurship. In addition, it is clear from studies that a significant relationship between national level of opportunity entrepreneurship and their projected economic growth (Acs et al, 2005; Acs and Varga, 2005; Reynolds et al., 2002). Previous studies identified that countries that are with a low ratio of opportunity to necessity entrepreneurs also have a low GDP per capita (Acs and Varga, 2005). For the time being, Oman is not have much issue with GDP per-capita because almost 88% of Oman's GDP comes from the Oil sector. Recently, we have had bad news about plunging oil prices' which call for major concern from government authorities over the country's potential GDP per-capita and the standard of living of Omani people! This study agreed with Acs and Varga, 2005, that Oman has less opportunity entrepreneurs for the time being and it can affect the future prospects of the country defectively. So this is the high time for Oman to promote opportunity entrepreneurship since the country's future depend on entrepreneurship.

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