



**T.C.
YALOVA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM**

**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF STRATEGIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP: INSIGHTS
FROM DIVERSE ENTREPRENEURS' STORIES AROUND THE WORLD FOR
ASPIRING BUSINESSES**

MASTER'S THESIS

ALAA ABDULLAH YAHYA MUSLEH

SUPERVISOR: ASST. PROF. DR. VILDAN TAŞLI KARABULUT

**YALOVA
JULY 2025**



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ETHICAL DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis titled “An Exploratory Study of Strategic Entrepreneurship: Insights from Diverse Entrepreneurs' Stories Around the World for Aspiring Businesses”, prepared in accordance with the Yalova University Graduate School of Education’s Thesis Writing Guidelines, was conducted in line with academic and ethical standards. All data, information, and documents presented within the thesis have been obtained and used in accordance with the principles of scientific ethics and integrity.

I confirm that all sources, studies, and references that contributed to this thesis have been properly cited and acknowledged. No modifications or distortions have been made to the original data, and the work presented is entirely my own and original. I accept full legal and academic responsibility in the event that any violation of these principles is identified.

Signature

Alaa Abdullah Yahya MUSLEH

ETİK BEYAN

“An Exploratory Study of Strategic Entrepreneurship: Insights from Diverse Entrepreneurs' Stories Around the World for Aspiring Businesses” başlıklı tezin, Yalova Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü Tez Yazım Kılavuzu’na uygun olarak hazırlandığını ve akademik ile etik kurallar çerçevesinde yürütüldüğünü beyan ederim. Tez içerisinde sunulan tüm veri, bilgi ve belgeler bilimsel etik ve dürüstlük ilkelerine uygun şekilde elde edilmiş ve kullanılmıştır.

Bu teze katkı sağlayan tüm kaynaklar, çalışmalar ve atıflar eksiksiz şekilde belirtilmiş ve kaynakça gösterilmiştir. Orijinal verilere herhangi bir müdahalede veya tahrifatta bulunulmamış olup, sunulan çalışma tamamen şahsıma ait ve özgün bir çalışmadır. Bu ilkelerin ihlalinin tespiti halinde doğacak tüm hukuki ve akademik sorumluluğu kabul ederim.

İmza

Alaa Abdullah Yahya MUSLEH

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July - 2025

Alaa Abdullah Yayha MUSLEH

ÖNSÖZ

Bu çalışma, kişisel kararlılığımın yanı sıra bu yolculukta benimle birlikte yürüten birçok kişinin cömert desteğinin bir sonucudur. Özellikle aileme, sonsuz teşvikleri için en derin şükranlarımı sunarım. Başta anne ve babam olmak üzere, sevgileri ve bana olan inançları her zaman ilham kaynağım olmuştur.

Tez danışmanıma, bu süreç boyunca verdiği sürekli teşvik, yol gösterici rehberlik ve desteği için içten teşekkürlerimi sunarım. Kendisine olan bağlılığı ve değerli geri bildirimleri fikirlerimi geliştirmemde ve bu çalışmanın şekillenmesinde etkili olmuştur.

Zorlu zamanlarda anlayış ve cesaret veren yakın arkadaşlarıma da ayrıca minnettarım. Bu başarıya ulaşmamı mümkün kılan tüm bu katkıların her birini büyük bir takdirle anıyorum.

Temmuz - 2025

Alaa Abdullah Yahya MUSLEH

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

SYMBOLS

α : Cronbach's Alpha

β : Beta

ABBREVIATIONS

SP: Strategic Posture

EH: Environmental Hostility

OP: Operational Posture

IBM SPSS: International Business Machines- Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

MAXQDA: MAX Qualitative Data Analysis

CRM: Customer Relationship Management

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF STRATEGIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP: INSIGHTS FROM DIVERSE ENTREPRENEURS' STORIES AROUND THE WORLD FOR ASPIRING BUSINESSES

ABSTRACT

This study explores the evolving dynamics of strategic entrepreneurship through a mixed-method approach, focusing on diverse and diaspora entrepreneurs operating across diverse global contexts. The study aims to examine the strategic practices of these entrepreneurs by analyzing their personal stories and entrepreneurial journeys. It seeks to identify trends in their strategic behaviors, determine how their experiences align with existing research, and offer actionable advice for aspiring entrepreneurs. The quantitative phase draws on survey responses from 30 entrepreneurs, analyzing the impact of environmental hostility and organizational practices on strategic posture using moderated regression analysis. The qualitative phase comprises five in-depth interviews with diaspora entrepreneurs, uncovering rich narratives related to risk management, adaptive strategies, and experiential learning. Findings reveal that while environmental hostility negatively influences strategic posture, strong organizational practices can moderate this relationship, which allows entrepreneurs to remain agile and opportunity-focused. The qualitative insights highlight key themes such as resilience, emotional discipline, market entry strategies, and the role of operational and marketing strategies. This research concludes by providing advice for aspiring entrepreneurs, emphasizing the importance of experiential learning, long-term planning, and social awareness as critical elements of long-term success. The study further integrates the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, strategic entrepreneurship, international entrepreneurship, diaspora entrepreneurship and strategic management literature, offering new perspectives on how internal capabilities and context-specific practices shape entrepreneurial success. This thesis contributes to the strategic entrepreneurship field by integrating empirical data with real-life narratives, offering practical recommendations for aspiring entrepreneurs and theoretical implications for future research.

Keywords: Strategic Entrepreneurship, International Entrepreneurship, Diaspora Entrepreneurship, Business Growth, individual stories, Business Strategies.

STRATEJİK GİRİŞİMCİLİĞE YÖNELİK KEŞİFSEL BİR ÇALIŞMA: DÜNYA ÇAPINDAKİ FARKLI GİRİŞİMCİLERİN HİKAYELERİNDEN İLHAM ALAN YENİ GİRİŞİMLER İÇİN BULGULAR

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, farklı ve diaspora kökenli girişimcilerin çeşitli ülkelerde yürüttükleri faaliyetler üzerinde stratejik girişimciliğin değişen dinamiklerini karma yöntem yaklaşımıyla incelemektedir. Çalışmada, girişimcilerin kişisel hikayeler ve girişimcilik yolculukları incelenerek stratejik uygulamalarının keşfedilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Bu kapsamda, çalışma, girişimcilerin stratejik davranışlarındaki eğilimleri belirlemeyi, deneyimlerinin mevcut literatürle ne ölçüde örtüştüğünü değerlendirmeyi ve girişimci adayları için uygulanabilir tavsiyeler sunmayı hedeflemektedir. Karma yöntem yaklaşımı çerçevesinde, nicel aşamada 30 girişimciden alınan anket yanıtlarına dayanılarak çevresel düşmanlık ve örgütsel uygulamaların stratejik duruş üzerindeki etkisi, düzenleyici regresyon analizi ile incelenmiştir. Nitel aşama ise diaspora kökenli girişimcilerle yapılan beş derinlemesine görüşmeden oluşmakta olup, risk yönetimi, uyum stratejileri ve deneyimsel öğrenme konularında zengin anlatılar ortaya koymaktadır. Bulgular, çevresel düşmanlığın stratejik duruşu olumsuz etkilediğini, ancak güçlü örgütsel uygulamaların bu etkiyi dengeleyebileceğini ve girişimcilerin çevik ve fırsat odaklı kalmasını sağladığını göstermektedir. Nitel veriler; dayanıklılık, duygusal disiplin, pazara giriş stratejileri ve operasyonel ile pazarlama stratejilerinin rolü gibi temel temaları vurgulamaktadır. Araştırmanın sonuç kısmında, girişimci adaylarına yönelik deneyimsel öğrenme, uzun vadeli planlama ve sosyal farkındalık gibi unsurların uzun vadeli başarı için kritik olduğunu vurgulayan tavsiyelerle yer almaktadır. Ayrıca bu çalışma, Kaynak Tabanlı Görüş (RBV) teorisini, stratejik girişimcilik, uluslararası girişimcilik, diaspora girişimciliği ve stratejik yönetim literatürüyle birleştirerek, içsel yetkinlikler ve bağlama özgü uygulamaların girişimcilik başarısını nasıl şekillendirdiğine dair yeni bakış açıları sunmaktadır. Bu tez, ampirik veriler ile gerçek yaşam anlatılarını birleştirerek stratejik girişimcilik alanına katkı sağlamakta, girişimci adayları için pratik öneriler ve gelecekteki araştırmalar için teorik çıkarımlar sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Stratejik Girişimcilik, Uluslararası Girişimcilik, Diaspora Girişimciliği, İş Büyümesi, Bireysel Hikâyeler, İş Stratejiler

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In today's fast-changing economy, entrepreneurship plays an important role in job creation, innovation, and building economic resilience. However, not every entrepreneurial venture succeeds, and the reason often comes down to the strategies that entrepreneurs adopt to deal with complex and volatile environments. Strategic entrepreneurship can be defined as a process that facilitates ventures efforts to identify opportunities with the highest potential to lead to value creation, through the entrepreneurial component and then to exploit them through measured strategic actions, based on their resource base. Strategic entrepreneurship combines the opportunity-seeking behavior of entrepreneurs with the resource-seeking mindset of strategic management. This approach offers a useful framework to better understand entrepreneurial success through highlighting the importance of not only identifying opportunities but also managing resources effectively and making careful strategic decisions that lead to success (Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland et al., 2003).

Despite growing interest in strategic entrepreneurship, much of the existing research focuses on specific regions, industries, or high-growth startups. This narrow focus offers limited insight into how entrepreneurs from various cultural and economic backgrounds develop and implement their strategies. Furthermore, although theoretical models of strategic entrepreneurship have been suggested (Ireland et al., 2023), there remains a significant gap in research based on the lived experiences of entrepreneurs operating under different socio-economic conditions. This thesis aims to address this gap by exploring the experiences and strategies of entrepreneurs across different global contexts, including both successful and unsuccessful ventures. Through a mixed-methods approach, the research aims to uncover patterns, challenges, and strategic practices that can help aspiring entrepreneurs and enhance the academic understanding of entrepreneurship across diverse contexts.

1.2 Problem Statement

Even though the field of strategic entrepreneurship has grown significantly over the past two decades, much of the research remains theoretical, with limited empirical studies that explore how entrepreneurship unfolds in practice (Ireland et al., 2023). Specifically, there is limited research that explores the everyday practices of entrepreneurs across different industries, backgrounds and regions, indicating a lack of studies that translates entrepreneurs' experiences, both successes and failures, into practical insights for those entering the entrepreneurial world (Ratinho et al., 2020). Translating entrepreneurs' real-life experiences, into practical insights is essential because it bridges the gap between theory and practice. While academic models often generalize behavior, lived experiences reveal how strategies are adapted in specific, dynamic, and uncertain environments. These insights offer aspiring entrepreneurs, educators, and policymakers grounded knowledge that can inform more realistic decision-making, risk assessment, and opportunity recognition (Rae, 2005; Cope, 2011). Additionally, experiential data contributes to theory by revealing how strategic choices unfold in diverse cultural and economic contexts.

Given the increasingly global nature of entrepreneurship, it is important to examine how cultural, economic, and institutional contexts influence entrepreneurial strategies and behaviors. Some existing studies, such as the one by Saleh and Manjunath (2023) highlight the need for localized and context-sensitive research in this area. In line with this suggestion this study aims to address the gap in the literature offering a more inclusive and practice-oriented perspective of strategic entrepreneurship.

1.3 Research Aim

This study aims to explore the strategic practices of diverse entrepreneurs by examining their personal stories and entrepreneurial journeys. It seeks to identify trends in their strategic behaviors, determine how their experiences align with existing research, and offer actionable advice for aspiring entrepreneurs.

1.4 Research Objectives

- To explore the personal stories, entrepreneurial journeys, and strategic approaches of entrepreneurs from various regions and backgrounds.
- To understand how these strategies relate to existing theories and models in strategic entrepreneurship, such as opportunity recognition (Baron, 2006), dynamic capabilities (Teece, 2007), and entrepreneurial orientation (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).
- To provide practical insights that can help aspiring entrepreneurs make informed strategic choices, particularly growth strategies, market entry, resource management, and risks management.

1.5 Research Questions

- How do successful diverse and diaspora entrepreneurs from different industries, backgrounds, and countries apply strategic entrepreneurship to overcome challenges, achieve success, and navigate failures?
- What strategies do they recommend for startups and entrepreneurs to adopt and to avoid?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to both the academic and the practical fields. Academically, it offers a deeper understanding of strategic entrepreneurship by including voices of entrepreneurs from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds and who are operating across different industries. It also addresses a gap in the literature that states a noticeable lack of research based on the real experiences of entrepreneurs navigating different socio-economic conditions (Ireland et al., 2023). This is achieved by exploring entrepreneurial experiences and stories, by providing a combined analysis of the quantitative data and the qualitative narratives. Practically, by including stories of both success and failures shared by participants, this study provides real-world insights and lessons that aspiring entrepreneurs can apply to their ventures. It provides a well-rounded understanding of what works and what doesn't in business, within various contexts and industries. Furthermore, this research contributes to the growing area of international and diaspora entrepreneurship, by adding depth to discussions on how these entrepreneurs deal with transnational challenges and opportunities (Nave & Ferreira, 2022; Solano, 2015).

1.7 Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on diverse entrepreneurial experiences from around the world. The entrepreneurs selected for this study come from various sectors and backgrounds to ensure a rich and varied dataset. This research includes aspects of international and diaspora entrepreneurship, recognizing the complexity of cross-border ventures. The scope includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection using a structured survey to identify some statistical patterns in order to gain a general understating of entrepreneurial behavior and narrative interviews to provide in-depth personal insights. However, due to the limited sample sizes, the findings may not apply to all global entrepreneurs.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into six chapters:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction:** This chapter presents the background, research problem, aim, and scope of the study.
- **Chapter 2: Literature Review:** This chapter reviews the theoretical literature on strategic entrepreneurship, international entrepreneurship and diaspora entrepreneurship, strategic management in entrepreneurship and Resource Based View Theory.
- **Chapter 3: Methodology and Results:** This chapter details the mixed-method approach, including the survey design, interview procedures, data integration techniques, and it demonstrates the results of each method in detailed.
- **Chapter 4: Findings:** This chapter reports the detailed findings from the mixed-methods analysis (Quantitative Findings, Qualitative Findings, and Integrated Findings).
- **Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications:** This chapter discusses quantitative, qualitative, and integrated findings, connecting them to existing literature and exploring their implications.
- **Chapter 6: Conclusion:** This chapter provides an overview of the study, summarizes key insights, and suggests areas for future research

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive synthesis of the academic literature relevant to the core concepts of this research. It focuses on four main topics: strategic entrepreneurship, international and diaspora entrepreneurship, strategic management in entrepreneurial contexts, and the resource-based view (RBV) theory. These frameworks form the foundation that is needed to understand the practices, strategies, and experiences of diverse entrepreneurs working in constantly changing and often uncertain environments. A large and growing body of entrepreneurship literature has been noticed in recent years, showing an increase of scholarly interest in entrepreneurial behavior. This interest is growing beyond the creation of business models to include themes such as resilience, strategic agility, and social intelligence in enterprises. The chapter begins by addressing the main concept of this thesis: strategic entrepreneurship through emphasizing its evolution over time and ongoing theoretical debates. Then, turning to international and diaspora entrepreneurship, where culture, identity, and transnational networks shape entrepreneurial decision-making. The chapter proceeds with a review of literature on strategic management within entrepreneurial contexts, highlighting how planning, adaptability, and agility can influence an enterprise's performance and success. Finally, the chapter concludes with the theory of resource-based view (RBV), a theory that states the role of internal capabilities and intangible resources in entrepreneurial ventures.

2.2 Strategic Entrepreneurship

Strategic entrepreneurship is a concept that sits at the crossroads of two fields: strategic management and entrepreneurship. It mainly focuses on understanding how entrepreneurs and firms can simultaneously take part in opportunity-seeking and advantage-seeking behaviors to create long-term value and success (Hitt et al., 2001). This indicates that pursuing innovation while maintaining strategic coherence is a dual perspective that has become increasingly relevant in today's volatile and diverse entrepreneurial landscape. Strategic entrepreneurship recognizes that while entrepreneurship involves identifying and exploiting opportunities, long-term success depends on the strategic configuration and rightful use of both internal and external resources (Ireland et al., 2003), this synthesis, is often described as an integration of the logic of opportunity

recognition and the logic of competitive advantage thereby forming the foundational logic of strategic entrepreneurship theory. Ireland, Hitt, and Sirmon (2003) developed one of the earliest models of strategic entrepreneurship, examining different aspects of the entrepreneurial mindset, such as, innovation, strategic resource management, and competitive advantage-seeking behavior. Their work called for further studies to clarify how entrepreneurs work with these aspects in practice. Some scholars continue to challenge the conceptual clarity of strategic entrepreneurship and its applicability in empirical research. For example, Ireland et al. (2023) stated that although the field is conceptually rich it has yet to fully capture the strategic complexity of entrepreneurship in diverse environments. They argued that while the field has developed since the early 2000s, there is still a need for more in-depth and focused explorations of the strategic foundations of entrepreneurship. This critique aligns with Simsek et al. (2017), who argued that while the concept of strategic entrepreneurship offers a valuable umbrella framework, it often overlaps with other related concepts and lacks clear distinctions from adjacent theories such as dynamic capabilities or effectuation. Previous research has offered a detailed examination of strategic entrepreneurship within specific organizational settings. For example, the study by Kellermanns et al. (2016) which conducted a comparative analysis of researchers' and entrepreneurs' perceptions of the resource-based view (RBV) within entrepreneurial strategy, showed a noticeable difference in focal points in both areas. Entrepreneurs tend to rely on practical, experience-based understandings of resources use, as opposed to the more theoretical classifications commonly emphasized in academic research. This highlights a gap between theoretical models of strategic entrepreneurship and the real-world experiences of entrepreneurs, an area that invites further examination. The various dimensions of strategic entrepreneurship have been explored across different areas, including innovation, knowledge integration, and digital transformation. For instance, Brinckmann et al. (2019) examined the importance of strategic flexibility and resource configuration as central points of sustainable entrepreneurial success. These findings are supported by Klyver and Nielsen (2021), who wrote about the strategic role of entrepreneurial networks in managing uncertainties and in enabling firm growth and expansion. A similar point on agility in strategic management has also recently been made by (Kargas & Aretos, 2023) who emphasized that strategic entrepreneurship is at its most effective when it is supported by flexible and agile structures that allow for rapid decision-making, organizational learning, as well as experimentation. The importance of strategic agility is further emphasized in diaspora and minority entrepreneurship

settings, where entrepreneurs frequently navigate institutional barriers, discrimination, and limited access to resources. Dana (2007) and Ram et al. (2017) show that such entrepreneurs must adopt agile and adaptive strategies to identify niches, pivot quickly, and survive in competitive markets.

Furthermore, the present study's quantitative findings showed that entrepreneurs tend to explore and experiment within different areas, products and markets before expansion and investment. This is consistent with Wiklund and Shepherd's (2011) view of entrepreneurship, as they see it an "experiment," where entrepreneurs distribute their strategies across different areas and test for success potential under different conditions. Similarly, Covin and Slevin (1989) stress that in hostile environments, entrepreneurial firms tend to rely on proactiveness and innovation as survival strategies, which is an insight shared by many entrepreneurs in this study. Moreover, recent research also points to the need for expanding strategic entrepreneurship theory to include the emotional and psychological dimensions. For example, Ahmed et al. (2022) provide evidence that resilience, stress management, and coping strategies form an essential part of how entrepreneurs sustain their ventures under disadvantageous and volatile conditions. They proposed that entrepreneurship itself may function as a mechanism for building psychological resilience, providing a perspective that challenges traditional models of strategic behavior that tend to focus on resource logic and environmental scanning. This has significant implications for how strategic entrepreneurship is understood in theory and applied in practice, particularly in low-resource, high-uncertainty environments. In summary, the strategic entrepreneurship literature provides an overall solid framework for analyzing how entrepreneurs pursue sustainable success, innovate, and manage resources in different environments. Recent contributions revealed the need for further research, to have a deeper understanding of how strategic entrepreneurship works in diverse contexts. The findings from this study contribute to this ongoing discourse by demonstrating how strategic entrepreneurship is defined by acts of seeking opportunities, seizing advantages, navigating emotional complexity, managing contextual constraints, and continuously learning through practice.

2.3 International and Diaspora Entrepreneurship

The evolution of international entrepreneurship as a field of study reflects the growing importance of globalization, mobility, and cross-border strategy in entrepreneurial behavior. International

entrepreneurship investigates how entrepreneurs identify, evaluate, and exploit opportunities across national borders (McDougall & Oviatt, 2000). Over time, the field has grown to include firm-level strategies and capabilities as well as individual experiences, including cultural identity, transnational networks, and mobility, which have been explored in the subfield of diaspora entrepreneurship. A systematic review by Nave and Ferreira (2022) outlined the key ideas and the intellectual structure of international entrepreneurship, revealing several themes, including international business networks, founder traits and characteristics, and internationalization drivers. The authors called for a more nuanced understanding of how entrepreneurs handle knowledge asymmetries and geographical embeddedness. Their call to reflect on the impact of how “different types of knowledge affect internationalization” (p. 25) is particularly relevant to diaspora entrepreneurs, whose double embeddedness in two or more sociocultural systems constitute as both an advantage and a challenge.

Diaspora entrepreneurship, particularly, offers an important angle for understanding the complexity of cross-border entrepreneurial practices. Solano (2015) and Elo (2019) argued that diaspora entrepreneurs operate beyond the limitations of home-host country dualism. Their identities, networks, and strategies are not limited to fixed locations but span across multiple spaces simultaneously. In a similar vein, Elo et al. (2022) subsequently added to this perspective by defining different subcategories of diaspora entrepreneurship. They acknowledged that diaspora entrepreneurs often pursue both “ethnic” and “transnational” entrepreneurship, simultaneously. These mixed strategies reflect the “multiplexity” of diaspora identity, which is often agile, adaptable, and resistant to fixed classification. The participants in the present study also reflect many of the same dynamics. Interviewed entrepreneurs described building businesses that simultaneously drew on the local market needs and international cultural or logistical ties. Their customer acquisition strategies, product/service lines, and partnership models would typically embody what Stoyanov, Woodward, and Stoyanova (2018) refer to as “boundary-spanning.” Diaspora entrepreneurs use their social capital and transnational ties to connect, bridge, and navigate multiple markets. Stoyanov, Woodward, and Stoyanova (2018) research on diaspora entrepreneurship is supported by Syrett and Keles’s (2022) findings, which show that most diaspora entrepreneurs start with mastering local markets before pursuing international markets, using their embedded knowledge as a strategic advantage.

However, the literature also suggests that the diaspora entrepreneurial journey is marked by both relational and structural challenges. Nkongolo-Bakenda and Chrysostome (2020), who conducted a study on 59 African diaspora entrepreneurs in Canada, found that entrepreneurs rely frequently on close friends to identify opportunities and to help customers “clarify their needs.” They note that knowledge transfer in diaspora contexts tends to happen informally and relationally, rather than through formal and institutional ways. Such findings are in line with the participants’ narratives in this study, who stated that trust-based networks and local knowledge as their one decision-making strategies in the early stages of their ventures. However, this strategy did not negate the use of formal education and its contribution to interviewees strategies, as they stated that they simply use a combination of both depending on the nature of the decision they must make and the strategy they must adapt.

At the same time, the opportunities offered by transnational positioning are not evenly shared. Elo et al. (2019) cautioned that diaspora entrepreneurs often face double exclusion, both from host country mainstream business ecosystems and from evolving dynamics in their home countries. These entrepreneurs therefore must endure not only business complexity but also institutional, linguistic, and cultural marginalization. Their work reinforces the argument that diaspora entrepreneurship should not be considered as inherently resource-rich or opportunity-laden. Rather, it involves a perpetual negotiation between agency and constraint.

Furthermore, some literature urges a move beyond simple taxonomies of immigrant and diaspora entrepreneurship. Brzozowski (2017) argued that diaspora entrepreneurs use different logics that are effectual, causational, and bricolage-based, depending on their different ways of accessing resources and the degree of institutional embeddedness within the host country. These findings support the argument that entrepreneurial strategy is shaped not just by identity but also by the entrepreneur’s ability to leverage embeddedness, networks, and experiential learning. This idea resonates with the present study’s focus on lived experience and adaptability.

Digitalization has altered the way diaspora entrepreneurs operate by enabling them to remain connected to multiple communities and markets simultaneously. Secundo et al. (2021) noted that social media has evolved from being a marketing tool to a leading platform for “value co-creation, knowledge sharing, and customer engagement” for entrepreneurial ecosystems. This is particularly so for diaspora entrepreneurs, who are more likely to operate in decentralized or virtual spaces

where relational capital management across borders is a daily practice. This study's participants described how Google, Instagram, and official Company Websites served as forms of communication and as experimental spaces for idea testing and brand-building, this supports the idea that diaspora entrepreneurship is becoming more digitally mediated.

Together, these studies suggest that international and diaspora entrepreneurship is a multidimensional, network-driven, and highly contextual phenomenon. It involves not only crossing geographic borders but also navigating different systems of thinking, roles, and different ways of understanding their chosen industries.

2.4 Strategic Management in Entrepreneurship

The intersection of entrepreneurship and strategic management has formed a dynamic field of study that seeks to integrate two separate and intellectual concepts: the structured, long-term orientation of strategic planning, and the adaptive and dynamic, opportunity-driven behavior at the core of entrepreneurship. Ireland et al. (2023) who wrote that a comprehensive understanding of strategic entrepreneurship requires commitment to both perspectives, as neither alone account for the complexity of how businesses initiate, grow, and sustain competitive advantage in uncertain environments.

One of the earliest structured attempts at integrating these disciplines is provided by Kraus and Kauranen (2009). In their analysis they identify several conceptual intersections, most prominently around the role of the entrepreneur in decision-making, resource orchestration, and uncertainty management. They stated that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which constitutes the vast majority of entrepreneurial ventures, are constantly needed to adapt to environmental turbulences while providing focused strategic trajectories. Such ventures rely heavily on the entrepreneurs' individual abilities to align short-term action with long-term vision, through a blend of informal decision-making (intuitive judgment) with formal decision making (structured processes).

Many entrepreneurs in this study reflected these dynamics. The participants emphasized the importance of operational readiness before launching, not merely to have a product but to also have internal systems and workflows to support scaling. This structural focus and readiness are

supported by the findings of Ma et al. (2021), in their meta-analysis, which concluded that entrepreneurs with managerial experience and higher risk aversion (particularly among female entrepreneurs) were more likely to invest in business planning. They concluded that planning behavior is influenced by both psychological traits and contextual factors, and that entrepreneurs who engage in pre-launch planning have better performance outcomes.

The literature has also challenged the idea that formal planning will always lead to better results. Welter et al. (2021) questioned the supposed “false dichotomy” between business planning and lean startup methodologies. They argued that in practice, entrepreneurs often mix structured and formal planning with iterative customer discovery, and pivoting when necessary, based on market feedback. This insight is consistent with the findings in this study, where entrepreneurs highlighted the importance of clarity and systems, yet also described examples of real-time adjustments and strategic recalibration. Planning thus, in these accounts, is viewed not as a static act, but rather as a dynamic process, modular in design, and highly adaptive.

Kellermanns et al. (2016) added further nuance by exploring how scholars and practitioners differ in their perceptions of strategic resource management. Their content analysis demonstrates that while researches emphasize classification and typologies of resources, entrepreneurs are interested in practical application and context-specific value. This has implications for how strategy is taught and understood in entrepreneurial contexts. For example, the entrepreneurs in this study rarely used theoretical terminology to describe their approaches, yet they consistently practiced resource prioritization, opportunity filtering, and market analysis, which are pillars of strategic management.

Recent literature also brings to the fore the increasing importance of agility and hybrid strategic frameworks. Kargas and Aretos (2023) study showed that successful strategy implementation is often based on a synthesis of agile approaches and hierarchical structures. In the face of uncertain markets, firms that are can institutionalize flexibility through open communication, iterative feedback cycles, and flattened decision-making structures, are better equipped to innovate and survive. This reflects the experiences of several participants in this study, who described using tools like social media platforms and informal peer feedback rather than following the formal corporate processes. These “lightweight systems” allowed space to experiment within strategic coherence.

Interestingly, the psychological and emotional aspects of strategic management have been receiving increasing attention over the last few years. For instance, Ahmed et al. (2022) referred to entrepreneurial strategy as a coping mechanism in the face of adversity (a reaction to hardship), proposing further that psychological mastery coupled with market awareness are crucial for sustaining business operation. Their work expands the strategic management conversation to include resilience and emotional regulation as strategic capabilities. The entrepreneurs in this study emphasized this concept repeatedly, by stating that emotional discipline and mental flexibility are not merely personal virtues but they are also practical tools for business survival and success.

Overall, the strategic management literature in entrepreneurship has evolved from focusing on planning and formal control towards embracing adaptive, relational, and psychological dimensions of strategy. While earlier research was mainly concerned with structure, routines, and managerial control, more recent research encourages hybrid models that combine agility, emotion, and contextual intelligence. The entrepreneurs in this study exemplify this evolution: as they plan, adapt, learn, and lead not from templates, but from a place of active, emotionally intelligent engagement connection to both their markets, customers and their inner values.

2.5 Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm provides serves as a powerful theoretical framework to understand how entrepreneurial ventures achieve and sustain competitive advantage through the strategic internal resource use. This view is rooted in the foundational work of Barney (1991), RBV suggests a firm gains its edge in the market not merely through market positioning, but through possession and deployment of resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). This theory has increasingly been expanded over the years to account for both tangible assets and intangible capabilities, such as knowledge, social capital, and leadership behaviors (Barney, 2001; Newbert, 2007).

RBV has been used in the entrepreneurial context to explain how early-stage ventures, often lacking in financial capital or institutional legitimacy, use nontraditional resources in order to compete and survive. Ireland et al. (2003) argued that effective orchestration of resource is fundamental to value creation in uncertain environments. Their model suggests that it is not simply the availability of resources, but the entrepreneur's ability to identify, arrange, and use them is what leads to sustained advantage and success.

Kellermanns et al. (2016) offered a nuanced extension of this idea through a comparison of the scholars and practitioners' perspective on RBV. They found that while researchers are likely to classify resources abstractly (e.g., human, social, or financial capital), entrepreneurs interpret resource value through practice, action and context. Entrepreneurs are less concerned with typologies and are more focused on "what works" in specific, dynamic market realities. This resonates with the conclusions of the present study's findings: qualitative interviews and quantitative responses both indicated that entrepreneurs consistently appealed to internal traits (e.g. discipline, clarity, emotional regulation) as well as used external means (e.g. personal networks, digital platforms, and customer feedback mechanisms) to adapt and thrive. These resources, though informal and sometimes unquantified, were vital to a successful strategic execution.

In the quantitative data, certain variables, such as the perceived importance of internal discipline, risk management strategies, and entrepreneurial experience, correlated with key performance indicators, suggesting that these "soft" resources operate as real inputs into business outcomes. This supports the broader literature on behavioral and cognitive resources, which views personal resilience, adaptability, and even emotional balance as an underexplored area yet highly powerful sources of competitive advantage (Ahmed et al., 2022).

Additionally, the RBV framework also provides a useful perspective for interpreting how the diaspora entrepreneurs in this study navigated limits and constraints. Rather than emphasizing the scarcity of resources, the participants often spoke of using what they did have in creative, context-specific ways. This is aligned with the notion of resource bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005), which is widely associated with RBV in entrepreneurial settings. Bricolage draws attention to how entrepreneurs recombine available resources in novel ways to overcome limitations, which is an approach that is repeatedly seen in the behaviors of the participants who began businesses with minimal capital but high levels of relational and emotional investment.

Overall, the RBV framework reinforces and is reinforced by the findings of this thesis. It identifies the strategic role of internal assets, lived experience, and relational capital; factors that, while they may be difficult to quantify, they proved to be essential for entrepreneurial success in uncertain and resource-constrained environments.

This literature review has demonstrated that entrepreneurship is best understood as a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by strategic intention, contextual responsiveness, and personal capability. The strategic entrepreneurship literature emphasizes the balance between opportunity-seeking and advantage-seeking behaviors, yet it also suggests a lack of clarity regarding how these dynamics in practice. International and diaspora entrepreneurship literature captures transnational identities and networks as fluid and dynamic, yet it tends underestimate the emotional and cultural role in cross-border business strategy. Similarly, strategic management in entrepreneurship has evolved beyond bureaucratic and formal planning models to include psychological, relational, and agile styles of leadership, suggesting that entrepreneurial strategy is increasingly relies on emotional and contextual intelligence. While the RBV theory, remains valuable, it calls for more systematic consideration to informal resources (e.g. resilience, adaptability, and social capital) as critical elements to entrepreneurial success (Newbert, S. L., 2007).

Overall, these frameworks constitute the conceptual angle which the findings of this study are interpreted. They reveal that entrepreneurial success depends as much on mastering uncertainty, mobilizing networks, and continuously learning as it is about acquiring and deploying resources. As the subsequent chapters will show, these theoretical constructs are brought to life through the stories and lived experiences of diverse entrepreneurs whose strategies, emotions, mistakes and decisions reflect both the insights and limitations of current academic discourse.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Research Aim

This research aims to explore the strategic entrepreneurship practices of diverse entrepreneurs worldwide through analyzing their personal stories and entrepreneurial journeys. By examining successful and unsuccessful stories of the participants, this research aims to identify the patterns in strategic decision-making processes and overall entrepreneurial growth. Given the scarcity of research that translates entrepreneurial experiences into practical strategies (Ratinho et al., 2020), this study also seeks to bridge the gap between academic research and practical application by providing actionable insights that aspiring entrepreneurs can implement in their business ventures. Furthermore, this research aims to compare the real-world strategic entrepreneurship practices with the existing literature to assess their general relevance and applicability. The international and diaspora focus of this study was chosen to improve the general understanding of how different cultural and economic environments shape entrepreneurial strategies across various industries, which remains an underexplored area in the literature today (Saleh & Manjunath, 2023).

3.2 Research Questions

The main questions that this study looks to answer are:

How do successful diverse and diaspora entrepreneurs from diverse industries, backgrounds, and countries apply strategic entrepreneurship to overcome challenges, achieve success, and navigate failures? What strategies do they recommend for startups and entrepreneurs to adopt, and which do they advise avoiding?

Through their experiences, what insights can be drawn about the most effective and ineffective approaches in strategic entrepreneurship and business?

3.3 Research Design

To effectively address these research questions this study adopts an exploratory research design to investigate the strategies, challenges, and insights of diverse and diaspora entrepreneurs operating in different industries around the world. Given the limited research on the intersection of strategic

entrepreneurship and diaspora contexts, an exploratory approach allows for the in-depth discovery of patterns, meanings, and practices that structured or hypothesis-driven studies might overlook (Stebbins, 2001).

To achieve a deep understanding of entrepreneurial behavior, the study used a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data, starting with the quantitative phase to inform the development of the qualitative phase. This approach was suggested by (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), who emphasized that using the results of one method (quantitative) to guide the other (qualitative) helps develop the coherence and depth of the research process. Following this rationale, the quantitative findings in this study were used to shape and direct the qualitative inquiry; the dominant approach is qualitative methodology aligning with approaches in entrepreneurship research where in-depth qualitative insights are complemented by quantitative data to improve the overall understanding and findings. For example, Vanaelst et al. (2006) employed a QUAL+quan design to examine the evolution of entrepreneurial teams in academic spinouts, utilizing qualitative case studies as the primary method and quantitative analysis to assess team composition changes. This methodology is discussed in the broader context of mixed methods studies applications in entrepreneurship research by Molina-Azorín et al. (2012), who highlight the value of such designs in exploring the entrepreneurial field.

The quantitative methodology, derived from a structured survey adapted from the validated study *Strategic Management of Small Firms in Hostile and Benign Environments* by Covin & Slevin (1989), provides complementary insights on the relationship between environmental hostility, organizational practices, and strategic posture.

The qualitative methodology focuses mainly on exploring the lived and practical experiences, strategies, challenges and reflections of diaspora entrepreneurs, starting at their start-up stages all the way to their established stages, through semi-structured interviews.

To support the technical application of the selected analytical methods, AI tools were used solely to help in understanding the practical steps that are required for conducting analyses within both SPSS (Quantitative Data Analysis) and MAXQDA (Qualitative Data Analysis), more detailed explanation of how SPSS and MAXQDA were used in this study is discussed in detail in the following sections. The choice of statistical and qualitative analysis methods, such as moderated regression and thematic coding, was based entirely on academic literature and methodological

research, and not influenced by AI. The role of AI was limited to explaining how to carry out these established techniques within the respective software. Additionally, AI was used to help organize

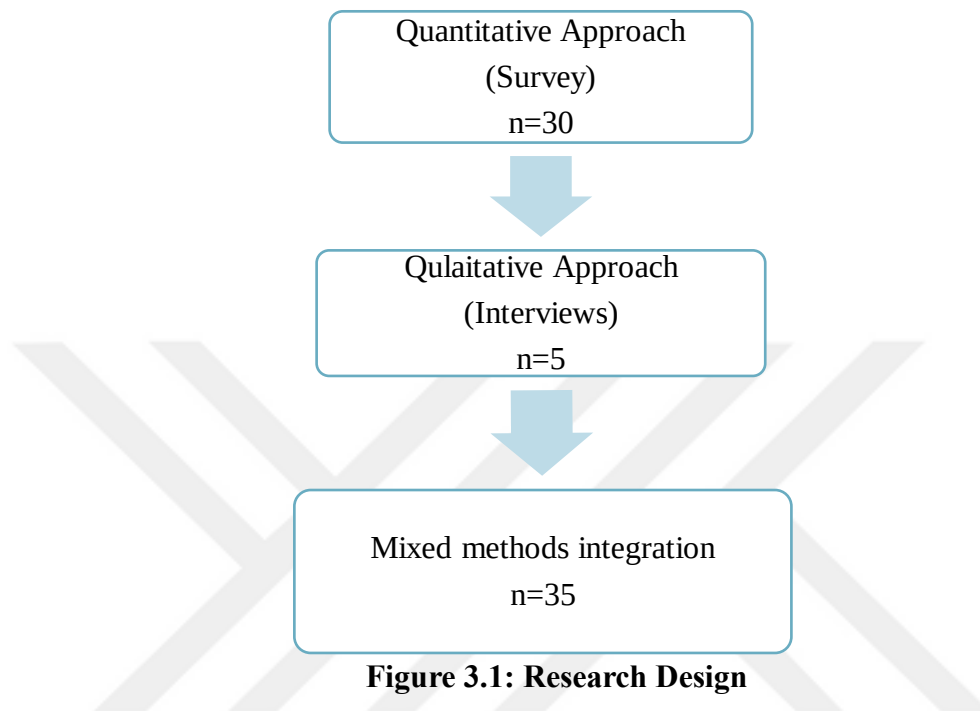


Figure 3.1: Research Design

the overall structure and framework of this thesis for an improved structure and coherence. All of the interpretations, findings, and written content are the result of the researcher's own analysis and academic research.

Although the main focus of this study is on the in-depth insights from qualitative interviews, the research purposefully began with a short survey to get a broader understanding of how entrepreneurs operate in their businesses. As such, the survey results lead to highlighting the key areas of interest and allowed for the development of more focused and relevant interview questions. This helped ensure that the interviews lead to deeper, more meaningful insights that are useful both for research and academic purposes as well as for practical insights future entrepreneurs as suggested by (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

At the final stage of the study, the quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to provide a richer, more comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial experiences. This sequential approach, where quantitative data informs the qualitative phase and both are later merged, is supported by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), who emphasize its value in deepening insight and improving the interpretation of the results and final findings.

3.4 Data Collection

This study used a mixed-method research design, integrating both quantitative statistical analyses using SPSS and qualitative interview analysis coded with MAXQDA. The data collection process started with the quantitative survey in order to have a general understating of how different entrepreneurs operate in their respective industries around the world which will helped in conducting deeper interview questions for the following qualitative data collection stage.

3.4.1 Quantitative Approach: Survey Design and Data Collection

Surveys

The quantitative data were collected using a structured survey distributed to 30 international entrepreneurs over a five-month period with the aim of examining how environmental hostility and organizational practices influence entrepreneurs' strategic posture within their respective business environments. A non-probability purposive sampling method was used where the survey participants were intentionally selected based on their status as entrepreneurs relevant to the research aim. Additionally, a snowball sampling method was used to expand the sample by relying on referrals through the researcher's initial professional and personal networks. The survey was administered through direct contact with the entrepreneurs. The survey was adapted from the validated study Strategic Management of Small Firms in Hostile and Benign Environments by Covin & Slevin (1989), and included three key scales:

- Environmental Hostility (EH): 5 items
- Organizational Practices (OP): 3 items
- Strategic Posture (SP): 8 items

All items used a 7-point Likert scale. Each scale was labeled and coded appropriately in SPSS (e.g., EH1 to EH5, OP1 to OP3, SP1 to SP8). Furthermore, data were processed and analyzed using SPSS to conduct descriptive statistics, reliability testing (Cronbach's Alpha > .75 for each scale), and moderated regression analysis to examine relationships and interaction effects between the variables.

See appendix 1 for the detailed survey questions and design.

3.4.2 Qualitative Approach: Interview design and Data Collection

Interviews

Selection Criteria

Interviewees were selected based on the following criteria: they had to be diaspora entrepreneurs who had successfully established businesses in their current countries of residence and were operating in distinct industries and markets. Personal relationships were excluded to reduce bias and ensure a degree of professional objectivity.

Participants

Five entrepreneurs participated in the study:

- A Yemeni entrepreneur operating in Egypt.
- A Turkish entrepreneur operating in the United Kingdom.
- A Lebanese entrepreneur operating in the United States and Turkey.
- An Azerbaijani entrepreneur operating in Canada.
- An Uzbekistani entrepreneur operating in Pakistan.

These participants represent diverse socio-economic and institutional environments, providing rich cross-national perspectives.

The following table provides an overview of the participants' industries and countries of operation; the participants are listed in the same sequence in which the interviews were conducted, providing a clearer view of how the data collection process unfolded in practice.

This complements the previously presented details on their nationalities and offers additional context for understanding their business environments.

Table 3.1: Summary Table of the Participants

Participant	Nationality	Country of Operation	Industry	Entrepreneur's Role	Years of Operating Business
Entrepreneur A	Yemeni	Egypt	Food Production	Founder and CEO	20 Years
Entrepreneur B	Turkish	The United Kingdom	Food Trading (Frozen Produce)	Founder and CO CEO	25 Years
Entrepreneur C	Lebanese	The United States and Turkey	Real Estate Investment	Founder and CEO	5 Years
Entrepreneur D	Azerbaijani	Canada	Moving & Relocation Services	Founder and CEO	6 Years
Entrepreneur E	Uzbekistani	Pakistan	Social Media management and Branding	Founder and CEO	3 Years

Interview Procedure

All interviews were conducted remotely, via video call platforms (Zoom, WhatsApp or Google Meet), and one via telephone. Each interview lasted between 40 to 90 minutes. Only audio recordings were made in effort to respect the participant privacy, the recordings were later transcribed with AI tools and manually, to ensure accuracy and preserving the richness of the data. The interviews were semi-structured, and the questions were chosen for their flexibility in exploring personal entrepreneurial experiences while maintaining focus on the key themes and objectives of this study (Bryman, 2016; Kallio et al., 2016).

This format encouraged an open dialogue with the interviewees and it allowed deeper insights into each entrepreneur's strategy. Two of the key interview questions: "What strategies are you currently using to maintain and grow your business?" and "Do you focus on innovation, customer retention, marketing, or something else?" frequently elicited similar insights from participants. This suggests that, in future research, these questions could be integrated into a single question. Overall, this approach ensured both depth and consistency in capturing the strategic thinking of diverse entrepreneurs.

Focus of Interview Questions

There were 20 main interview questions and they were designed to explore the following themes:

- Strategies and challenges during the startup phase.
- Current strategic practices and challenges.
- Mistakes made early in the entrepreneurial journey and insights on how to avoid them.
- Advice for start-ups and aspiring entrepreneurs.

See appendix 2 for the detailed interview questions.

The main aim was to extract actionable insights and strategic reflections that would be valuable for entrepreneurs, particularly those at early stages of creating a business or an entrepreneurial venture.

3.5 Data Analysis

A mixed methods approach is used in this research combining quantitative survey data with qualitative interviews. The quantitative phase served to test the relationships between core variables, while the qualitative phase offered deeper insights into entrepreneurial behavior, allowing for contextual and thematic elaboration. The integration of both approaches was chosen to increase the richness and validity of the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3.5.1 Quantitative Approach- Statistical Approach

A structured survey was prepared to measure three primary scales based on the validated survey previously developed by Covin and Slevin (1989), from the strategic entrepreneurship literature:

- Environmental Hostility (EH), measured by five items (1–7 Likert scale), showing the perceived hostility of the external environment.
- Organizational Practices (OP), measured by three items (1–7 Likert scale), assessing the internal organizational mechanisms that support entrepreneurial responsiveness.
- Strategic Posture (SP), measured by eight items (1–7 Likert scale), representing the firm’s entrepreneurial orientation and strategic assertiveness.

The survey data were collected and distributed over five months to 30 international entrepreneurs, through direct contact with each individual participant to ensure the authenticity of the responses and the accuracy of the information provided. As this study follows an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, the initial quantitative sample of 30 participants is consistent with Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), who note that small quantitative samples may effectively inform subsequent qualitative phases.

This section outlines the step-by-step analysis procedures followed in SPSS for the survey questions, including scale reliability testing, descriptive statistics, and moderated regression analysis.

Step 1: Data Entry and Preparation

After the data collection was completed, the data were first exported from Google Forms into Microsoft Excel and cleaned for consistency. Each scale’s items were clearly labeled (e.g., “EH”, “OP”, “SP”), then imported into SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 29). The dataset was examined for completeness, and all 30 cases were confirmed to be valid, with no missing values or irregularities.

Data cleaning is a foundational step in quantitative research, it is imperative to ensure the accuracy and reliability of subsequent statistical analyses (Field, 2018). This included validating scale ranges and identifying potential outliers.

Step 2: Reliability Analysis

To make sure of the internal consistency of the scales, Cronbach's Alpha was computed for each scale, this measure assesses the degree to which items in a scale are correlated reliable (Nunnally, 1978). The analysis was conducted in SPSS under the Reliability Analysis function for each scale. Each scale achieved a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7 indicating that each scale is acceptable to excellent reliability and had sufficient internal consistency for further analysis. This was done in SPSS by using the Compute Variable function to calculate the average score for each scale per respondent.

Step 3: Scale Computation

To accurately complete the regression analysis, mean scores (composite averages) for each scale were calculated using the Compute Variable function in SPSS, resulting in:

- EH_average
- OP_average
- SP_average

This was done in SPSS by using the Compute Variable function to calculate the average score for each scale per respondent. The use of composite scores is a standard approach in multivariate analysis, allowing parsimonious modeling and reducing multicollinearity while maintaining construct validity (Hair et al., 2012).

A product interaction term EHxOP was also calculated for use in the moderated regression analysis (step 5 in the analysis process). This approach follows recommendations by Baron and Kenny (1986) and Hayes (2018) for testing moderation effects in linear regression models. The interaction term shows the extent to which the effect of environmental hostility on strategic posture depends on the level of internal organizational practices.

Step 4: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics, including both the arithmetic mean (average) and medians, were calculated for each scale to understand the distribution of responses in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the data distribution. The inclusion of the median allows for a stronger representation

of central tendency, particularly in cases where the data may be skewed or contain outliers (Wilcox, 2012). By using both measures this research offers a clearer understanding of the variables' behavior before proceeding with the inferential analysis. However, for the moderated regression analysis the arithmetic mean was used for centering predictor variables and calculating interaction terms. This approach aligns with common statistical practices, as mean-centering helps in reducing multicollinearity and facilitates interpretation of regression coefficients (Aiken & West, 1991; Hayes, 2018). However, it should be noted that as a general best practice, the use of the median is preferred over the mean when the dataset contains extreme values or is significantly skewed, as the median is less sensitive to the presence of outliers, making it a more reliable indicator of central tendency in skewed distributions or datasets that contain extreme values. (Field, 2018). As such, to assess the central tendency and to detect any potential distortions caused by extreme responses in this study, both the mean and median were calculated during preliminary data screening. And upon review, no substantial outliers or skewed distributions were identified. Therefore, the mean was deemed appropriate for use in the subsequent statistical analyses, including the moderated regression. Nonetheless, the decision to compare both measures reflects a precautionary measure to confirm the validity and interpretability of the results under different data conditions.

Overall, the descriptives procedure in SPSS produced key metrics including the arithmetic medians, mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values for EH, OP, and SP. This step provided an essential summary of the dataset, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of how respondents scored on each scale and guiding the interpretation of regression findings.

Step 5: Moderated Regression Analysis (Main Analysis)

The decision to conduct a moderated regression analysis follows the methodological approach originally used by Covin and Slevin (1989), whose survey instrument served as the foundation for this study's quantitative approach. Their work highlights the interaction between internal organizational characteristics and external environmental conditions in shaping strategic posture, justifying the inclusion of an interaction term in the model (Covin & Slevin, 1989).

Furthermore, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is often recommended for small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2017), this study employed moderated regression analysis to explore the interaction effects between Environmental Hostility (EH), Organizational Practices (OPS), and Strategic Posture (SPS). The decision was based on the

specific aims of the research, the scale structure, and the theoretical focus on moderation rather than latent variable modeling. The sample size for the quantitative component was 30 entrepreneurs, which is admittedly limited for regression-based statistical inference. However, the study prioritized theory-driven hypothesis testing rather than complex model estimation. Moderated regression remains a widely accepted method in strategic management and entrepreneurship research as mentioned by Aiken and West's research (1991, as cited in Aguinis, Edwards, & Bradley, 2017), even when the sample size is modest, provided that assumptions are reasonably met and results are interpreted with appropriate caution.

Moreover, all variables used in the analysis were measured using validated and reliable composite scales, not latent constructs requiring factor loadings or measurement models. This further supported the suitability of regression analysis over PLS-SEM, which is typically more advantageous when latent variables and complex path modeling are involved.

Nevertheless, the limitations of using moderated regression with a small sample size are fully acknowledged. The statistical power is reduced, and the generalizability of the results is limited. Future studies with larger sample sizes may benefit from adopting PLS-SEM to capture more nuanced relationships and to test the robustness of the findings reported here.

The moderated regression analysis was conducted using SPSS's Linear Regression function to test whether the interaction between environmental hostility (EH) and organizational practices (OP) had a significant effect on strategic posture (SP). Variables Entered:

- Independent Variables: EH_average, OP_average
- Interaction Term: EHxOP
- Dependent Variable: SP_average

The purpose of this analysis was to determine whether:

- Environmental hostility (EH) significantly predicts strategic posture (SP).
- Organizational practices (OP) independently contribute to strategic posture (SP).
- The interaction between EH and OP significantly moderates this relationship.

This form of analysis has proven to be widely used in entrepreneurship studies in effort to identify direct relationships and conditional effects that reflect more complex dynamics (Zahra & Covin, 1995; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005), it further helps in evaluating the statistical significance, model fit (R^2), and standardized coefficients in order to finally determine the strength and direction of these effects for these research purposes.

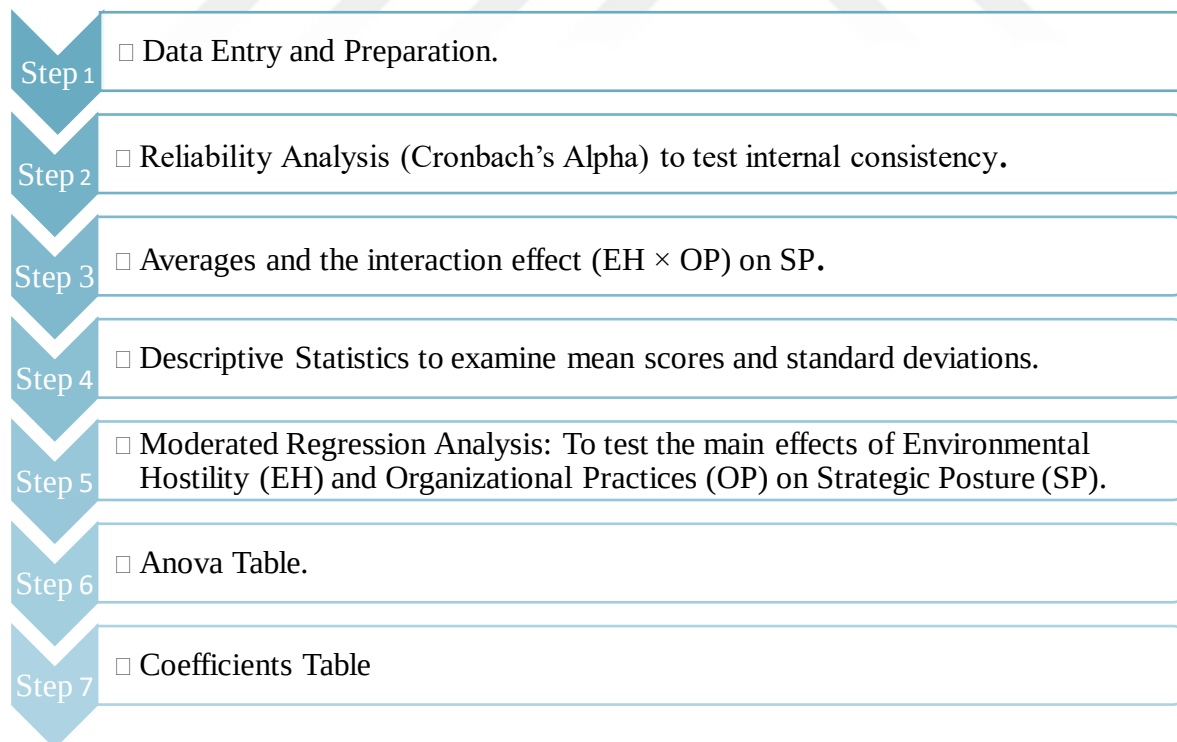
Step 6: ANOVA Table:

As part of the modern regression analysis output, SPSS generates an ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) table. This table tests whether the overall regression model is statistically significant, in other words, whether the combination of our three predictors (EH, OP, and their interaction) explains a meaningful amount of variance in the outcome variable (SP).

Step 7: Coefficients Table- 1Interpreting the Predictors:

A coefficients table was carried out to examine each predictor's effect. This is a crucial step and it helped in understanding, not only whether EH and OP matter, but also how they work together; which is a key insight in strategic entrepreneurship research.

Table 3.2: Summary of the Steps Included in the Quantitative Approach:



3.5.2 Qualitative Analysis – Thematic Approach

The qualitative aspect of this study involved semi-structured interviews with five diaspora entrepreneurs. In line with Guest et al. (2006), a small sample size of five participants was deemed appropriate for this study, as the interviews provided rich, in-depth data on entrepreneurial experiences. The goal of this research was not statistical generalization, but analytical depth and thematic insight, which can be achieved with fewer cases in qualitative inquiry. These interviews explored participants' background, startup phases, strategic behaviors, challenges and risk management and most importantly their advice for aspiring entrepreneurs. The goal was to discover how individual narratives and strategic decisions in different contextual, cultural, and institutional environments can lead to success in a business venture.

Participants were purposefully selected for their experience in operating entrepreneurial ventures in a host country different from their country of origin, showcased in detail previously in the chapter; this selection aimed to capture diverse cultural, geographic, and economic perspectives within diaspora entrepreneurship.

Step 1: Data Collection and Transcription

Each interview lasted between 40 and 90 minutes, conducted via online platforms (Zoom, Google Meet & WhatsApp). Interviews were audio recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed verbatim using different AI transcription tools. One interview conducted in Arabic was fully transcribed and translated into English to make sure of analytic consistency. The data were all proofread and reorganized to ensure that every word was transcribed accurately before the coding process. Furthermore, all participants gave verbal consent before starting the recording process.

Step 2: Data Analysis Using MAXQDA

Data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis, following the six-phase process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). MAXQDA Analytics Pro was used as the central tool for organizing, coding, summarizing, and visualizing qualitative data. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach, the step-by-step procedure is detailed below:

1. Familiarization with the data through repeated readings of transcripts:

After transcription, all interviews were reviewed multiple times to ensure accuracy in the data. Initial notes and impressions were recorded to support the later coding process.

2. Coding and Code System Development

Using MAXQDA, data were open-coded line by line. A total of six main codes were developed, each having multiple subcodes that showed specific dimensions of entrepreneurial strategy and experience. These codes were mainly extracted from the interview content while keeping this study's main aim a focal point.

The analysis produced five major themes (main codes), each with their own sub-codes. The final coding framework was as follows:

- 1. Introduction (contextual framing):** Name/ Nationality/ Location, Business Overview, Entrepreneur's Role, Evolution of Business, Motivation to Start.
- 2. Startup Stage Strategies:** Initial steps, Resources, Strategic planning, First customers, Early challenges.
- 3. Current Strategies & Growth:** Current main strategy, Pivoting, Risk Management.
- 4. Current Challenges & Risk Management:** Current Challenges, Response Strategies.
- 5. Lessons Learned:** Early Mistakes, What They Would Do Differently.
- 6. Advice for Aspiring Entrepreneurs:** Start-up advice, Traits for Success, Final Reflections.

Each subcode was applied to segments across all five interviews, capturing the nuanced ways each entrepreneur experienced and interpreted entrepreneurial practice.

Each interview transcript was manually coded. Summaries were developed for each sub-code per interview using MAXQDA's Summary Grid, and cross-case memos were written for every sub-code to identify patterns, differences, and insights.

It should be noted that the main code of: Introduction, with the subcodes of: (Name/ Nationality/ Location, Business overview & Entrepreneur's role) were all efficiently included in the MAXQDA

framework only to provide contextual background for the purposes of this research but they are not part of the thematic analysis that was conducted for the qualitative data.

These sub-codes were not analyzed for code co-occurrence or meaning patterns, as they serve solely for framing the interviews and understanding participant demographics. Their exclusion from deeper analysis is consistent with qualitative practices that distinguish between descriptive and analytic coding, however, detailed information on each participant's background has already been provided in the "Interview and Participant" section of this thesis.

This approach aligns with qualitative research practices that distinguish between analytic codes and contextual data used to support transparency and case understanding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

3. Summary Grid Writing (Per Subcode Per Interview)

After coding, the MAXQDA Summary Grid function was used to write a short analytical summary of each subcode across all five interviewees. This grid provided a structured, cross-case overview and helped the comparison of how themes were expressed across different individuals.

Each summary synthesized the key points, quotes, and interpretations related to each subcode within a single interview, maintaining participant-level granularity.

4. Memo Writing (Per Subcode Per Interview)

In a separate layer of analysis, analytic memos were created for each subcode. These memos focused on cross-case synthesis by identifying:

- An overview of reflections
- Common patterns and recurring ideas across participants
- Similarities and differences across interviews
- Quotes by each interviewee.
- Researcher interpretations and reflections.

These memos were important for the interpretive foundation in developing broader thematic findings and for integrating qualitative data with quantitative results in the next chapter.

5. Code Patterns and Frequency Analysis

To deepen the analysis, the Simple Code Patterns tool in MAXQDA was used. This tool helped in exploring:

- Which codes co-occurred most frequently
- Which codes appeared in the same documents or segments
- How codes were distributed across interviews (by document and by coded segment)

This process helped visualize how themes overlapped, and to what extent they were shared across participants as shown in the figure below:

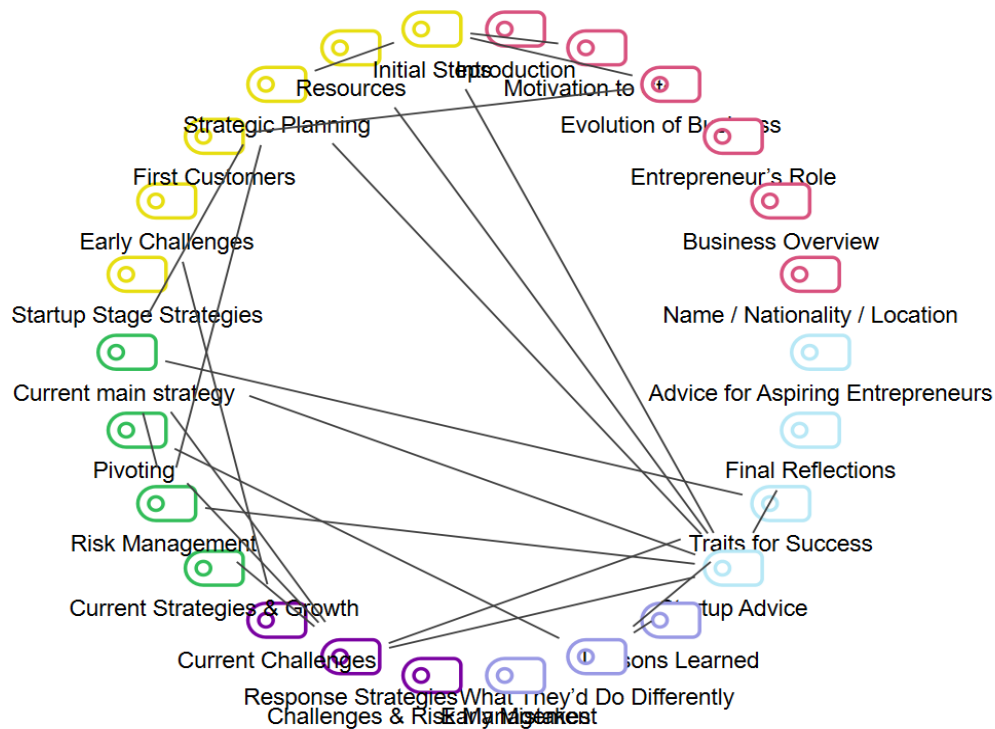


Figure 3.3: Code Co-Occurrence Model (Code Intersection)

6. Code Co-Occurrence Model

Figure 1 represents a code co-occurrence model, which shows how various themes were identified in the qualitative interview data and how they are interrelated. Each colored node represents a main code and sub-code applied during the inductive coding process. The lines (arrows) connecting these nodes indicate co-occurrences instances where two codes were applied to the same or overlapping text segments during the thematic analysis.

A. Color Coding of Themes

The colors are used to visually group related thematic areas:

- **Pink Nodes:** This color represents the main code of Introduction and its following sub-codes: Name/ Nationality/Location, Business Overview, Entrepreneur's Role, Evolution of Business, Motivation to Start,
- **Yellow Nodes:** This color represents the main code of Initial Steps and its following sub-codes: Start-Up Strategies, Early Challenges, First Customers, Strategic Planning and Resources.
- **Green Nodes:** This color represents the main code of Current Strategies & Growth and its following sub-codes: Current Main Strategy, Pivoting and Risk Management.
- **Purple Nodes:** This color represents the main code of Challenges and Risk Management and its following sub-codes: Current Challenges and Response Strategies, Risk Management). These codes often overlap with others, reflecting their relevance across various aspects of the entrepreneurial journey.
- **Lavendar Nodes:** This color represents the main code of Lessons Learned and its following sub-codes: Early Mistakes and What They Would Do Differently
- **Blue Nodes:** This color represents the main code of Advice for Aspiring Entrepreneurs and its following sub-codes: Start-up advice, Traits for Success, Final Reflections.

B. Arrows and Connections

The arrows (or connecting lines) shown in the figure above represent the code intersections, which means that two codes were frequently applied to the same portion of text throughout all 5 interviews. For example:

- A line between Current Challenges and Response Strategies suggests that many participants discussed challenges alongside how they managed them.
- The connection between Advice for Aspiring Entrepreneurs and Traits for Success implies that these themes often appeared together when participants reflected on what qualities are they believe are essential for entrepreneurial success.
- E.g. The lines that are connecting Strategic Planning sub-code (yellow) with the sub-code Traits for Success (blue) suggests that the participants often linked their startup experiences and strategies with the advice or lessons they shared later in the interview for aspiring entrepreneurs.

This thorough network of interrelated codes highlights the complexity of entrepreneurial narratives and demonstrates that the key themes, such as Challenges & Risk Management, Current Strategies & Growth, and Lessons Learned etc., are deeply interconnected. This visual structure helps in validating the thematic saturation and further supports the richness of the qualitative data and analysis.

7. Exporting and Documenting

All summaries, memos, and code pattern tables were exported as structured reports. This included:

- Summary Grid exports (per subcode, per participant)
- Subcode memos
- Simple and complex code pattern tables (by document and by segment)

These exports were the main basis for this research's findings in the next chapter and for ensuring auditability and transparency of the qualitative analysis process (Nowell et al., 2017).

8. Ensuring Trustworthiness

To ensure the credibility and dependability of the data, the study followed the best practices outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1994):

- Triangulation: Using multiple sources of data (quantitative and qualitative data) to support interpretations.
- Thick Description: The key findings from the interviews were supported by detailed participant quotes and summaries.
- Audit Trail: All of the analyzing, coding decisions, memos, and summary steps were recorded and exported for transparency.
- Reflexivity: Maintained self-awareness by the researcher through analytic journaling all throughout the process.

9. Bias Reduction and Limitations

To mitigate bias, the researcher avoided interviewing family members, close friends, or known business partners. Participants were selected based on objective entrepreneurial status, ensuring professional distance and diverse perspectives.

However, the study is not without limitations. The small qualitative sample size restricts generalizability. Additionally, cross-sectional survey data does not account for long-term strategic evolution. Finally, while MAXQDA supported rich coding and visualization, manual interpretation of patterns carries the risk of researcher subjectivity, mitigated by memoing and systematic coding frameworks.

3.6 Integration Analysis:

Once both the qualitative and quantitative analyses were completed independently, the results were brought together in an integrated discussion. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data was designed to offer a broad, contextual understanding of entrepreneurial behavior, while keeping the qualitative analysis as the central focus of this thesis. The purpose of integrating the two datasets was to allow the quantitative data to act as a contextual backdrop that supports the deeper insights from interviews.

While the quantitative survey helped in capturing the general trends in how international entrepreneurs operate, particularly regarding their responses to environmental hostility, organizational practices, and strategic posture; the qualitative interviews were the primary source of rich, detailed insight for this research. They provided nuanced understanding of entrepreneurs' strategies, their start-up experiences, the challenges they faced, and how they navigated and managed risk and uncertainty starting at their start-up phase until the current stable and successful

phase of their respective companies. This reflects an exploratory, qualitative-dominant approach to integration, where qualitative data drives interpretation and the quantitative data offers supplemental orientation (Morse, 2010; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The integration analysis mainly aimed to:

- Support interpretation of the qualitative findings by offering a general sense of the broader entrepreneurial context.
- Ensure coherence between participants lived experiences and general patterns of strategic behavior.
- Extract actionable lessons for aspiring entrepreneurs based on both broad tendencies and deep individual stories of successful entrepreneurs.

This form of integration is aligned with what Sandelowski (2003) and Fetters, Curry, & Creswell (2013) describe as a “connective” or “supportive integration”, where one dataset (qualitative) leads, and the other (quantitative) plays a secondary, contextualizing role.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This research was reviewed and approved by Yalova university’s ethics committee. The ethical compliance was ensured by:

- Securing informed verbal consent from all participants.
- Protecting participant anonymity using pseudonyms or general descriptors.
- Avoiding video recording to respect privacy.
- Storing recordings and transcripts securely.

Participants were informed that their contributions were voluntary, confidential, and could be withdrawn at any point.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and key findings from the mixed-methods approach adopted in this study. The quantitative results, that are based on the distributed survey data and analyzed through statistical methods, offer a broad overview of how diverse international entrepreneurs perceive their environments, manage internal organizational practices, and how they conduct their strategic posture within their respective environments. Complementing the quantitative process, the qualitative findings, that are drawn from in-depth interviews, provide rich contextual insights into the lived experiences, perceptions, and decision-making processes of diaspora entrepreneurs.

By combining these two data sources, the integrated analysis seeks to provide a deep understanding and interpretation of entrepreneurial entrepreneurs' strategic behaviors. This approach elaborates on the survey findings as well as helps uncovering nuanced complexities that the quantitative data alone cannot fully capture. The chapter first presents the quantitative results, followed by the qualitative findings, and concludes with an integrated analysis that synthesizes both research approaches to address the main research objectives.

4.2 Quantitative Results

The main aim of the quantitative results from the survey data that were analyzed using IBM SPSS is to have a general understanding of how international entrepreneurs operate within their business environments, and how environmental hostility and organizational practices influence their strategic posture, as well as understanding how these entrepreneurs respond strategically to their context and business environments. The quantitative analysis focuses on three key scales: Environmental Hostility (EH), Organizational Practices (OP), and Strategic Posture (SP). The data was analyzed by using reliability tests, descriptive statistics, and moderated regression analyses, which is consistent with the survey design adapted from Covin and Slevin's (1989) foundational work on entrepreneurial strategy.

4.2.1 Reliability Analysis Results

The aim of this analysis is to ensure the *validity and consistency* of the three main measurement scales, Environmental Hostility (EH), Organizational Practices (OP), and Strategic Posture (SP), Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were calculated. The reliability results are as follows:

Table 4.1: Reliability Statistics for Survey Scales

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Number of Items	Interpretation
Environmental Hostility (EH)	0.888	5	Excellent Reliability
Organizational Practices (OP)	0.797	3	Acceptable Reliability
Strategic Posture (SP)	0.789	8	Acceptable Reliability

- A Cronbach's Alpha (α) value above 0.70 is generally considered acceptable for research (Hair et al., 2019).
- The EH scale showed high consistency ($\alpha = 0.888$), indicating strong reliability.
- Both OP and SP scales also showed acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.797$ and 0.789 respectively).

Cronbach's alpha (α) is a measure of internal consistency reliability. It indicates how well the items within a scale measure the same underlying concept. Values range from 0 to 1, with $\alpha \geq 0.70$ considered acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Here, all three scales show good reliability: Environmental Hostility at 0.888, Organizational Practices at 0.797, and Strategic Posture at 0.789. This suggests that the survey questions coherently measure each scale, which provides enough confidence that the resulting data accurately reflect the intended variables. For this research, establishing reliability was critical because it ensures that the subsequent analyses of relationships between these scales are based on consistent measurement, which is crucial when studying strategic entrepreneurship in real-world environments (Covin & Slevin, 1989).

4.2.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis was chosen for the purpose of summarizing the general trends in the data. Both arithmetic medians and means were calculated for each scale to understand the distribution of responses. The comparison between these values suggests that the data distribution is relatively symmetrical, as the means and medians do not show substantial differences. Reporting both measures ensures transparency and accounts for any potential skewness in the sample (Kim, 2013). Following the descriptive analysis, moderated regression analysis was conducted using mean-centered variables. This technique is widely recommended in the literature because it improves model estimation and interpretation of interaction effects (Hayes, 2018). Therefore, while the median was included in the descriptive stage to enrich understanding of the data, the mean remains the preferred measure for regression analysis due to its mathematical properties and interpretability in this context. The results are illustrated in the table below:

Table 4.2.2: Descriptive Statistics of the Main Variables

Variables	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
EH	30	1.60	6.20	4	4.0467	1.36426
OP	30	1.67	7.00	5	5.1778	1.57259
SP	30	2.13	6.63	5	4.4250	1.18112
Valid Numbers (Listwise)	30	-	-		-	-

The Median value of 4 for Environmental Hostility (EH) indicates that the entrepreneurs of this study perceive their external environments as moderately challenging but not extremely hostile. Organizational Practices (OP) showed a median of 5, which suggests that the entrepreneurs generally maintain strong internal operational capabilities to manage their businesses effectively. Similarly, the Strategic Posture (SP) median was 5, which reflects a proactive and well-defined strategic approach among the participants. These median values offer a clearer picture of the entrepreneurs' experiences and behaviors and reinforce the importance of both environmental perception and internal management when it comes to shaping strategic entrepreneurship practices.

This aligns with (e.g., Covin & Slevin, 2012; Lumpkin & Dess, 2001) research that emphasizes the importance of environmental factors and organizational capabilities in entrepreneurial success. Moreover, the use of medians supports a more accurate interpretation of the survey data by minimizing some of the influence of possible extreme responses, which improves the reliability of insights that guide the subsequent qualitative interviews phase of this study.

The Mean represents the average response on the 7-point Likert scale for each variable, with higher scores indicating stronger agreement or intensity. The mean score for Environmental Hostility showed an average of 4.046, which suggests a moderate perception of challenging external environments among the participants. Organizational Practices averaged at 5.017, indicating that the entrepreneurs generally report effective internal practices. And Strategic Posture scored 4.42, which indicates a moderate to high level of proactive strategic behavior.

The Standard Deviation (SD) shows the variation in responses. The results, as shown in table 4.1.2 of an SD around 1 indicates reasonable diversity in perceptions and behaviors, which is typical in real-world samples, as it reflects different lived experiences among international entrepreneurs.

Together these results provide important insights to help in setting the stage for analyzing how these variables interact and influence entrepreneurial strategy which effectively highlights the complex interplay between external pressures and internal responses (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). In summary, these results show that the entrepreneurs in the sample, on average, perceived a moderately high level of organizational practices and strategic posture, while their perception of environmental hostility varied more widely. The standard deviations scores further suggest some diversity among respondents, especially in how they experience environmental challenges.

4.2.3 Moderated Regression Analysis (Main Analysis)

Moderated regression analysis was used to examine whether the relationship between environmental hostility and strategic posture is influenced by organizational practices. This method was specifically chosen to align with the analytical approach used in the original study by Covin and Slevin (1989), where interaction terms were included to test moderation effects, which aligns with this research's purposes as well. The analysis involved three predictors:

- Independent Variables: EH_average, OP_average
- Interaction Term: EHxOP (calculated by multiplying the EH and OP average)
- Dependent Variable: SP_average

4.2.3.1 Model Summary

The model summary provides a statistical overview of how well the independent variables and their interaction explain the variance in the dependent variable, Strategic Posture (SP). By analyzing key indicators such as R-squared, adjusted R-squared, and the significance of the model, this summary offers a foundational understanding of the model's explanatory power before moving into a detailed interpretation of the regression coefficients.

Table 4.2.3.1: Model Summary for the Moderate Regression Analysis Predictors

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.618a	0.3815	0.3101	0.98100

a. Predictors: (Constant), EHxOP, OP Average, EH Average.

The moderated regression equation used in this study is:

$$SP = \beta_0 + \beta_1(EH) + \beta_2(OP) + \beta_3(EH \times OP) + \varepsilon$$

SP = Strategic Posture (dependent variable)

EH = Environmental Hostility (independent variable)

OP = Organizational Practices (independent variable and moderator)

EH × OP = Interaction term between Environmental Hostility and Organizational Practices

β_0 = intercept (constant)

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = regression coefficients

ε = error term (residual)

This model examines how Environmental Hostility and Organizational Practices influence Strategic Posture, as well as whether Organizational Practices moderate the effect of Environmental Hostility on Strategic Posture.

As shown in Table 4.2.3.1 the *R value* reported a score of 0.618 indicating at a moderate to a strong positive correlation between the combination of predictors (EH, OP, and their interaction) and the outcome variable (SP). In practical terms, this suggests that there is a reasonably strong relationship between the environmental and organizational conditions faced by entrepreneurs and their strategic responses (Cohen, 1988).

The results of the *R Square value* of 0.3815 shows that approximately 38.2% of the variation in strategic posture is explained by the model. This implies that more than one-third of the changes in entrepreneurs' strategic posture are influenced by the combined effects of EH, OP, and their interaction. This is a meaningful proportion, especially considering the complexity of entrepreneurial behavior and its sensitivity to both internal and external influences (Dess, Lumpkin & Covin, 1997).

The *Adjusted R Square*, was carried out to correct for potential inflation due to multiple predictors, has scored slightly lower at 0.3101, which indicates that even after accounting for the number of predictors, the model still explains about 31% of the variability in strategic posture. supporting the reliability of the regression model and confirming that the results are not due to chance or overfitting.

Finally, the *Standard Error of the Estimate* scored at 0.98100, was carried out to provide an estimate of how much the predicted SP scores vary from the actual scores. The smaller standard error suggests a precise model and while the results suggest some room for error, it still indicates that the model provides a reasonably accurate fit to the data (Field, A. 2013).

These results provide important preliminary statistical support for the conceptual assumption that both external pressures (such as environmental hostility) and internal responses (such as organizational practices) contribute meaningfully to how international entrepreneurs shape their strategic behavior, which is a dynamic central to the theory of strategic entrepreneurship (Ireland, Hitt & Sirmon, 2003).

4.2.3.2 ANOVA

As part of moderated regression analysis, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) table plays a central role as it tests the overall significance of the regression model. In other words, it helps in assessing

whether the model built explains enough of the variation in entrepreneurial strategic behavior to be considered useful and statistically valid.

Table 4.2.3.2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA^a) for Model Predictors

Model	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.434	3	5.145	5.346	.005 ^b
	Residual	25.021	26	0.962	-	-
	Total	40.456	29	-	-	-

a. Dependent Variable: SP Average

b. Predictors: (Constant), EHxOP, OP Average, EH Average

The importance of the ANOVA test stems from its ability to indicate whether the entire model is statistically better at predicting the outcome than a model with no predictors at all (Field, 2018). In the context of this research, this means examining whether the external environment and internal practices, when considered together, help us understand how entrepreneurs behave strategically in challenging environments.

Sum of Squares (SS):

The Sum of Squares shows how much of the total variation in strategic posture is explained by the model versus what remains unexplained.

- Regression SS = 15.434: This result tells us that 15.434 units of the total variation in entrepreneurs' strategic behavior can be explained by the combination of EH, OP, and their interaction. This is the portion our model accounts for.
- Residual SS = 25.021: This is the variation that remains unexplained, potentially due to other factors outside the model.
- Total SS = 40.456: This is the overall variability in the dependent variable. The sum of the explained (regression) and unexplained (residual) scores equals this total.

In essence, the predictors explain approximately 38% of the variation in strategic posture ($15.434 \div 40.456$), which remains consistent with the R^2 value of 0.3815 reported in the model summary.

Degrees of Freedom (df)

The Degrees of Freedom (df) refer to how many independent values are involved in calculating the sums of squares.

- Regression df = 3: This reflects the number of predictors in the model; EH, OP, and their interaction.
- Residual df = 26: This is calculated as the total number of observations ($n = 30$) minus the number of predictors (3) and the constant (1).
- Total df = 29: This is simply $n - 1$.

Understanding degrees of freedom is important because it helps determine the Mean Square, which averages the sum of squares per predictor or residual error.

Mean Squares (MS)

This analysis was carried out to show the average variability explained or unexplained:

- Regression MS = 5.145: This is the average explained variance for each predictor, calculated as Regression SS divided by Regression df ($15.434 \div 3$).
- Residual MS = 0.962: This is the average unexplained variance for each data point, calculated as Residual SS divided by Residual df ($25.021 \div 26$).
- No Total MS is observed because the total mean square does not contribute to interpreting model fit; it simply aggregates both regression and residual components.

F-statistic

- $F = 5.346$: The F-value is a ratio of the model variance to the error variance ($5.145 \div 0.962$). A larger F indicates that the model performs better than chance. This resulting value indicates that the predictors, as a set, significantly improve our ability to explain strategic posture compared to a model without them.

Significance Value (Sig.)

- Sig. = 0.005: This is the p-value, and it is one of the most crucial results in this analysis. A p-value below 0.05 means the model is statistically significant, and in this case this result is significant at the $p = .005$ level, which is well below the 0.05 threshold, further indicating

a high level of confidence that the predictors (EH, OP, and their interaction) showing a that the model is accurate.

This result confirms that the interaction between internal practices (OP) and external pressures (EH) has real explanatory power. In other words, entrepreneurs' strategic behavior is not random, it is influenced by how they perceive their environment and how they manage their operations. The t-values, presented in the coefficients table (i.e. Table 4.2.3.3), supports this interpretation by demonstrating that each variable, EH, OP, and their interaction, makes a statistically significant individual contribution to predicting the strategic posture (SP). This suggests that both internal and external factors influence how strategic decisions are made, reinforcing the model's relevance and explanatory strength.

Overall, the ANOVA results strongly support the foundation of this study. The statistically significant result ($p = .005$) offers clear evidence that the independent. Environmental Hostility, Organizational Practices, and their interaction, explain meaningful variation in the way international entrepreneurs shape their strategic posture. This finding aligns with Kiss, Danis, and Cavusgil (2012) research where it was argued that internal entrepreneurial orientation gains relevance only when interpreted in light of external challenges. The results validate the decision to include these variables and provide a strong quantitative foundation for the subsequent qualitative phase, where deeper insights into entrepreneurial decision-making is explored.

4.2.3.3 Coefficients

A coefficients table was carried out to examine each predictor's effect as is it a crucial step and it helped in understanding whether EH and OP matter and how they work together; which is a key insight in strategic entrepreneurship research. The results are shown in the table below:

Table 4.2.3.3: Regression Coefficients^a for EH, OP, and Their Interaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients
-------	--------------------------------	------------------------------

1		B	Standard Error	Beta	t	Sig.
	Constant	-1.108	1.540		-0.179	0.479
	EH	1.083	0.405	1.251	2.672	0.013
	Average					
	OP	1.044	0.295	1.391	3.546	0.002
	Average					
	EHxOP	-0.202	0.077	-1.589	-2.607	0.015

a. Dependent Variable: SP Average

- *Environmental Hostility Average (EH)*: This result ($B = 1.083$, $p = 0.013$) is positive and significant coefficient at suggesting that as perceived hostility in the environment increases, entrepreneurs tend to adopt a more aggressive strategic posture.
- *Organizational Practices (OP)* is also, positively and significantly related to SP ($B = 1.044$, $p = 0.002$), indicating that structured and adaptive organizational practices support a stronger strategic posture.
- *Interaction Effect ($EH \times OP$)*: The results, as shown in Table 4.1.3.3 is negative and indicating significant coefficient ($B = -0.202$, $p = 0.015$) implies that OP moderates the relationship between EH and SP. Specifically, the positive effect of EH on SP is reduced when OP is high suggesting that while hostile environments can drive entrepreneurs to take stronger strategic actions, having strong internal practices can buffer or adjust that influence.
- β (*Standardized Coefficients*) allows for comparing the relative influence of variables. Here, OP ($\beta = 1.391$) is the strongest predictor.
- *Sig. (p-value)*: All three predictors are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that each one contributes uniquely to predicting SP.

Overall, the results reveal that both the Organizational Practices (OP) and the interaction term ($EH \times OP$) significantly predicted Strategic Posture, while Environmental Hostility (EH) alone did not show a statistically significant effect. This means that how entrepreneurs internally manage and structure their businesses, especially when combined with how they perceive external threats,

plays a key role in shaping their strategic posture. These results directly support the aim of the study which is to understand how different factors, such as: internal practices and external environments, influence the strategic decisions of international entrepreneurs. It reinforces the idea that strategic entrepreneurship is not only reactive to the environment but it is also shaped by how well entrepreneurs align internal systems with external challenges (Ireland, Hitt, & Sirmon, 2003).

In summary, the quantitative findings suggest strong empirical support for the notion that strategic posture among international entrepreneurs is significantly influenced by both environmental and organizational factors, particularly through their interaction. The statistically significant results of the moderated regression model, supported by the ANOVA and coefficient tables, indicate that entrepreneurs who effectively align internal practices with external hostility are more likely to adopt proactive and innovative strategic postures. And this final outcome fulfills the initial goal of the survey: to build a foundational understanding of how entrepreneurs operate strategically in challenging environments. These insights not only validate the theoretical links in strategic entrepreneurship literature (e.g., Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Teece et al., 2016) but they also provide a strong, data-driven rationale for the themes explored further in the qualitative phase, where the experiences behind these patterns will be unpacked in greater depth to support aspiring entrepreneurs.

4.3 Quantitative Findings

The quantitative phase of this research, built around a structured survey, originally developed by Covin and Slevin (1989) to explore how a company's environment and internal practices influence its overall strategy. Using the Covin and Slevin (1989)'s model provided a clear structure for understanding how entrepreneurs think and act in different situations. Interestingly, some results from this study showed similarities to the original findings; particularly in how a challenging environment can encourage more proactive and risk-taking behavior among entrepreneurs, which supports the idea that tough conditions often push entrepreneurs to think more strategically. The following part of this research will discuss findings from the survey analysis and explains their relevance to the study's core objective which is to understand how international entrepreneurs navigate environmental challenges, internal practices, and strategic postures.

Building on the Results chapter, that presented the output of the reliability checks, descriptive statistics and moderated regression analysis, this section focuses on what these results mean for the main aim of this research and how they help in answering the research questions. While the quantitative results offer generalizable patterns, they also serve as a foundation for the qualitative interviews and the integrated discussion that follows in the next section.

4.3.1 Strategic Posture is Significantly Influenced by Environmental Hostility and Organizational Practices

The regression model demonstrated that environmental hostility (EH) and organizational practices (OP), and their interaction, significantly influence the strategic posture (SP) of international entrepreneurs. This means that how entrepreneurs perceive external challenges and structure their business internally, significantly affects the way they make strategic decisions within their respective ventures. In this sense, the data support the idea that uncertainty is not merely a constraint but often a trigger for strategic behavior. Entrepreneurs in hostile environments appeared more likely to engage in bold actions; suggesting that instability can fuel creativity and strategic aggressiveness, provided the business has the internal capacity to respond effectively. This aligns with prior research emphasizing the need for agility and adaptability in unstable environments (Kreiser et al., 2013). Entrepreneurs tend to adopt more aggressive or proactive strategies when they perceive their environment as highly competitive or threatening, especially if their organizations are internally well-structured to support such moves, described in Zhang and Bruning (2011) found that organizational structures supporting decision autonomy and innovation increases a firm's ability to adapt strategically.

However, this finding is not without contradiction, as found in the previous research by Huang, Wellman & Ashford (2017) who argued that internal practices may be less relevant in highly volatile markets and suggested that even well-designed internal systems may not compensate for unpredictable external threats, especially in contexts of extreme instability.

4.3.2 Internal Practices Amplifying Strategic Capability

The second key insight centers on organizational practices, putting a light on internal practices such as planning, communication, delegation, and flexibility. The resulting data from the previously explained regression model show that the interaction between environmental hostility and organizational practices was statistically significant meaning that the effect of environmental hostility on strategic posture changes depending on how effective the organizational practices are. In essence, entrepreneurs who invested in structured, yet adaptable internal systems, were more capable of making bold strategic moves, especially when faced with external challenges.

Put differently, when entrepreneurs are in hostile environments, the presence of strong organizational practices (e.g., clear routines, planning, communication) helps them in responding more strategically. This finding is important for understanding real-world entrepreneurial behavior, showing that entrepreneurs do not simply react to their environment; they also draw upon internal systems to determine their next actions. This supports a growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of entrepreneurial infrastructure. For example, Lumpkin and Dess (2001) whose research supported this interaction effect, argued that strategy is not purely reactive but shaped by internal organizational dynamics. Similarly, Baron and Tang (2011) found that emotionally resilient entrepreneurs with strong operational routines are better equipped to navigate uncertain environments within their ventures. This outcome contrast with to that of Miller (2015) who cautions against over-reliance on internal structures, arguing that they may hinder innovation in rapidly changing markets.

This layered insight is especially important for understanding international and diaspora entrepreneurship, where entrepreneurs often face volatile markets and need strong internal coordination to manage regulatory, cultural, and other complexities.

4.3.3 Practical Insights for Aspiring Entrepreneurs

Another finding is that the survey results are reassuring since they confirm that both the external business environment and internal organizational capabilities play a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial strategies. For aspiring entrepreneurs, this means that success may not depend solely on simply finding a market opportunity or reacting to competition. Instead, a part of a ventures success can depend on developing effective internal practices, such as good

communication systems, staff coordination, and planning routines, these practices can give them a strategic edge when facing challenges. This study's survey data confirms and supports the idea that internal readiness empowers entrepreneurs to make strategic and proactive, rather than reactive, decisions (Hakeem, 2023).

4.3.4 Implications for Qualitative Analysis and Interview Design

The quantitative findings guided the structure and development of the semi-structured interview questions used in the qualitative phase. For example, because the data revealed a strong interaction between environmental hostility and organizational practices, the interview questions explored how entrepreneurs perceived external challenges and how their companies responded internally. This allowed the qualitative analysis to further explore the lived experiences of entrepreneurs, such as how they adjusted their strategies and operations, changed suppliers, or managed remote teams under pressure.

4.3.5 Conclusion

Overall, the findings from the survey successfully supports the main idea that strategic entrepreneurship is driven both by external and internal factors. It can therefore be assumed that while the environment presents challenges, it is the entrepreneur's ability to structure and utilize internal resources that determines how effectively they respond to any challenge. These findings align with the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which argues that sustained competitive advantage stems from the entrepreneur's ability to effectively manage and leverage valuable internal resources and capabilities (Kellermanns et al., 2016). These insights are particularly valuable for aspiring entrepreneurs and contribute to a growing body of literature emphasizing the multidimensional nature of strategic decision-making.

4.4 Qualitative Results

This section presents the results of the qualitative analysis from five in-depth interviews with diaspora entrepreneurs from Lebanon, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkey, and Yemen, the analysis was conducted through thematic coding using MAXQDA. The results below are organized

according to the coding framework with providing some descriptive statistics (e.g., frequency and coverage where applicable), highlighting how frequently each theme occurred across interviews.

4.4.1 Overview of Coded Data

A total of 922 coded segments were identified across all interviews. These segments were categorized under six main thematic codes each with multiple subcodes. The distribution of codes across the five interviewees was relatively even, although some themes (e.g., Challenges and Risk Management and Advise for aspiring Entrepreneurs) were discussed more extensively.

Table 4.4.1: The Detailed Coded Segments of the Qualitative Analysis

Main Code	Subcodes	Total Coded Segments	Coverage Across Documents/ Interviews
Introduction	Name/ Nationality/ Location, Business Overview, Entrepreneur's Role, Evolution of Business, Motivation to Start.	61	100%
Start-Up Strategies	Initial steps. Resources, Strategic Planning, First Customers, Early Challenges.	127	100%
Current Strategies & Growth	Current Main Strategy, Pivoting, Risk Management	76	100%
Challenges & Risk Management	Current Challenges, Response Strategies	53	100%

Lessons Learned	Early Mistakes, What They Would Do Differently	39	100%
Advice for Aspiring Entrepreneurs	Stat-up Advice, Traits for Success, Final Reflections	114	100%
Total	-	922	100% Saturation

Note: All five interviews contributed to each main theme, reflecting thematic saturation and coherence in the dataset.

4.4.2 Main Code 1: Introduction

This code's main aim was to simply provide contextual background for all interviewees, and all five participants provided rich background information, revealing diverse stories and personal motivations behind their entrepreneurial journeys, including the participants' origins (which validated that they are all in fact diaspora entrepreneurs), reasons for migration, and the start of their business ideas as well as their roles in their ventures. A total of 61 coded segments were identified across all 5 interviews (100% coverage). These segments helped in providing important context for understanding the personal motivations and geopolitical influences behind each entrepreneurial journey.

Documents covered: 5/5 | Segment frequency: 15

4.4.3 Main Code 2: Start-Up Strategies

This code is the most strategically dense as it yielded 127 coded segments, with rich answers across all interviews. The most common subcode was Strategic Planning with a total of 39 segments. Subcodes such as Initial Steps and Early challenges also featured prominently.

- **Initial Steps (coded in 5/5 interviews):** Entrepreneurs discussed how they identified business ideas, secured licenses, and used prior experience at the start-up stage of their businesses. While each individual followed a unique path shaped by their background and industry, several common themes emerged across all five interviews. The most important

themes were: the extreme importance of starting small, strategic preparation, leveraging networks, and learning through experience during 3 months to-2 years before starting their venture.

- **Resources (coded in 5/5 interviews):** The theme of this code spans across financial, human, digital, and relational resources, which were leveraged at the early and growth stages of their respective ventures. Interestingly, despite operating in different industries, countries and contexts, all five entrepreneurs emphasized starting an entrepreneurial venture small, with a great emphasis on creativity, leveraging networks and technological tools e.g. as phones for advertising and accessible CRM apps for organizations, while gradually building up resources.
- **Strategic Planning (coded in 5/5 interviews):** Each entrepreneur described their startup stage strategic planning with a strong focus on marketing, networking, goal setting, and gradual growth. They emphasized the importance of preparation- having a complete brand framework, legal documents and operational business system ready before even starting. Understanding the market, building trust with clients, and managing partnerships carefully through legal agreements were also seen as essential. Although each entrepreneur used different approaches, they did share common themes of persistence and patience (even during failure and losses), clear quick planning and execution, and effective use of available resources.
- **First Customers (coded in 5/5 interviews):** This theme examines how the interviewees acquired their first customers during the startup phase of their businesses. While two entrepreneurs described initially targeting local communities and leveraging personal networks, two others used word-of-mouth and offering discounted services and the fifth one solely focused on digital marketing.
- **Early Challenges (coded in 5/5 interviews):** Each entrepreneur encountered a variety of early challenges which included partnership conflicts, financial losses due to lack of experience in their chosen field, multitasking pressures before they built a team, economic instability, client acquisition difficulties, and individually managing growing responsibilities. These challenges significantly influenced their strategic decisions and resilience during the startup phase.

Documents covered: 5/5 | Segment frequency: 127

4.4.4 Main Code 3: Current Strategies & Growth

This code explores the main strategies for scaling and keeping the success of the interviewee's businesses with a total of 76 coded segments. This is one of the most important areas to explore for this research as it gives us a direct insight into how successful entrepreneurs operate within their respective organizations.

- **Current Main Strategy (coded in 5/5 interviews):** This sub-code captures the main strategies entrepreneurs currently use to maintain and expand their businesses. Participants described many different approaches that emphasize employee management, brand building, market adaptation, digital marketing and operational control. Despite differences in sectors and countries, a shared commitment to quick responsiveness, focusing on customer retention and loyalty, and strategic/ smart decision making through consulting experts or relying on their past experiences, was clear across all cases.
- **Pivoting (coded in 5/5 interviews):** This code captures how entrepreneurs adapt and pivot their business strategies in response to internal limitations, external pressures, or market fluctuations. While each participant had a different approach to this code, the central theme across all interviews was strategic flexibility and agility, guided by resilience, specialization in their chosen field, cost control for their products, or a reevaluation of business scale and priorities.
- **Risk Management (coded in 5/5 interviews):** This subcode explores how entrepreneurs frequently manage risk as part of their current business strategies. Across all five interviews, participants showed a proactive, multi-layered approach to risk by combining emotional resilience and prioritizing having a cool head when dealing with challenges, strategic foresight, continuous and active market engagement and prediction, legal awareness, and financial pragmatism. Notably, emotional resilience and optimism were often reported as essential tools for enduring early turbulence, a theme echoed by Shepherd (2010), who emphasizes the psychological aspects of entrepreneurship during hardship. While their techniques vary, they all demonstrate a deep awareness of uncertainty as an inevitable part of entrepreneurship and a complete willingness to adapt accordingly.

Documents covered: 5/5 | Segment frequency: 76

4.4.5 Main Code 4: Challenges and Risk Management

This theme had a total of 53 coded segments. It covered many different areas including economic challenges, cultural, and legal challenges as well as the entrepreneurs' response strategies and personal resilience.

- **Current Challenges (coded in 5/5 interviews):** Each entrepreneur reported different external and internal challenges such as internal mindsets, operational management strategies, and external economic and competitive challenges. Their experiences reveal the overall complex and adaptive nature of the entrepreneurial practice, where we find personal values, business structure, and environmental conditions intersecting to shape risk exposure.
- **Response Strategies (coded in 5/5 interviews):** For this section the interviewees demonstrated diverse yet complementary approaches to managing business challenges and risks. A common view amongst interviewees was that emotional control was essential, they shared that in business one should have a cool head and not allowing emotions (e.g. impatience, anger, anxiety and over empathizing) to control any business decision; Surprisingly all of the interviewees also emphasized the importance of having and showing empathy for their clients. However, it was noted that they only advised empathy to understand their clients' point of view and their actual needs. Furthermore, they mentioned adaptability, gaining knowledge from several sources, strategic communication, and pragmatic financial management as their main response strategies. So, despite their different industries and contexts, all entrepreneurs emphasized resilience and proactive and quick problem-solving as essential strategies for sustaining and growing their businesses. Documents covered: 5/5 | Segment frequency: 53

4.4.6 Main Code 5: Lessons Learned

A total of 39 coded segments emerged under this theme. These codes showed individual reflections on past decisions and what would the participants do differently.

- **Early Mistakes (coded in 5/5 interviews):** This theme reveals a variety of common challenges and mistakes that the entrepreneurs faced in the initial phases of their ventures. These included errors like poor pricing, not hiring managers early enough, or trusting wrong collaborators. Moreover, these mistakes showed a wide range from emotional over-involvement to adopting a very stressful life style due to the early challenges of their businesses as well as micromanagement, operational oversights and confidence issues in starting different businesses that, in hindsight, would have thrived. Despite the diversity of their mistakes, a clear pattern emerges around the negative impact of emotional strain and lack of delegation.
- **What They Would Do Differently (coded in 5/5 interviews):** This sub-code captures reflective insights from the entrepreneurs about what they would change if they could restart their journey. The responses show a transition from emotionally reactive, solo, or poorly structured early practices to more strategic, disciplined, and balanced approaches. Interestingly, each interviewee emphasized the importance of failure in building a successful business. They all claimed that expecting and preparing for a certain margin of failure is essential. Each interviewee advised keeping the worst-case scenario in mind before making any decisions and being fully prepared for negative outcomes. They also stressed the importance of continuing the business despite setbacks (either by making minor tweaks to their strategy or completely discontinuing it and pivoting to another direction). Across interviews, a notable emerged valuing structure, delegation and hiring a team from the very early stages to understand the ins and outs of their business. They emphasized, professionalism when dealing with employees and planning of every minor and major decisions. However, they advised against over-planning and sitting on an idea for a long time. Health, and quality of products were also highlighted as priorities.

Documents covered: 5/5 | Segment frequency: 39

4.4.7 Main Code 6: Advice for Aspiring Entrepreneurs

This theme had the second-highest coding frequency, with 114 coded segments, present across all five interviews. The interviewees advice for aspiring entrepreneurs were centered on

planning, traits required for any entrepreneur to succeed, and how to avoid common pitfalls in their business.

- **Start-Up Advice (coded in 5/5 interviews):** The sub-theme “Start-Up Advice” reflects participants’ personal philosophies, practical tips, and cautionary reflections drawn from their own lived experiences. While each entrepreneur emphasized different aspects and approaches of the start-up journey, common values such as full preparedness, discipline, truthfulness and honesty, trust in oneself as well as prioritizing inspiring trust in their clients, and resilience emerged. Furthermore; there was a repeated warning against over-planning and delaying execution, which aligns with the “just start” mentality emphasized by Ries (2011) in Lean Startup methodology. However, one entrepreneur warned that “speed without structure is dangerous,” reflecting the need to balance agility with due diligence, which is a critique of overly lean strategies (Dencker et al., 2009). Overall, the advice given to aspiring entrepreneurs spanned strategic planning, emotional control, relationship-building, and the extreme importance of learning and gaining knowledge in the chosen field of business before launching. This theme offers a direct application for the study’s broader goal of finding actionable, experiential knowledge and insights to help aspiring entrepreneurs.
- **Traits for Success (coded in 5/5 interviews):** This theme captures the reflections of five diaspora entrepreneurs on the personal traits they believe are fundamental to entrepreneurial success. The participants focused on internal qualities; such as composure, honesty, psychological insight, quick decision-making ability, and overall discipline. Their insights show how entrepreneurship demands more than strategy, it requires a certain character and attitude toward risk, people, and self-management.
- **Final Reflections (coded in 5/5 interviews):** This theme explored the reflective, often deeply personal advice that participants would offer to aspiring entrepreneurs based on their own experiences and journeys. These reflections addressed general expectations versus reality, emotional resilience, preparation, and the evolving nature of entrepreneurial learning. Participants emphasized the importance of client focus, patience, market understanding and staying updated on digital marketing as key to growing any business today. They also highlighted personal adaptability, drawing from unique yet overlapping experiences.

In conclusion, the qualitative results from in-depth interviews with five diaspora entrepreneurs reveal clear patterns and diverse perspectives across their journeys. They uncovered both shared strategies and context-specific decision-making shaped by each entrepreneur's environment, background, and industry. Although the entrepreneurs had different nationalities and markets, there were notable recurring themes such as the importance of early adaptability and preparation, risk navigation and emotional management emerged consistently across all interviews. The coded data also highlighted rich reflections on personal development and strategic thinking, especially in the later-stages of entrepreneurial maturity. With these coded segments now systematically analyzed and categorized, the next chapter interprets these results as well as presenting both supporting and opposing views from academic literature to offer a deeper understanding of how strategic entrepreneurship manifests across diasporic, cross-border contexts.

4.5 Qualitative Findings

This section discusses the detailed findings of the Qualitative data. Five in depth interviews were conducted with diaspora entrepreneurs for the purpose of understanding their overall strategies, challenges, and mistakes, and to have actionable and practical insights for aspiring entrepreneurs as well as academic insights for the entrepreneurial literature.

4.5.1 Start-Up Strategies

The interviews revealed a diverse set of strategies that they used during their start-up phase, shaped by many factors including but not limited to their industry, background, and current country of business. The sub-codes under this theme were emerged as: Initial Steps, Resources, Strategic Planning, First Customers and Early Challenges. These codes together provided a realistic view of how diaspora entrepreneurs navigated their early-stage business formation.

A/ Initial Steps

A recurring and common view amongst the interviewees were the importance of trial-and-error learning in the initial steps of starting their businesses. Some of the interviewees mentioned that their first business steps were with very small exploratory steps rather than a rigid plan. These findings reflect what Sarasvathy (2001) termed as “effectual reasoning” which means starting with

available means and adjusting goals based on emerging contingencies rather than adhering to a rigid business plan. Further, this resonates with the broader entrepreneurship literature that suggests early-stage ventures often evolve through experimentation rather than formalized strategy (Blank, 2018). All the interviewees emphasized the importance of having a full or semi-structured plan of the business as well as the market they chose to enter before starting any venture, as well as starting with the smallest step using the available resources at hand, and then allowing and continuing on to gradual growth as emphasized by Entrepreneur A “Losses can happen in one day and a brand can disappear in one day. You must start slow, gain experience and slowly rise.”

B/ Recourses

In discussing resources, the interviewees made it clear that non-financial assets, such as language skills, knowledge, networks, and resilience, played an equally vital role, and often a more important role, as financial capital or technical resources. Entrepreneur A mentioned that his earlier resources were loans from other companies that he had built connections with, while Entrepreneur E mentioned solely using her knowledge and skills as her main capital rather than financial capital in the early stages. The main difference between the two is that the first entrepreneur runs a product-based business while the latter runs a service-based business. The latter finding supports recent arguments in the literature that entrepreneurial success is highly dependent on intangible resources such as knowledge and information resourcing etc. (West, M. A., & Noel, T. W., 2009). Several studies highlight digitalization as a central point to modern start-up strategies (Nambisan, 2017). The participants of this study agreed with this, emphasizing using technology and digital marketing, across various platforms, as a crucial strategy in their businesses starting from day one onwards.

C/ Strategic planning

Strategic planning during the start-up phase varied among the participants. A few entrepreneurs described meticulous pre-launch planning, including feasibility studies and market research and gaining 3 months to 2 years of experience in their chosen industry. Planning was mentioned by several of the participants, emphasizing the need to have a complete company profile (brand image, websites, legal documents etc.) as well as an effective operating system. However, Entrepreneur E

indicated that planning was minimal, with decisions made organically in response to immediate needs. Nevertheless, each entrepreneur mentioned the need for pre-planning, whether on a smaller or a bigger scale, and the importance of it as well as setting short-term, medium-term and long-term goal, as illustrated by Entrepreneur C:

“Short-term goals lead to mid-term goals, then long-term goals”

These findings align with previous strategic entrepreneurship frameworks that emphasize long-term value creation by (Ireland, Hitt, & Sirmon, 2003). Interestingly, they also align with the “emergent strategy” model proposed by (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985) which views strategy as an act that forms from patterns of action rather than formal planning. They both seem like contradicting views, but in practice they seem to complement each other, where using one strategy does not eliminate the use of the other, as different entrepreneurs proved to use an integration of both strategies in different circumstances. The entrepreneurs interviewed did not wait for ideal conditions but instead acted decisively within their constraints. Their practices demonstrate strategic entrepreneurship, combining opportunity-seeking behavior with resourcefulness and forward planning. This phase sets the tone for later business evolution, as it shapes operational foundations, early brand perception, and the entrepreneur’s confidence in navigating uncertainty within their ventures Simarasl et al. (2022).

D/ First Customers

Moreover, when discussing how they acquired their *first customers*, the participants emphasized marketing (through word of mouth or digital marketing), relationship-building and trust as central strategies, as emphasized by Entrepreneur B:

“Trust with the customer is maybe 60 or 70% more important than all the other factors”

Rather than targeting mass audiences. The majority of the participants began by serving niche or local markets and networks. Instead of targeting a larger population they focused on a smaller one and grew gradually. Entrepreneur A mentioned how important it is to only launch a product locally, saying that:

“When a product is local, quality control is more cost effective. If anything is proved wrong with the product it can easily be drawn from the market and corrected. Advising a strategy of starting local and when the product is 100% ready and has high demand in the local market you can expand your consumer market to other national/international markets.”

Another participant confirmed this by saying that:

“If you want to be successful in the foreign market, you always have to be the best in the local market first.” - Entrepreneur B.

E/ Early challenges And How to Avoid Them

Early challenges were different across all five interviewees centering on varies aspects, such as:

- **Partnership Issues and Trust-Related Problems:** This can be avoided with being careful and strategic when choosing a business partner as well as signing legally binding agreements from the very beginning of the business.
- **Legal and Bureaucratic Confusion as well as Solo Workload:** Diaspora entrepreneurs, as they are operating outside their country of origin described some barriers in understanding local regulations and urged aspiring entrepreneurs to learn them and gain as much knowledge on them as possible as well as emphasizing the importance of finalizing all necessary documentation before starting any venture as echoing findings from studies on immigrant entrepreneurship that highlight liability of foreignness (Zaheer, 1995) and the regulatory burdens faced by foreign founders (Kloosterman & Rath, 2018). Yet, unlike in some literature that shows these challenges as insurmountable, these entrepreneurs frequently framed them as formative, and spurring creative adaptation. Solo workload, is another challenge that the interviewees strongly advised against, and rather advised aspiring entrepreneurs to seek help and hire dependable employees from the very first stages of the business. As the participants said that having someone who understands the ins and outs of the business alongside them is important, as this early strategy will help with work/life balance, growing the business faster and easily sustaining it in the upcoming years.

- **Financial Loss and Learning from their Mistakes:** All of the five entrepreneurs mentioned that financial loss is inevitable, as Entrepreneur A put it:

“You must expect losses at any moment.”

The entrepreneurs agreed that loss should never be a source of discouragement or a reason to stop the business altogether but rather it should be viewed as a motivational tool to keep going and earn more to compensate for the losses, however, only in the case if these losses do not cause significant debt.

Overall, the start-up strategies of diaspora entrepreneurs in this study show a balance between improvisation, planning, proactiveness and personal networks, as well as resilience in the face of challenges. They understand that slow, consistent progress, supported by good branding and team development, is essential to withstand market competition and failures. Digital tools and clear communication are fundamental resources to establish and grow the business. Most of the practices supported previous assumptions about the centrality of formal planning, digital tools, and professional networks in early-stage entrepreneurship.

4.5.2 Current Strategy and Growth

Current strategy and growth are one of the main themes of this research as it directly answers one of this study’s research questions: “How do successful diverse and diaspora entrepreneurs from diverse industries, backgrounds, and countries apply strategic entrepreneurship to overcome challenges, achieve success, and navigate failures?”

This section’s main aim is to explore the successful strategies the participants are currently applying in their ventures, from customer retention, innovation, or marketing, etc., to maintain and expand their businesses, especially now that they have reached maturity, stability, and success in their respective ventures. The sub-codes under this theme are: Current Strategies, Pivoting, and Risk Management.

A/ Current Strategies

The participants described applying various strategies and approaches to their ventures, and interestingly, similar strategies were detected despite the differences in sectors across all five interviewees. The detected similar strategies are: Client-Centric Strategies, Strategic

Responsiveness, Technological and Digital Presence, the importance of Reputation/Brand Identity and of having an Internal Team, as well as Fast Decision-Making processes.

Emerging Strategies/Patterns Across Five Interviews:

1. Client-Centric Strategy

Across all 5 interviews, a strong pattern of client-centric strategy emerged as a defining feature of how entrepreneurs operate in their current business environments. Entrepreneur E, C, and A emphasized different aspects of client relationship management having a central role in their current strategy as illustrated by Entrepreneur E:

“Retention is achieved through the relationship that we build.”

While Entrepreneur E focuses on relational trust and personalized service, by tailoring deals to meet each individual clients’ needs and budgets, with the goal of ensuring satisfaction and creating long-term loyalty with the clients. This emphasis on relationship building was echoed by Entrepreneur C, who constructs his strategy around emotional authenticity and transparent communication -a shared theme across all 5 interviewees-, trusting that clients respond positively to genuine interactions. Similarly, Entrepreneur A incorporates structured loyalty mechanisms within his business such as cashback offers and end-of-year gifts to his highest customers in order to retain customers and gain their loyalty. These approaches reflect a common belief that maintaining close, trust-based relationships with clients is fundamental to long-term strategic success within any venture regardless of the industry.

2. Adaptability and Strategic Evolution and Responsiveness

A second pattern that was shared across the interviews is the importance of quick strategic responsiveness and ongoing oversight. Entrepreneurs D and B exhibit a proactive approach towards continuous change and improvement to respond to market trends, Entrepreneur B said:

“You can’t stick to one model. You must change it to grow”

Entrepreneur D’s approach is marked by constant vigilance and full operational control, regardless of his physical presence in the company, He emphasized that business is a continuous, non-stop endeavor and stated that:

“Never stop. Businesses shouldn’t stop. You have to continue and continue following up on the team and business even while you are on vacation.”

Similarly, Entrepreneur B maintains his competitive approach by frequently reinventing his business model and embracing innovation.

All of the entrepreneurs emphasized fast decision-making and strategic agility as critical approach to success. Entrepreneur A uses this approach through his multi-layered strategy that incorporates real-time customer feedback via market representatives, allowing for agile product adjustments as well as continuously following his teams and business deals across all his ventures. All entrepreneurs agreed that Innovation, product development, and evolving marketing channels are key tools in maintaining relevance in today's highly competitive business environment.

3. Technology and Digital Presence

Another important theme mentioned by all of the participants is the integration of technology and marketing as tools for maintaining competitiveness and visibility. Entrepreneurs A, C, and D said that they rely on digital tools to improve performance, brand exposure, and service delivery. For example, Entrepreneur A uses an omni-channel marketing strategy that spans traditional and digital platforms, to make sure that his brand remains present across all consumer touchpoints. While, Entrepreneur C and D often leverage technology to streamline client communication and operational efficiency through various CRM apps, Entrepreneur D placed strong emphasis on the strategic value of digital marketing, online reputation, and staying fully aware of the ever-evolving digital sales techniques. This trend suggests that even among entrepreneurs with different styles and industries, there is consensus on the necessity of technological engagement for sustainability and growth especially to today's digital world.

a. Reputation and Brand Identity

Both Entrepreneurs A and D mentioned that they viewed brand image and consistency as a foundational focus in their early and current strategies. Entrepreneur A particularly, put great emphasis on how he protects his successful products' identities, he said that any product that is proving consistent and long-term success should never be changed at all. He gave an example of some major global brands (KitKat, Twix, Clorox etc.) that have achieved constant success by keeping the brand exactly as it is throughout the years, never altering any of the core brand elements (e.g. product packaging and appearance). He emphasized that any change to the products'

image can deter loyal clients from buying it, believing that the product itself has changed due to the change of its packaging, Entrepreneur A said:

“Brands that succeed don’t always change. Some of my products haven’t changed in 20 years.”

b. Internal Team and Delegation

The role of having an internal team appears as a recurring strategic asset amongst most of the interviewees. For instance; Entrepreneur E considers her team to be the foundation of consistent service delivery and long-term client satisfaction, she regularly invests in improving her team’s skills and competence (Capacity Building) as well as creating trust and unity among her team members (Team Cohesion). Likewise, Entrepreneur A, has structured motivation systems for his employees through performance incentives and weekly paid commissions. He said that a weekly commission is better than a monthly commission because the former approach keeps the motivation alive throughout the month. He also ensures to have expert consultants for all his different ventures across different industries to enhance any decision-making process. While the exact methods vary, both Entrepreneur A and E highlighted the value of team strength and internal alignment as an integral strategy to successfully execute their business vision.

c. Fast Decision-Making and Emotional Control

All of the participants highlighted the need for rapid decision-making and emotional neutrality. They agreed that this approach is efficiency-focused, and leader-driven.

Different Strategies/Patterns Across Five Interviews:

Despite detecting shared strategies throughout all five interviews, some clear differences were also detected in how the entrepreneurs implement their current strategies and operate in their respective business. One of the most significant differences in the degree of control and operational involvement Entrepreneur A and D referred to a highly centralized model of micromanagement, with a hands-on approach that includes daily monitoring of employee performance, even when away. In contrast, Entrepreneur B takes a more flexible and innovation-driven approach, favoring delegation and local partnerships as well as smart productivity/work over intense operational control. This contrast reveals two distinct philosophies. One is grounded in detailed oversight to

maintain consistency, while the other one is built on adaptability and trust in the business system, partners and managers.

Overall, participants revealed that the success of their current strategies largely depend on balancing innovation with consistency, and strategic clarity with relational depth. Through adaptability, team capacity, client retention, or technological integration, each entrepreneur's strategy reflects the maturity of their enterprise and their ever-evolving understanding of what sustains growth and success within their business and industries.

B/ Pivoting

This theme centers on how entrepreneurs adapt and pivot their business strategies in response to different aspects of any business, such as; internal limitations, external pressures, or market fluctuations. While each participant did approach pivoting differently, the central theme was found to be strategic flexibility guided by either resilience, specialization, cost control, or a reevaluation of business scale and priorities across all interviews.

Emerging Strategies/Patterns Across 5/5 interviews:

1. Emotional Resilience & Strategic Downsizing as a Pivot Mechanism

A shared pattern emerged across all of the interviews, around strategic responsiveness through emotional clarity and reflective decision-making. Most of the entrepreneurs demonstrated an ability to reevaluating their course of actions to respond to external or internal challenges. For example, Entrepreneur D adopts an emotionally resilient approach to setbacks, he views challenges as opportunities for renewed motivation to succeed. He mentioned, that when faced with challenges, his pivot mechanism is emotional detachment, saying that a diplomacy of calmness when dealing with client problems, and rapid mental recovery allows him to return his focus to his business operations to compensate for any occurred losses, without any lingering negativity of any problem. So, he does not dwell on financial losses but rather channels them into renewed motivation, he supported this claim with the following quote:

"If I lose \$100,000 or \$200,000, I don't think about it after two days. I just focus on making more"
-Entrepreneur D.

Similarly, Entrepreneur E shared a reflective pivoting strategy that is driven by personal sustainability and value alignment, when asked how that is managed, she said that when she started

facing some external/client crises, she engaged in deliberate, inward-looking adjustments and decided to downsize her business through narrowing her client base to a certain niche in order to better serve her professional goals and personal well-being, as illustrated by the following quote:

“I had to scale down. I started saying no to clients and being selective. That was a personal decision and a business pivot” -Entrepreneur E.

Both entrepreneurs demonstrated that pivoting is not only structural but often attitudinal, shaped by clarity of purpose and a desire to realign with one’s core values.

2. Specialization as a Market Differentiation Strategy

Another important recurring pattern amongst the interviewees is pivoting through refinement of market positioning and product strategy. Entrepreneur C, for example, recognized the mistake and strategic inefficiency of serving multiple market with conflicting expectations so he chose to refine his brand identity and to narrow his focus to a specific target audience. Through this strategy, he was able to enhance consistency and attract clients more aligned with his business vision. As he put it:

“You can’t be luxury and also low-end. I learned to specialize to attract the right clients.”

He demonstrated that specialization allowed for a better brand coherence and a stronger customer alignment for his venture, emphasizing that pivoting toward niche markets can be a key growth strategy.

3. Operational Restructuring and Consumer-Centric Adaptation

Entrepreneur A’s pivot strategy is both practical and data-driven. He adapts products based on market response, such as redesigning packaging to reduce the perceived cost and drive sales. This approach was exemplified when he took a stagnant product and reduced its size by half, and pricing it at slightly less than half its original price, which significantly increased its sales. Moreover, he stressed the importance of negotiating better supplier rates to reduce expenses when he is in a price competition with other brands, stating that in the production industry, the buying price is more critical than selling price.

“It’s not the selling price that matters; it’s the buying price. If my supplier won’t lower it, I find another one who will” -Entrepreneur A.

So generally, his strategic decisions are informed by consumer feedback, internal cost assessments, and competitor benchmarking.

Overall, these patterns highlight the diverse nature of pivoting across entrepreneurial settings. While some entrepreneurs' pivot strategy was reactive in response to challenges or failures, others pivot proactively to ensure keeping the business's alignment with their personal values, audience fit, or long-term goals. While it was found that this process may be emotional, operational or relational, it revealed that pivoting is not a uniform concept, but rather a multifaceted response to change, risk, and challenges.

C/ Risk Management

This section explores how entrepreneurs manage risk as part of their current business strategies. Across all five interviews, participants showed a proactive, multi-layered approach to risk, with combining emotional resilience, strategic foresight, market engagement, legal awareness, and financial pragmatism. While their techniques may vary, they all demonstrate a deep awareness of uncertainties as an inevitable part of entrepreneurship and a complete willingness to adapt accordingly.

Emerging Strategies/Patterns Across Five Interviews:

1. Proactive Risk Anticipation and Informed Decision-Making

Across all five interviews, a shared theme of proactive risk anticipation and informed decision-making is very evident. Most of the entrepreneurs mentioned that they incorporate forecasting, contingency planning, or scenario evaluation into any of their strategic approaches. For example: Entrepreneur D incorporates risk management into the early/ foundational strategic planning stages. He said that he deliberately accounts for the worst-case scenarios and prepares for potential losses.

Similarly, Entrepreneur E prioritizes extensive contingency planning, with outlining multiple layers of backup strategies before proceeding, as illustrated by the quote below:

"I always have backup plans, and backup plans for the backup plans."

Evidence from both participants demonstrates an orientation toward preparedness, and heavily suggesting that risk management is viewed not only as a reactive mechanism but as a core element of strategic foresight.

2. Resilience, Mental Preparation & Decisiveness

Another detected pattern is the integration of emotional resilience with practical planning. Both Entrepreneurs D and E highlighted the emotional dimension of risk, recognizing that setbacks and losses are inevitable, but must be met with mental endurance and motivation as shown by the quote of Entrepreneur D:

“You have to be ready to lose financially... it’s a part of business”

Financial loss was an accepted risk highlighted in the five interviews, with entrepreneurs addressing the importance of business continuity despite in-determinable losses, and emphasizing that such losses are a normal part of any business.

Entrepreneur E further adds that boldness, awareness, and trust in the process are essential to navigate uncertain outcomes. This psychological readiness is echoed by Entrepreneur C, who embraces a rational evaluation of risk, legal, financial, and strategic, while acknowledging the need to act decisively once a threshold of preparedness is reached. He said that:

“I study a bit, analyze and prepare some scenarios, and then I throw myself into it” combining planning with bold execution.”

Together, these perspectives reveal a dual-layered risk strategic posture that blends cognitive assessment with emotional strength.

3. Information-Based Decision Making

Both Entrepreneurs A and B stressed the value of quick research and real-time information. Entrepreneur B relied on continuous market intelligence by observing competitors, customers, and suppliers as illustrated by the quote below:

“You need to live inside the business, not outside it.”

Meanwhile Entrepreneur A consults experts, performs scenario analysis, and gathers data before taking risks.

4. Legal and Ethical Risk Mitigation

One of the key strategic recommendations from the interviews is the use of legally binding agreements with partners and clients. Both Entrepreneur B and C advised to always require signed agreements as a preventative legal measure to protect the business. Entrepreneur C emphasized

that this safeguards exclusivity and reduces risks from client-side breaches. Prior studies that have noted the importance of this strategy, for example; (Hillman & Hitt, 1999) highlighted the role of legal contracts in reducing uncertainties and safeguarding against opportunistic behavior in entrepreneurial contexts. Similarly, Entrepreneur B and C noted that these formal agreements mitigate potential partnership and client-side breaches by creating clearer boundaries of accountability.

5. Cost Control and Iterative Testing

Entrepreneur A mentioned that his main focus is on minimizing financial risks, through product testing, starting small and only scaling if the initial test results are favorable and profitable. He implements market-testing strategies and real-time adjustments, he emphasized that when launching a new product, he must assess its viability before any full-scale investment to stay vigilant for any irreversible losses. He illustrated this by saying:

“Through this process if we notice that the product loses money, we stop it completely. We don’t continue down a losing path.”

His phased testing model is closely aligned with the principles of lean startup methodology (Ries, 2011), which advocates for market validation through minimal viable products and incremental scaling. This strategy, shows how different entrepreneurs can leverage environmental scanning and controlled experimentation as a safeguard against any uncertainty.

Different Strategies/Patterns Across Five Interviews:

Despite a shared concern for planning and adaptability across all five interviews, the entrepreneurs did show some differences in their primary strategies of risk management, this is ranging from internal emotional preparedness to external operational control. Entrepreneur D proved that he manages risks through fast decision-making and mental readiness, and by emphasizing the relatively stable economic environment as a form of contextual security. His strategy focuses more on a resilient mindset and adaptability than on technical systems. On the other hand, Entrepreneur B presented a contrasting approach that is situational and ecosystem-driven, emphasizing that field observation, stakeholder engagement, and trend awareness are his main focus. Rather than relying solely on internal planning, his strategy is built on immersion; for him risks are managed through presence and participation

Entrepreneur A appears to adopt one of the most financially, technical and market-driven model of risk management. His focus is on minimizing exposure by negotiating supplier costs, eliminating inefficiencies, and testing new products through small-scale pilots. He believes that managing procurement costs, holds the key to maintaining profitability and protecting against loss, especially when there is a product discount competition in the market. He added a warning against discounting a product to the point of non-profit, by saying that the competitors who adopt such approaches will eventually lose profit and they usually go bankrupt and exit the market. He concludes that while that strategy can initially generate fast profit, it is not a smart plan for long-term sustenance and success. This results-oriented and scalable approach distinguishes him from others who rely more heavily on personal insight.

Overall, Risk Management has proved that it is not treated as a defensive mechanism but as a strategic tool that supports long-term growth by all of the entrepreneurs. The participants do not attempt to eliminate risk; rather, they anticipate it, prepare for it, and engage with it. The variations in approach suggests that context (market, business model, personal experience) strongly influences how entrepreneurs conceptualize and deal with business risk.

4.5.3 Challenges and Risk Management

This section explores the nuanced challenges that each interviewee is currently facing within their ventures. This includes an independent outline of each entrepreneur to provide a clear understanding of their challenges and their detailed response strategies. This level of detail is intentional to provide both practitioners and scholars with actionable insights into the specific strategies used by the entrepreneurs in their different industries and business models. Thus, providing findings that can inform both real-world decision-making and academic understanding. Through demonstrating that occurring challenges are multidimensional and are shaped by many variables, including: the intersection of external constraints, internal capabilities, and the unique pressures of operating businesses in foreign environments. This section explores these nuanced experiences categorized under the subcodes Current Challenges, and Response Strategies.

Entrepreneur A's Current Challenges

Entrepreneur A shared an outline of a series of macro-level and operational setbacks. He recounted a \$40,000 loss that was tied to container mismanagement at the importing/exporting ports, which proves the immediate financial damage that logistical errors can cause. He further highlights the that market competition has intensified in these past 5-7 years, with more fast-growing number of competitors: he said that once he introduces a successful product, imitating products quickly emerge, with non-profitable discounted rates which can spark destructive price wars. The broader shift from his early market leadership 20 years ago to today's oversaturated market has undercut both his uniqueness and profit margins. Moreover, he mentioned an especially impactful incident that occurred in the car trading business, where despite his strategic preparation and planning before entering the care trading business, an interest rate spike abruptly destabilized the market which caused him a \$300.00 loss. These challenges show the volatility of external factors and the limits of predictive planning.

Entrepreneur A's Response Strategies

Entrepreneur A as a main response strategy he takes a pragmatic, loss-tolerant approach centered on financial discipline, small-scale experimentation, and strategic persistence. His readiness to accept short-term losses with viewing failure as part of growth is supported by the concept of entrepreneurial learning through failure (Cope, 2011), which argues that setbacks often catalyze future success by improving judgment and resilience. Entrepreneur A's emphasis on managing buying costs rather than focusing solely on sales aligns with Porter's (1985) cost leadership strategy, where long-term profitability is achieved through operational efficiency and input cost control, this helps him in offering reasonable discounted rates for his products, further he advised against engaging with competitors who offer incredibly low discounts and said he first offers 15% discounts and then increases it to 20%, and finally 30% is where he chooses to stop as to insure that he makes profit, when asked if that means the consumer will only buy the most cost effective product; he said new products with incredibly low prices tend to burn out and leave the market fast or they withdraw and re-enter with higher costs to compensate the loss of the low discounted rates strategy, which is not sustainable and does not promote long term success. Finally, his reliance on faith, planning, and team coordination reflects a holistic, systems-based view of entrepreneurial

endurance, echoing the findings of Fisher et al. (2020), who linked personal belief systems and social capital with entrepreneurial persistence in volatile markets.

Entrepreneur B's Current Challenges

Entrepreneur B is currently navigating a set of interconnected markets and operational challenges, particularly within the international trade business. These challenges include competitive pricing pressures, difficulty in sourcing dependable buyers, exchange rates fluctuations, some issues with maintaining product quality, and logistical inefficiencies. However, similarly to Entrepreneur A he mentioned that the most pressing issue is the current saturation of national and international markets, which forces him to remain constantly innovative and responsive. These challenges are further compounded by the need for speed, efficiency, and consistency in today's dynamic business ecosystem.

Entrepreneur B's Response Strategies

As a response strategy Entrepreneur B uses a proactive, market-oriented strategy that emphasizes transparency, unique value propositions, and close customer engagement. His main focus is on offering upfront information and building long-term trust reflecting the customer relationship management theories of Payne and Frow (2017), who notes that trust-based value creation is essential in competitive, globalized markets. Entrepreneur B's practice of living "within the market," rather than observing passively, is consistent with the concept of effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2001), that prioritizes real-time feedback, adaptive strategies, and stakeholder engagement. He has a main strategy of educational outreach to clients which can also be seen through the lens of relational entrepreneurship, where value is co-created through collaborative and socially embedded business practices.

Entrepreneur C's Current Challenges

Entrepreneur C discussed the complications involved in relocating and adjusting to another foreign business environment. As he has recently moved countries and he encountered stark differences in business infrastructure, consumer behavior, and competitive practices. His current main challenge is building a client base from scratch and it has proved especially difficult in a context where local agents had deeper roots and more aggressive marketing strategies. He mentioned an urgent need

to adopt to these systemic shifts which required a full recalibration of business strategy and expectations.

Entrepreneur C's Response Strategies

Entrepreneur C's main response strategy combines knowledge acquisition with niche specialization to respond to the challenges of market relocation and competition. By investing months in legal research and freely offering valuable information to clients, he leverages what Spender (1996) calls knowledge-based strategy, where deep contextual expertise becomes a source of competitive advantage. His emphasis on mastering a specific niche further aligns with the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm (Barney, 1991), which suggests that sustainable success comes from developing exclusive and specialized capabilities. Additionally, he is choosing to focus on informed action over hesitation reflecting the entrepreneurial orientation framework of (Covin & Wales, 2012), which emphasizes proactiveness, risk-taking, and autonomy as defining traits of high-performing entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneur D's Current Challenges

Entrepreneur D is currently facing some challenges related to scaling and client management. He took notice that as his business expands, clients have begun exploiting his dedication to perfection by over-exaggerating minor issues to seek unjustified compensation. Which has led to a growing dilemma in his business between maintaining high service standards and avoiding manipulative client behavior. The shift in customer expectations from trust-based interactions to transactional exploitation has disrupted his ability to maintain the crucial balance between customer satisfaction and business protection.

Entrepreneur D's Response Strategies

Entrepreneur D is currently adopting an emotionally intelligent and adaptive approach to business challenges, mainly characterized by flexible negotiation, emotional regulation, and constant persistence. He emphasizes the importance of offering alternative solutions during client conflicts and negotiations as well as managing emotional reactions, particularly when clients exploit his perfectionist standards. This aligns with Goleman's (1998) theory of emotional intelligence, which highlights the central role of emotional self-regulation in high-stakes decision-making processes. His strategy further reflects the "problem-solving orientation" concept described by Shepherd et

al. (2015), who argues that entrepreneurial success often depends on the ability to reframe problems and navigate them creatively rather than disregarding them. Moreover, his belief that “every problem has a solution over time” is consistent with the entrepreneurial resilience framework, which views persistence and adaptability as core components of sustainable growth and success (Ayala & Manzano, 2014).

Entrepreneur E's Current Challenges

Finally, Entrepreneur E's business is currently struggling with the limitations of a fully remote business model. She said that while remote work offers the flexibility that she always worked towards, it also divides her focus between client delivery and operational management. The main issue with this model is the absence of a centralized team which results in lagging communication amongst team members, overextension, long working hours, and mental exhaustion resulting in a certain lag in scaling and growing her business, mentioning that the business would have shown faster growth with a more traditional business model.

Entrepreneur E's Response Strategies

Entrepreneur E responds to her challenges through emotional detachment, team reliance, and disciplined decision-making. She emphasizes always remaining “cool-headed” in moments of tension, a practice that supports effective leadership under uncertainty. Her approach echoes the findings of Uhl-Bien et al. (2007), who has argued that adaptive leadership (the ability to remain composed while making high-impact decisions) is critical in complex and dynamic environments. Her reliance on her team further reflects the strategic delegation model that is promoted by Rauch and Rijdsdijk (2013), who found that entrepreneurs who share decision-making with trusted team members experience greater scalability and reduced burnout. Her emotional discipline approach complements the view of Cardon et al. (2012), who argued that while passion is vital for any venture's success, over-identification with the business can cloud judgment and inhibit rational strategic choices.

Overall, the findings from this theme mainly reveal that while diaspora entrepreneurs face an array of structural and market-based challenges, their capacity to endure and adapt is shaped by planning, resilience, iterative learning, and social resourcefulness and almost never by privileged access.

These insights enrich entrepreneurship models by showcasing the lived experiences of how entrepreneurs navigate risks in cross-cultural and often unstable and volatile environments.

4.5.4 Lessons Learned

A/ Early Mistakes

Across all five interviews, the participants were asked what were the early mistakes that they made in the early period of their business lives? Interestingly, some similarities were found within all of the stories despite their differences in business models and industries. One prominent theme was the emotional entanglement with the business. For example, Entrepreneur A described how the business consumed every aspect of his life which resulted in sleep disturbances, personal isolation, and compromised health. Similarly, Entrepreneur D admitted to allowing emotions to interfere with his judgment and allowing the stressful environment of the business to overwhelm his mental and physical health. These patterns highlight how entrepreneurs often underestimate the psychological demands of their ventures, a mistake previously noted in the literature as a common cause of burnout and impaired decision-making Uy, Foo, & Song (2013).

Another early mistake mentioned by some of the interviewees was blurring professional boundaries. For example, Entrepreneur D explained that treating employees as friends at the start of his business, diminished his authority and led to long-term leadership challenges. These reflections align with previous studies warning against informal management structures during early-stage development, which can create role confusion and weaken accountability (Baron, 2008).

A third early mistake was shared by Entrepreneur E. He stated that trying to juggle multiple projects at once; resulted in exhaustion and critical oversights. This reinforces the findings that highlight the dangers of overextension and the need for early team development and task delegation (Ling et al., 2008).

Operational inexperience and oversight were also mentioned by some of the entrepreneurs. For example, Entrepreneur C reflected on lack of confidence during the early stages of negotiating with perspective client, due to language barriers, which may have limited momentum.

Entrepreneur E also described purchasing cheap equipment to cut costs as one of the biggest mistakes he did in the beginning. Because of this decision he had some significant financial losses, including a \$20,000 error due to incorrect packaging dimensions that came from his lack of attention to the details of the packaging dimensions. These mistakes point to the importance of quality control and attention to detail in early-stage ventures which echoes previous research by Brinckmann, Grichnik, & Kapsa (2010) showing that early operational errors can have compounding effects over time.

Overall, these findings prove that entrepreneurs can encounter overlapping difficulties rooted in emotional management, leadership boundaries, overextension, and insufficient planning regardless of industry differences. These experiences reflect the multidimensional learning process involved in early entrepreneurial development and reinforces key themes in entrepreneurial psychology and startup management literature.

B/ Insights on What Could Have Been Done Differently

When the entrepreneurs were asked to reflect on the early missteps and what they would do differently in hindsight after gaining their current vast experience, the entrepreneurs proposed clear, experience-based strategies that they would implement if they had to start over.

One major area of revision that was found across most interviews was the importance of personal balance and emotional regulation. As Entrepreneur D emphasized how important it is not to live exclusively for the business and maintaining a calm, logical demeanor during any decision-making process. Entrepreneur C also stressed the need to balance passion with rationality, especially in business, recognizing that excessive stress undermines health and clarity which in the long run proved to be detrimental to himself and his business. These insights support recommendations in entrepreneurial resilience research that advocate emotional regulation as a core skill Hayward, Forster, Sarasvathy, & Fredrickson (2010).

Another key area was revising management style and human resource strategies. For example, Entrepreneur D stated that he would maintain clearer professional boundaries with the staff from the start and hire an internal team member early on so he could have someone who could grow into a reliable second-in-command. Similarly, Entrepreneur E echoed this strategy, expressing that

she would build and train a team much earlier, emphasizing trust in others' strengths and setting boundaries with clients and collaborators. These adjustments reflect some literature advocating early investment in human capital and structured delegation for sustainable growth Unger, Rauch, Frese, & Rosenbusch (2011).

Interestingly, Entrepreneur B mentioned that he would have chosen a different strategy and begin his own production company and factories rather than relying solely on trade, highlighting the connection between production control, scalability and an easier sustained business. Such reflections are supported by studies like that of Delmar & Shane (2003) who indicated that early strategic planning improves organizational adaptability and growth potential.

Some entrepreneurs also mentioned early errors in pricing and marketing too broadly as early mistakes. Surprisingly, these reflections were not presented as failures alone but as learning points that sharpened their strategic thinking over time. This reflective lens is consistent with research on learning from failure in entrepreneurial ventures (e.g. Cope, 2011; Yamakawa et al., 2015), which mainly emphasizes failure as a catalyst for personal and professional growth. However, some scholars challenge this view, arguing that not all failures result in learning, especially under chronic stress or when reflection opportunities are lacking (Cardon et al., 2011).

Lastly, quality control and specialization emerged as common priorities in the interviews. For example, Entrepreneur A indicated that he would invest in high-quality materials and would consult experts before entering new markets. He also emphasized a current shift from hands-on involvement in different ventures to a more investor-oriented role, aiming for financial gain and growth without operational exhaustion. This approach aligns with literature that supports progressive specialization and structured scaling as businesses mature (Kazanjian & Drazin, 1990).

Together, these reflections revealed how diaspora entrepreneurs shift from reactive to proactive entrepreneurship and evolve through iterative, reflective processes, where early lessons are used to craft more balanced, scalable, and sustainable business strategies. They not only emphasize the importance of personal growth and learning in entrepreneurship but also reflect on well-documented entrepreneurial learning curves in both practical and academical contexts.

4.5.5 Advice for Aspiring Entrepreneurs

This theme explores practical, experience-driven advice that is offered by all 5 interviewees for aspiring entrepreneurs. The subcodes under this category include; Start-Up Advice, Traits for success and Final Reflection. The narratives are rich in actionable insights in highlighting the depths of experiential knowledge gained by diaspora entrepreneurs.

Startup Advice

In sharing their startup advice, the entrepreneurs offered concrete, experience-driven recommendations about how to begin the entrepreneurial journey with greater clarity, structure, and long-term sustainability. Their advice perfectly combines strategic planning, personal growth, and a realistic understanding of today's business markets.

A. Identifying Optimal Conditions and Responding with Agility

Entrepreneur D stressed that the location and the economy matter deeply when building a business. He advised that:

“Build your business where people are doing well and the economy is strong.”

For him, successful entrepreneurship is about constant renewal, speed, and staying sharp. He urges the use of digital marketing as a powerful tool for growth and insists that attentions to details such as punctuality and straightforward communication can make or break a business.

He further warns against emotional vulnerability in professional spaces and urges entrepreneurs to always remain in control of their business. His startup advice is generally grounded in customer focus first: “understand your clients before thinking about profit”. He also highlights the value of gaining some experience before starting, even if it is just for a short time. Lastly, he stresses adaptability and range, as shown by the quote below:

“If you can't offer different types of deals to meet varying client needs, you are not a businessman.”

B. Structure, Planning, and Emotional Discipline

Entrepreneur E believes that success begins with internal systems. She strongly recommends setting up business management structures from day one, especially for online ventures. As these systems do not just keep the business organized, they keep the entrepreneur grounded. She also

emphasizes setting goals encouraging short- and long-term goals as a strategy to keep the business going towards the right direction and to keep motivation levels high throughout the journey.

Moreover, she emphasizes the dangers of emotional decision-making, advising entrepreneurs to stay calm and composed even when things do not go as planned, which is a reoccurring theme across all interviews. When asked what she would change if she were to go back to the starting point, she said that she would have spent more time in planning before launching e.g. defining her goals and preparing backup plans. Her advice is also deeply personal:

“Stay authentic and ethical, eventually, this will reflect in the quality of your work.”

C. Build Trust and Work Smarter, Not Harder

Entrepreneur B frames entrepreneurship mainly around trust, structure, and social responsibility. According to him, strong business relationships come before sales. He emphasizes the importance of writing down agreements and establishing legal contracts with partners, even with friends, and encourages formal business conduct from the beginning. His mantra is to “work smart, not hard,” as he advocates for efficiency over long hours. Furthermore, he brings a strong social ethos to his advice, emphasizing the idea that giving back to the community enhances your reputation and long-term success. He suggests face-to-face communication rather than online communication, when possible, mentioning that this builds trust with the client which is essential in any business deal, by saying that:

“Trust is 60% to 70% more important than anything else.”

He further urges aspiring entrepreneurs to invest in thorough market research, formal planning, brand building, establishing the business image and operational system before starting. He also emphasized the importance of having a few mentors, stating that stability is never guaranteed, making resilience and strategic thinking essential.

D. Developing Expertise and Ensuring Clear Communication

Entrepreneur C believes that knowledge and the ability to communicate clearly are core entrepreneurial skills. He mentions that founders must be able to explain their businesses clearly, authentically, answer questions before they’re asked, and appear competent and confident in their field. He encourages becoming both a “jack of all trades and a master of one”, to have deep

knowledge in your own field, as well as being broadly aware of others. Moreover, he advises against blind leaps into a venture by saying that:

“Study the market thoroughly, then act decisively.”

He also stresses the importance of starting small, simple, and solid, agreeing with Entrepreneur B that all administrative and branding work should be completed before launch and that the ventures systems should be ready to support operations early. Finally, he strongly advises aspiring entrepreneurs by stating:

“Don’t sacrifice your health for fast success; balance is key.”

E. Experience First, Expansion Later

Entrepreneur A’s advice is methodical, focusing on long-term visions, and is deeply strategic. He urges entrepreneurs to work for others first, especially in their intended sector, arguing that with this strategy they learn by doing and avoid costly mistakes. For example, he recommends working in different coffee shops before opening your own, emphasizing the need to work for several places to compare their strategies and operational system in order to choose the most successful one for your own venture. In contrast, he advises against this strategy for anyone intending to be an employee in other companies rather than starting their own business as jumping between businesses does not reflect well on CVs. However, entrepreneurs do not need to prove their CVs to any prospective employers, this that should not be an issue for them. He also believes that local mastery must come before international ambition, as shown by the quote below:

“If you can’t succeed locally, how will you succeed internationally?”

Furthermore, he advocates for building systems before expansion, remaining consistent with all other interviewees, by using social media as well as preparing business operational and logistic systems. For him consistency is critical, with an emphasis on minimizing errors by using his own product that remain unchanged since the years 2000, as a testament to this. He also encourages full organizational and market studies before starting any business, including role definitions, salaries, and competitive landscape analysis. His bottom line is that: *“70% planning and execution, 30% faith”*.

Traits for Success

In this subcode a consistent theme emerged across all 5 interviews around the personal and psychological traits required for long-term entrepreneurial success. While each entrepreneur described different pathways and challenges, their reflections revealed key internal attributes, ranging from discipline and courage to cultural sensitivity and emotional control, that shaped their strategies and resilience. Below are their insights, organized by core traits.

A. Decision-Making, Experience, and Courage

A few of the interviewees view entrepreneurship as rooted in decisive action and personal experience. For example, Entrepreneurs A and D believe that decision-making is the central force of entrepreneurial momentum saying that without decisions, progress halts. They both strongly believe that academic qualifications are not enough, insisting that real, hands-on experience in the field is far more valuable. They further advise new entrepreneurs to first work for others in their target industry to absorb practical insights before launching their own ventures. They strongly emphasize the importance of having courage and the capacity to act despite risk and fear. Entrepreneurship, in their shared views, is impossible without bravery, as illustrated by the quote below:

“If you’re not brave, you’re not an entrepreneur. If you’re not willing to lose, you’re not an entrepreneur.” - Entrepreneur D

B. Trust, Cultural Sensitivity, and Behavioral Awareness

Entrepreneur B believes that entrepreneurs must develop behavioral intelligence; to understand how people think, communicate, and behave within different frameworks. He stated that by adapting to these nuances, entrepreneurs can build trust and communicate more effectively. Both Entrepreneurs B and C emphasized the importance of cultural empathy, stating that even small efforts such as learning a few words of a local language can signal sincerity and help break down social barriers. They added that this kind of emotional and social intelligence is essential for relationship-building and negotiation. as illustrated by the quote below:

“If you know how they think, how they behave, and a few words of their language, you already have the advantage.” -Entrepreneur C

C. Honesty and Resilience

A shared theme between all of the interviewees is their focus on emotional balance and integrity. They value authenticity and the ability to put one's heart into the work. On the other hand, they warn that emotional overload can be dangerous in business settings. They suggest that entrepreneurs must learn how to manage their feelings, maintain perspective, and stay consistent during setbacks. Resilience, a crucial trait in their view, is not just about bouncing back but about enduring with clarity and purpose, as shown by the quote below:

“Do not put your emotions into the business too much, balance them out and take care of your health.”-Entrepreneur E

A. Discipline, Integrity, Social Intelligence and Patience

Discipline and mental clarity were connected to entrepreneurial reliability by some interviewees with an emphasis on the value of a “cold mind”, referring to a level of emotional detachment that allows for rational decision-making under pressure. Entrepreneur E, for instance, places emotional control above all other traits. She argues that without composure, entrepreneurs can easily fall into reactive thinking, which leads to distraction and failure. She further added that for her, internal traits such as calmness, integrity, and self-honesty are more important than other business tools, techniques, or external resources. She believes that success lies in aligning passion with patience and strategic thinking.

Moreover, they mentioned that punctuality, discipline, and readiness to take risks are essential at every step of any venture. Entrepreneur D added a layer of social intelligence, stating that entrepreneurs must be able to read people, influence conversations, and navigate complex emotional environments without manipulation, in his point of view, entrepreneurs must act like psychologists: observant, emotionally intelligent, and aware of how people think and behave. The quote below illustrates this:

“The moment you let your emotions get you, you are so close to failure.”-Entrepreneur E

Final Reflections

In their closing thoughts, the entrepreneurs shared honest and often vulnerable reflections about their journeys, offering guidance not only on what works but also on the emotional and practical realities of entrepreneurship. These insights reflect a more personal, introspective layer of their respective experiences, revealing how they process uncertainty, loss, growth, and time, and how they reached their desired success.

A. Prioritizing Clients First

Most of the interviewees stressed the importance of focusing on the client before thinking about profit, they said that customer satisfaction is the foundation of any sustainable business. Their shared philosophy is simple: understand what the customer wants, and the business will follow. As Entrepreneur D stated:

“First, think about what the client wants and needs, and then think about the money.”

B. Embracing the Pace of Growth

Entrepreneur E offered a heartfelt reflection on the unrealistic timelines many new entrepreneurs, including herself, often expect. She spoke of thinking success should be quick, when in reality, meaningful and stable growth takes time. Her advice encourages patience and acceptance by understanding that slow progress does not equal failure. It is about embracing the journey, not rushing to the end.

“I wish someone had told me that you cannot achieve all your goals as quickly as you think. It takes time, and that’s okay.”-Entrepreneur E

C. Surviving the Highs and Lows

Entrepreneur B’s final reflection was pragmatic and emotionally grounded. He described entrepreneurship as a volatile process that is full of fluctuations and requires mental endurance. His central message was to keep going even when the business hits difficult patches emphasizing

that resilience and survival are more important than perfection. For him, persistence despite instability is the true measure of entrepreneurial strength and it is what will eventually lead to success.

“Your business is going to go up and down, you need to keep surviving, keep going, and never give up.”-Entrepreneur B

D. Following What Grows

Interestingly, Entrepreneur C took a more philosophical stance while describing the unpredictability of outcomes in entrepreneurship. He said that even well-planned moves can fail, while accidental moves may succeed so he encouraged entrepreneurs to stay adaptable and to observe where energy and growth naturally flows, and to shift their focus accordingly. His reflection calls for intuition, openness, and humility in how one pursues success.

“You can keep planting seeds and nothing will grow... then accidentally, you drop a seed somewhere and it grows. Follow where things grow- shift your attention.”-Entrepreneur C

E. Experience Before Funding, and the Willingness to Lose

In contrast to Entrepreneur C, Entrepreneur A's closing message was a bold and strategic call to gain enough experience before launching. He warned against entering any business or market unprepared, especially in today's highly competitive global market. He recommended working inside different companies for six to eight months to gain professional operational insight which will minimize errors when starting a new venture. He also reflected on his own massive financial losses but emphasized that failure is part of the entrepreneurial identity. His final words in the interview were an appeal to resilience and risk tolerance.

“I've lost \$500,000 to \$700,000... even \$40,000 last week. Did I stop? No. I learned. I'm an entrepreneur, I have to be willing to lose and keep going.”-Entrepreneur A

Overall, the theme of Advice for Aspiring Entrepreneurs acts as a synthesis of learned experiences across all 5 interviews. It shows how diaspora entrepreneurs transform individual trial-and-error

into collective insights. Their advice is not abstract but it is grounded in lived experience across multiple countries, industries, and regulatory landscapes. It affirms the growing body of research emphasizing the value of experiential and peer-based knowledge in entrepreneurship ecosystems (Stam, 2015; Autio et al., 2014), while also highlighting some contradictions, such as the debate between planning and action, or resilience versus agility, reflecting the complexity of entrepreneurial life.

4.4.6 Cultural Backgrounds and Their Influence on Entrepreneurial Strategies

The influence of the five entrepreneurs' cultural backgrounds was significant on their chosen strategies. It was found that their cultural backgrounds played various roles in shaping their business approaches and strategies.

Cultural Differences and Adaptation

Some of the interviewees noted that they were positively influenced by some cultural and economic differences, when they chose to start a venture abroad. For instance, Entrepreneur D, who is originally from Azerbaijan and is currently operating in Canada, highlighted how economic and cultural differences influenced his decision to start a business abroad. He noted that his venture would likely have had a low success rate in his home country, and that is due to several factors such as, limited funding, unstable economy, and different consumer expectations, and these factors were not only economical but also cultural. This reflection is consistent with that of Hofstede (2001), by reflecting a high-power distance and more collectivist cultural orientation in Azerbaijan, where hierarchical structures are emphasized, and deference to authority can limit entrepreneurial autonomy. In contrast, Canada's lower power distance and more individualistic culture supported his preference for flexible decision-making and strategic adaptability. This contrast shaped Entrepreneur D's choice to start his business in Canada, where the cultural context was more aligned with his entrepreneurial approach.

Similarly, Entrepreneur A highlighted the risks that are associated with entering foreign markets without adequate knowledge of the local market. He emphasized that it is important to acquire market-specific expertise rather than to rely solely on one's own cultural background. This insight aligns with the argument by Ang and Van Dyne (2008) on the necessity of cultural intelligence in

international entrepreneurship, where they emphasized that understanding local cultural dynamics is essential for effective strategy formation.

Cultural Advantages and Access to Networks

Entrepreneur C's Lebanese background and his international experience in both Turkey and the USA helped him in providing access to immigrant networks in both countries, which proved to be an important resource in his real estate venture. These networks, that were formed through shared cultural ties, facilitated trust-building and client engagement for him, which illustrates the strategic advantage of cultural familiarity within diaspora communities (Drori et al., 2009).

In contrast, Entrepreneur E's experience as an online entrepreneur who is working with clients from around the world, noted that her international customer focus has minimized the impact of any direct influence from her cultural origins. However, she acknowledged that her background gave her valuable insights into diverse customer needs worldwide. This reflects the capacity for cultural backgrounds to indirectly enrich an entrepreneur's global perspective, particularly in digital and transnational sectors (Drori et al., 2009).

Comparative Cultural Work Environments and Strategic Focus

An interesting insight was shared by Entrepreneur B, where he drew a comparison between the economic and cultural work environments of the UK and Turkey. He noted that the UK's pragmatic and efficiency-driven approach prioritizes productivity over appearances, and he said that this different approach in business and by prioritizing efficiency and productivity over prestigious appearances helped him in scaling his business in the UK at a rapid rate. He also mentioned that his business in Turkey had a slower scalability and growth rate, which is attributed, partly, to the countries' deeply ingrained work culture that emphasize long hours and intense effort, yet it can lack the strategic focus that is necessary for scaling efficiently. He further observed that in Turkey there were cultural preference for investing in outward indicators of success, such as prestigious office spaces and maintaining an image of grandeur, which, he said they were culturally valued, can divert an entrepreneur's attention from the core business strategies that drive rapid and sustainable success. This can be observed through Hofstede's (2001) lens of collectivism and higher power distance in Turkey, where social image and hierarchical markers are culturally emphasized, in contrast to the UK's individualistic and low-power distance culture that values

efficiency and direct results. This insight demonstrates the different ways in which cultural perceptions of work and success can shape entrepreneurial outcomes across various contexts.

Together, these narratives show how cultural context can serve as both a source of advantage and a challenge, depending on the entrepreneur's industry, business model, and cultural background. These findings echo existing research that positions culture as a pivotal lens through which entrepreneurial behavior is both enabled and constrained (Hayton et al., 2002; Tung, 2008).

4.4.7 Strategic Map for Aspiring Entrepreneurs

Stages	Dos	Don'ts
1. Ground Work “Start with Clarity and Purpose”	- Set clear long-term and short-term goals. - Define your mission, values, and unique services. - Work in your target industry to gain firsthand experience. - Study the market thoroughly before acting.	- Don't launch a venture without understanding the business environment. - Don't copy others without adapting to your own vision. - Don't rely solely on passion without a structured plan.
2. Planning & Setup “Structure Before Speed”	- Build business systems from day one (e.g. admin, operations). - Write formal contracts, even with friends. - Use research to define pricing, branding, and logistics. - Build a timeline and backup plans before you launch.	- Don't skip planning in favor of fast execution. - Don't neglect legal or financial structures. - Don't ignore mentors or experts during setup.

3. Testing & Launching “Start Lean and Learn”	- Launch with a minimal but solid version of your product or service. - Focus on customer feedback and usability. - Stay agile and ready to adjust quickly. - Choose a stable location and market to begin.	- Don't aim for perfection at launch. - Don't overspend on branding without market validation. - Don't delay testing your idea in real-world settings.
4. Building the Brand “Trust Before Transactions”	- Prioritize trust and credibility in every interaction. - Focus on face-to-face communication when possible. - Learn cultural cues and adjust your style accordingly. - Create a personal brand rooted in authenticity.	- Don't rely solely on digital communication. - Don't assume one-size-fits-all marketing. - Don't ignore small gestures that build trust.
5. Systemizing & Scaling “Work Smarter, Not Harder”	- Delegate tasks and automate operations where possible. - Use digital tools for marketing, customer service, and logistics. - Remain lean but build scalability into your systems. - Expand only after local success is achieved.	- Don't scale without clear systems in place. - Don't micromanage everything; trust your team. - Don't rush into new markets before validating fit.
6. Traits for Long-Term Success “Balance, Discipline and Integrity”	- Maintain emotional control and discipline under pressure. - Stay honest, consistent, and aligned with your values. - Take care of your health and avoid burnout.	- Don't let emotions drive your decisions. - Don't sacrifice your ethics for quick wins.

	- Use failures as learning, not as deterrents.	- Don't isolate yourself from mentors and support networks. -Don't neglect your mental and physical health
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4.4.8 Conclusion

The findings from the qualitative data offered rich, first-hand insights into the lived experiences of diaspora entrepreneurs who are currently navigating different markets and industries. Through their voices, we were able to trace the strategic choices they made during startup and the ways they responded to risk and uncertainty, as well as the lessons they have carried forward. While each entrepreneur followed a unique path, common themes were consistently detected, such as adaptability, proactive learning, and long-term vision. The advice they shared for aspiring entrepreneurs reflected a deep understanding of what it truly means to build a business in today's business environments. Furthermore, these findings, the Resource-Based View Theory (RBV) that offers a useful lens to understand how internal organizational features shape entrepreneurial strategy. While external environmental pressures such as competition or market fluctuations were widely acknowledged, it was the strategic use of internal capabilities, including efficient decision-making, team trust, and adaptability, that appeared to support entrepreneurial posture for these participants. This implies that competitive advantage among diaspora entrepreneurs may emerge more from the internal resources that they use and less from their respective environmental conditions.

Overall, these findings not only bring depth to our understanding of strategic entrepreneurship, but it also sets the stage for a meaningful comparison with broader literature and the survey-based results, which will follow in the integrated analysis discussion.

4.6 Integrated Analysis: Survey and Interview Findings

This section discusses the integrated analysis that draws together insights from both the quantitative survey responses and the qualitative interviews to have a deeper understanding of the strategic behaviors and mindsets of entrepreneurs. While the qualitative interviews formed the core of the research by offering nuanced and real-world accounts, the survey data helped to situate these insights with broader patterns of perception and strategy.

4.6.1 Current Strategies

The current strategies that are used by the diaspora entrepreneurs reflect a hybrid model of reactive agility and proactive positioning. Across the interviews, a dominant theme was strategic flexibility where the entrepreneurs reported consistently adjusting their operations in response to customer behavior, market dynamics, and macro-level challenges. Several interviewees emphasized the importance of digital operations as an essential part of businesses today, including the use of social media for outreach and client engagement, digital payment tools for smoother transactions, and remote systems for managing remote team members and partners. These findings suggest that rather than relying on rigid business plans, the entrepreneurs leaned heavily on situational analysis and ongoing customer feedback, aligning closely with adaptive strategy models as seen in the literature (e.g. Teece, Peteraf & Leih, 2016)

Moreover, the entrepreneurs mentioned some strategies that centered on consistency, emphasizing the reliability and trust of their products or services as a primary market differentiator. This was particularly evident in cases where the business model had remained unchanged for years, signaling a belief in the long-term value of brand identity and customer trust. The Survey findings support adaptability with over 68% of the respondents reported that they respond to changing conditions or circumstances by quickly revising their strategies, affirming the importance of iterative strategy-making across both data sets. While these approaches may seem contradictory, they are in fact complementary as the entrepreneurs explained that they maintain a stable core identity in their ventures by using different strategies and tactical adjustments according to rising conditions, this balance between consistency and flexibility is a recurring theme across in both the qualitative and quantitative findings, reflecting a strategic posture that is both stable and adaptive. This approach aligns with the strategic entrepreneurship literature, which suggests that firms often

sustain long-term competitive advantage by keeping a consistent core while developing dynamic capabilities to respond to environmental changes (Teece, 2014; Ireland & Webb, 2007).

The dominant picture from both the interviews and survey responses underline the necessity of real-time, context-sensitive, and trust-driven strategies, especially for diaspora entrepreneurs who must navigate not only market uncertainty but also cultural, institutional, and sometimes legal complexity in foreign environments. These strategies are marked by a balance of structure and spontaneity, allowing entrepreneurs to sustain their businesses while remaining responsive to evolving market demands.

4.6.2 Challenge and Risk Management

The theme of navigating environmental hostility emerged strongly in both data sets. All the interviewees discussed facing regulatory ambiguity, lack of market knowledge, and high competition as recurring challenges. Their responses often reflected a resilience-oriented mindset through emphasizing adaptive strategies such as building networks, learning and gaining deep knowledge in their chosen country and industry etc. This was supported by the quantitative data as 72% of the survey participants agreed that hostile environments required frequent strategic shifts. These results aligned well with the qualitative codes “Risk Management and Responses Strategies,” which highlighted agility, regulatory learning, and mental resilience as some of the dominant coping mechanisms for entrepreneurs.

Previous literature on diaspora entrepreneurship supports these dual dynamics of vulnerability and strategic strength. Scholars like Elo and Freiling (2019) who argued that diaspora entrepreneurs often face compounded challenges due to their identity and location. Yet, others (e.g., Brzozowski, 2017) have argued that such conditions can actually stimulate innovation and unconventional thinking, which was clearly reflected in the adaptive strategies shared by the interviewees. These contradictions further underline the complex dualities that characterize diverse and diaspora entrepreneurial ventures.

4.6.3 Advice for Aspiring Entrepreneurs

The advice shared by the interviewees for aspiring entrepreneurs presents a deeply experiential and emotionally intelligent approaches to entrepreneurship by emphasizing clarity, discipline, planning, and personal growth. These diaspora entrepreneurs prioritize resilience, self-awareness, and adaptability. For instance, multiple participants emphasized the importance of beginning

where the market conditions and economy are the most favorable as well as acting decisively and quickly, and designing operational systems prior to launching a venture. Others focused on emotional regulation and behavioral intelligence as some of the core foundations for a sustainable business practice. Although the survey data did not directly explore “entrepreneurial advice”, a related finding emerged from the survey’s Strategic Posture Scale showing that over 65% of survey participants viewed agile adaptability to uncertainties as central to their strategy. This aligns with the interviewees’ recommendations on maintaining mental flexibility in uncertain markets.

Some academic voices have previously offered contradictory insights. Scholars such as Gartner (1988) argued that entrepreneurship should be approached as a set of observable behaviors rather than personal traits or advice, cautioning against overreliance on anecdotal insights. Furthermore, critics of “entrepreneurial myth-making” (e.g. Ogbor, 2000) argue that storytelling and personal narratives often obscure structural factors such as access to capital, which are vital for real entrepreneurial success but are less discussed in entrepreneurial advice. In contrast the entrepreneurs interviewed emphasized that access to capital is not the main challenge, instead, the real challenge is having a successful idea and implementing it correctly as funding can come from various resources and is not a major challenge when starting a new venture. Overall, by synthesizing insights from the detailed qualitative findings (Interviews) and the broader quantitative findings (Survey responses), as shown in a summary table below (i.e. Table 4.6.4), this integrated analysis has demonstrated not only what strategic approaches diaspora entrepreneurs use but also why and how they use them. The data revealed that strategic posture is more positively influenced by adaptability and supportive structures. It also suggested that internal entrepreneurial traits, when combined with systemic organization, play a significant role in determining strategic outcomes in complex markets. The alignment between the two methods strengthens confidence in the findings, while the contradictions invite for further exploration. Together, the data painted a picture of diverse and diaspora entrepreneurship as a process of adaptive learning, strategic evolution, and personal resilience, situated within dynamic and often challenging environments.

4.6.4 Integrated Analysis Summary Table

Main Theme	Qualitative Findings (Interviews)	Quantitative Findings (Survey responses)
Current Strategies	Entrepreneurs reported focusing on systematization, efficient use of digital platforms, niche market positioning, and customer-centric models as well as on staying agile and delegating tasks. Flexibility in pricing, communication, and service delivery was framed as essential in volatile market conditions.	76% reported regularly updating their marketing strategies to adapt to changing consumer behavior.
Challenge and Risk Management	Entrepreneurs managed environmental hostility with agility, regulatory learning, and being knowledgeable in their field.	72% agreed that hostile environments required frequent strategic changes.
Advice for Aspiring Entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurs emphasized the importance of early planning, emotional composure, practical experience, trust-building, and starting small but strategically. All interviewees spoke of learning through mistakes and highlighted the need to build systems before scaling. Traits	65% of survey participants noted that agile adaptability to uncertainties were central to their strategy, aligning with the interviewees' recommendations on maintaining mental flexibility in uncertain markets.

	like discipline, patience, adaptability, and social intelligence were frequently mentioned.	
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CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the interplay between the quantitative and the qualitative data collected for this research with a body of scholarly literature spanning entrepreneurship, strategic management, diaspora entrepreneurship and strategy, and entrepreneurial traits necessary for success (e.g. psychological resilience). The aim of the discussion is to showcase the patterns, contrasts, and insights that emerge when the entrepreneurial experiences of this study are examined against 27 peer-reviewed studies. The integration of these sources with the findings drawn from qualitative interviews and surveys offers a multidimensional perspective that respects both lived experience and theoretical frameworks.

The findings from this study revealed several central themes which are; strategic flexibility, digital operations, entrepreneurial traits such as resilience and adaptability, challenges and risk management, emotional control, and experiential learning, all of which underline the foundations for entrepreneurial decision-making and long-term sustainability and success. Furthermore, the diversity in customer acquisition strategies, the early-stage strategies, and the focus on psychological preparedness and discipline explores further into the lived nuances of early-stage businesses and ventures.

This chapter is organized around the integration of these findings with relevant academic literature, specifically addressing areas of convergences and contradictions. It further discusses the practical implications for future entrepreneurial practice, and offers some recommendations for future academic research.

5.2 Strategic Flexibility and Adaptability

Strategic flexibility was a dominant theme across all interviews as well as the survey responses. There was a consistent emphasis on the need to swiftly adapt and implement strategies in response to market dynamics and customer behavior, which is not surprising given the volatile and competitive nature of the environments in which these entrepreneurs operate in. These findings precisely align with Wiklund and Shepherd (2011) emphasis of the dynamic, contingent nature of

strategic posture, integrating environmental and internal organizational factors. They stated that entrepreneurial orientation must be viewed through the lens of experimentation and the distribution of outcomes by arguing that strategic posture is not fixed but rather dynamic, and it is contingent on both internal orientation and external realities. This aligns directly with the flexible decision-making practices that were described by the entrepreneurs of this study.

Similarly, Kargas and Aretos (2023) added further validation to these finding through their research on agile methodologies in strategic management, which concludes that the most important aspects for successful agile methodologies' adoption are linked to "adoption and perception," indicating that organizational flexibility is critical in volatile environments. When interviewed, the entrepreneurs described the use of adaptive strategies that fit closely onto this idea of "hybrid situations in strategic management where both agile principles and hierarchical control are used" (Kargas & Aretos, 2023). Moreover, Miller and Friesen (1983) stated that environmental hostility's effect on strategy is complex and it can lead to varied strategic postures depending on the firm's characteristics, which further emphasizes the necessity of strategic flexibility in uncertain settings. Covin and Slevin (1989) reinforce this finding with their foundational work that concludes that environmental hostility pushes firms toward innovation and proactive strategies, which echoes the behavioral and strategic adjustments made by the entrepreneurs in this research from observing customer reactions and market fluctuations.

5.3 Planning and Operational Preparedness: Foundational Strategies

The previous emphasis on adaptability does not negate the core relevance of structure. All interviewees highlighted the importance of having full operational business systems in place before launching any venture, emphasizing the need for, not only financial models or branding material, but end-to-end operational preparedness. This finding aligns closely with Nakajima and Sekiguchi (2025)'s recent research, which states that business planning serves not only as nourishment for an entrepreneur's vision but also as a vital companion in their journey. The study warns that in uncertain environments, lack of planning can create "psychological anxiety and fear," indicating that planning becomes a psychological anchor that helps entrepreneurs from facing the anxiety and loss of vision that can arise in the face of overwhelming ambiguity. Ma et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analysis adding to this idea by noting that entrepreneurial experience and

managerial experience positively influence the degree of planning sophistication. They stated that both experienced and inexperienced founders benefit from thoughtful planning, although they may approach it differently (formal vs. informal), further adding that female entrepreneurs, who are often more risk-averse, are more likely to engage in structured planning behaviors for their ventures.

In further support of this result is found in a study by Delmar and Shane (2004), their evidence suggests that completing business plans and establishing a legal entity early in the life of a new venture are advantageous to new ventures because these activities facilitate the transition to other firm organizing activities. These findings resonate strongly with the interview and survey results in this thesis, where over 65% of participants identified clarity and planning as critical pillars of their startup process. Yet Welter et al. (2021) directly challenged the dichotomy between business planning and lean startup logic by arguing that truly understanding customers through preorders and interviews can lead to better business plans and better pivots. They argued that rather than viewing planning as a static, one-time event, they propose a more fluid integration of planning and customer discovery. This nuance invites a reconsideration of the participant accounts in this study: while they advocated for comprehensive systems and early readiness, their descriptions often involved iterative adaptation, customer feedback, and ongoing change which are precisely the hallmarks of lean strategic thinking.

5.4 Digital Operations and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

This blend of structure and fluidity was perhaps most visible in the participants' use of digital tools as the entrepreneurs in this study highlighted pinpointed importance of social media, remote CRM tools, and digital marketing systems which, they explained, served as core operational backbones and platforms for their ventures' current strategic posture (e.g. day-to-day operations and long-term growth strategies). This finding broadly supports the work of other studies in this area; such as a previous research by Secundo et al. (2021) who described how "social media is primarily used by entrepreneurs as tools to market products and services," and further adds that the digital entrepreneurship field is rapidly shifting towards co-creation in networking environment as well as information sharing in the entrepreneurship ecosystem, further supporting the idea that digital

tools are now central to entrepreneurial ventures as well as aligning with the technology-driven approaches observed among the diaspora entrepreneurs in this research.

Additionally, the integration of digital operations is supported by Isaksson et al. (2021) in their study of 589 high-tech firms and its focus on that the complexity and structure of a business model including value proposition, customer relationships etc. They found that when firms are operating in dynamic environments, they need to adapt their technologies and strategies to fit the needs of customers, particularly in knowledge-intensive firms. These strategies include the integration of internal and external resources, adaptability of product and service offerings to align with customer needs. The emphasis on adaptability in these studies strongly supports the findings of this thesis, where it was found that entrepreneurial success was not shaped merely by a good idea, but by the fluid alignment of that idea with the continues changing needs of consumers.

5.5 Entrepreneurial Traits: Resilience, Discipline, Adaptability, and Social Intelligence

While strategic flexibility, operational preparedness and digital fluency emerged as external strategic priorities; social & emotional intelligence, discipline and psychological resilience stood out as internal strategies amongst the key findings of this research. A recurrent theme in this study is the constant emphasis by the participants on discipline, emotional and social intelligence, and resilience as necessary traits to have for any entrepreneur to succeed. These findings are in line with those of previous studies, such as; Shepherd and Williams (2020) who found that entrepreneurs with mental resilience are better equipped to manage setbacks and navigate challenges, which affirms this study's interpretation that psychological resilience shapes strategic decision-making and long-term success.

Interestingly, Ahmed et al. (2022)'s research proposed the idea that entrepreneurial activity itself can be a mechanism for building resilience as their integrative model connects resilience to the key constructs of stress and adaptability, where they found that the former is the key trigger of the resilience process and the latter is its core underlying mechanism. Their findings frame that whereas resilience can be an antecedent of engaging in entrepreneurship, there is limited research showing how resilience can also be an outcome of entrepreneurship, by building on the previous work on compassion venturing (Williams & Shepherd, 2016a, 2016b) and venturing during persistent adversity (Shepherd et al., 2020), they explained how scholars might usefully examine

how engaging in the act of entrepreneurship can help individuals in coping with various stressors. They provided an example stating that engaging in entrepreneurship can be seen as a problem-focused coping strategy for someone who is suffering from the effects of economic deprivation, or it might represent an emotion-focused coping strategy that psychologically distracts from significant traumas or persistent stress, supporting the idea that psychological resilience and balance is not only critical but it can also be cultivated through entrepreneurial activity which proposes an interesting angle to resilience, stress and the motivation behind starting an enterprise amongst some diaspora entrepreneurs.

In addition, Cardon et al. (2012) research states that emotions, passion, enthusiasm, and even emotional vulnerability, can actually enhance entrepreneurial creativity and resilience. They suggest that authenticity and emotional expressiveness may form stronger relationships with stakeholders and encourage further innovation. This complements some of the participants' opinions on having an empathetic, with caution against over empathizing, and an honest approach to business will increase the chances of success for an enterprise.

Supporting the idea of the importance of social and emotional intelligence in affecting entrepreneurial outcomes, Taneja, Tandon, and Mittal (2025) conducted empirical research that examined the interplay of social intelligence, entrepreneurial orientation, and organizational resilience. Their findings match those observed of this study, emphasizing that social intelligence enhances entrepreneurs' interpersonal capabilities which significantly contributes to the development of resilient and successful organizational practices, particularly under conditions of uncertainty and volatility. This suggests that entrepreneurs who have a heightened sense of social awareness and interpersonal adaptability are better positioned to navigate the dynamic challenges in the early-stages of a venture.

5.6 Experiential Learning and Strategic Development

Experiential learning and strategic development were a common theme that emerged across some of the interviews of this research, and it was often interwoven with the narratives of trial, error, and growth. As the participants often spoke of failure, not as an endpoint, but rather as learning moments that guided future strategic choices in their entrepreneurial journeys. Prior studies that have noted the importance of adaptive learning, where entrepreneurs refine their strategies based

on a process of trial and error, such as the research by Dencker et al. (2009), who argued that learning can be a great asset for a new firm; however, the survival benefits created by various learning activities may also be constrained or facilitated by the founders' pre-entry knowledge and experience. Their findings support this study's findings by suggesting that experiential knowledge enhances future decision-making for entrepreneurs. This aligned with the participants' stories in this study, where prior knowledge and learning translated into visible successful operational systems, and where constant development and real-world experience helped them in building a successful business and improve their ventures overall operational efficiency. An interesting contradiction emerged regarding the role of prior industry experience in entrepreneurial success. Among the interviewees, those who had established their businesses 20 to 25 years ago strongly emphasized the importance of extensive prior experience (1 to 3 years), they believe it as a critical foundation for starting a successful enterprise. One entrepreneur with six years of operating business supported a more moderate stance, he suggested that even a week of experience in the field could be enough to begin and start a successful venture. In contrast, the younger entrepreneurs, with 3 to 5 years of operating business, challenged the necessity of prior experience or industry-specific knowledge altogether. They argued that in today's digital and information rich environment, relevant knowledge is widely and easily accessible, and learning can happen dynamically through different approaches, such as; on-the-job experience, online platforms, and peer networks. The younger participants' views suggested a noticeable shift towards more fluid and non-linear learning ways, where a sense of quick adaptability and openness to learn may replace the need to have traditional experience in the industry as means to a successful enterprise. This supports the idea that entrepreneurial knowledge can be acquired and constructed in real time, suggesting a more contemporary interpretation of experiential learning. Additionally, this study extends the Knowledge-Based View (KBV) (Sirén et al., 2012) by highlighting how entrepreneurs in diverse and resource-constrained contexts leverage experiential and contextual knowledge as strategic assets. The findings demonstrate that beyond formal capabilities, it is the dynamic, and sometimes the informal knowledge that guides strategic decision-making, adaptability, and resilience in uncertain environments, particularly among diaspora and diverse entrepreneurs.

5.7 Early Customer Acquisition and Marketing

When asked “What strategies they used to acquire their first customers?” the entrepreneurs of this research had various answers, and two common themes were found, first, they described how their first clients were sourced through personal networks, second, they described how they were acquired through strategic online visibility (digital marketing) as well as a combination of both strategies. The complexity of these approaches is mirrored in González et al. (2024), who argued that the importance of questioning; who/why (core customers and partnerships), what (product definition), and for whom (market segmentation), before elaborating the different how’s for any venture. Their work emphasizes that the initial stages and customer targeting of an enterprise are crucial and are controlled by the foundational decisions making process from the outset of a venture. The first finding is directly supported by Dubini and Aldrich (2002) who argued that personal and extended networks are central to the entrepreneurial process, they further distinguished between “extended networks associated with organizations” and “informal, personal networks associated with individuals,” saying that both of which are essential in shaping market opportunities and sustaining business growth.

The second finding is supported by Fürst et al. (2023) who emphasized that new Venture managers should proactively attend to the organizational design of marketing activities right after their firms’ founding, supporting this study’s findings that early customer engagement and structured marketing strategies are a focal point at the start of any venture.

Interestingly however, Fürst et al.’s (2023) further recommended to implement “wide marketing dispersion” rather than market specialization at the earliest stages of the firm arguing that distributing marketing responsibilities broadly across improves the responsiveness rates from the consumers and supports market orientation, particularly when startups lack fully staffed marketing teams. This is in contrast with the findings of this study, as some of the participants urged against reaching a broad and generalized market, mentioning that this was one of their early mistakes, and rather advised aspiring entrepreneurs to shift their focus and specialize in only one market (e.g. exclusive luxury markets vs mass markets). Based on this thesis findings, focusing only in one market seems to be the most practical approach for early start-up. It was found that having a wide market dispersion for the sole purpose of reaching more people does not guarantee reaching the right consumer base because broad marketing may lack relevance for specific consumer groups.

However, specializing in a niche ensures that the product or service speaks directly to a targeted audience that is more likely to convert into actual customers. Moreover; startups typically operate with limited financial and human resources so specializing in one market allows the team to focus their time, budget, and energy more strategically and helps in avoiding the dilution of efforts that often comes with generalized marketing. In today's digital environment the rise of digital marketing platforms, such as social media, email marketing, SEO tools, and influencer partnerships, has lowered the barrier for reaching and engaging a niche audience effectively, while having a fully staffed marketing team is certainly beneficial for a venture, but a small team (or even a solo founder) can still run a focused and impactful marketing campaign without needing a large budget or team using today's ever-evolving digital marketing platforms.

5.8 Challenges and Risk Management

Challenges and risks were described as another constant in the lives of the entrepreneurs interviewed. However, what emerged was not a fear of risk or loss but rather a need to face the challenges through a complex layered approach. This included an interwoven blend of experience, market and data analysis, preparedness for a margin of failure, and staying mentally agile in the face of challenges. The entrepreneurs' sophisticated approach to managing uncertainty aligns with Kim and Park (2023), who found that entrepreneurs using systematic environmental scanning and data analytics make more effective risk management decisions than those relying solely on intuition alone. Furthermore, the participants risk management approaches confirm with Shepherd and Williams (2020) findings, who wrote that entrepreneurs with mental flexibility are better equipped to manage setbacks and navigate challenges, which helps them in sustaining their ventures despite risk. It was understood from the interviews mental flexibility was not mentioned merely as a trait but rather as a working method, a way to handle challenges and risks in a volatile business environment and acting decisively even in the absence of full information. This suggests that the entrepreneurs in this study are aligned with some of the best practices in the field regarding managing risks, where data-driven situational analysis has been proved to improve decision making in the face of challenges. One interesting finding is that the interviewees mentioned financial capital was not an issue in starting a venture. Instead, they explained that finding the right human capital is the most crucial and challenging part of a start-up. This aligns with Ucbasaran et

al. (2008), who argued that both general and entrepreneurship-specific human capital, including education, experience, and technical capabilities, are essential in shaping the identification and pursuit of successful business opportunities. This raises another compelling contradiction as the participants of this study frequently pointed to resilience and human capital as ways to overcome challenges, yet they said financial capital is not a limiting factor as it can be obtained from multiple sources. This is at odds with Fairlie and Robb (2008) study, who found that firms with higher levels of startup financial capital are less likely to close and are more likely to have higher profits and sales, they highlight that access to capital is a major determinant of success, especially amongst minority entrepreneurs. Similarly, Eisenmann (2021) says that lack of capital is consistently among the top 5 reasons startups fail which raises the question of whether the entrepreneurs in this study deprioritized this constraint, or whether their resilience strategies compensated for financial barriers in unique ways. In order to answer this question a re-review of the interview results was conducted, and it was found that some participants, practically in the product-based businesses, explained that financial capital can be easily obtained through formal connection, previously collected finances, family members and loans from banks or businesses. Others mentioned relying solely on their knowledge and education to build their service-based ventures, which they started without any financial capital and were not in the need for it during the start-up stages.

5.9 Diaspora Strategy: Local vs. International

Several entrepreneurs in this study emphasized the importance of starting a venture with small steps within the existing market in their host country. They emphasized that any start up must only focus on the local market first and after achieving success and having stable ROI they can further expand to international markets. This strategy, as they mentioned, helps with correcting product mistakes through cost effective strategies and preventing major loss. Syrett and Keles (2022) confirm this pattern in diaspora settings, by showing how diaspora entrepreneurs often focus on mastering local markets before expanding internationally and underscoring the critical role of contextual understanding and embedded relationships. Nkongolo-Bakenda and Chrysostome (2020: p31) support this insight through their survey of 59 diaspora entrepreneurs, noting that “the majority... preferred close friends as the best source to identify business opportunities”. These practices support the findings of this thesis as most of the participants appeared to have built their ventures with a strong focus on the local market.

Nkongolo-Bakenda and Chrysostome (2020) addressed some strategies applied by diaspora entrepreneurs when expanding their business internationally. They explained that these entrepreneurs often had to perform tasks themselves that their customers were supposed to do to facilitate the knowledge to transfer across borders. They also differentiated themselves from competitors on the basis of product quality, and in some cases, adopting a low-cost leadership strategy. Interestingly, the same study reported that diaspora transnational entrepreneurs frequently operate across borders, and they often export the same products/services without any modification. This suggests the complexity of diaspora entrepreneurial practices as there may be different models within diaspora entrepreneurship: some hyperlocal, others transnational, which might reflect sectoral, cultural, or contextual differences.

5.10 Practical Implications for Aspiring Entrepreneurs

This section outlines the most important actionable takeaways for aspiring entrepreneurs, start-up founders, and organizations, drawn directly from the integration of this study's findings and the 27 discussed research articles. These implications emphasize resilience, planning, adaptability, and system-building etc. as foundational tools for entrepreneurial success.

1. Strategic Planning and Agility

The entrepreneurs interviewed in this study demonstrated a high level of strategic flexibility, which resonates with Kargas and Aretos (2023) who highlighted the importance of flexible methodologies that affect strategic management. They stated that entrepreneurs should institutionalize agility through both adaptive operations and lean business structures through combining agile principles with essential control systems. This hybrid approach helps firms to respond quickly to uncertainties and challenges without losing strategic direction. Similarly, Wiklund and Shepherd (2011) recommend treating entrepreneurship as an "experimentation" that has several phases of failure and learning. So, entrepreneurs should view adaptation not as a reactive move, but as a structured and a repeatable strategy within their ventures.

Furthermore, aspiring entrepreneurs are encouraged to take a nuanced approach to business planning. Welter et al. (2021) cautioned that lean startup and business planning are not opposing approaches; rather, they suggested intertwining iterative planning with continuous customer

feedback. Furthermore, Kim and Park (2023) stressed that systematic environmental scanning and data analytics can significantly improve business outcomes. Based on these studies, as well as the findings from this research, it is suggested that entrepreneurs embrace a hybrid decision-making process by combining intuition with analytical tools to make smarter and more agile choices. Nakajima and Sekiguchi (2025) further argue that planning is a vital companion in the entrepreneurial journey, as it helps in reducing psychological stress and facilitates actions specifically in times of uncertainties and challenges. Thus, entrepreneurs should adopt modular planning, where core operational systems are set up early, but product or market specifics continuously evolve based on customer feedback. This approach reduces the risks of over-planning while still catering to agility, direction and clarity.

2. Early Investment in Foundational Decisions

It has been emphasized that entrepreneurs should pay close attention to the decisions (e.g. team building, market segmentation, partnerships, operational systems etc.) at the early stages of a venture, which as González et al. (2024) emphasized, have far-reaching consequences. These core choices form the foundation on which the venture's future strategy and growth depend. Focusing on these early decisions when building a venture can form a stable yet flexible foundation that can support rapid scaling and long-term success for business.

3. Leveraging Social Media Strategies

This study showed that participants widely used digital tools especially social media platforms and Google Reviews. As Secundo et al. (2021) noted, social media use is rapidly moving towards value creation, beyond just promotional and marketing activities. They emphasized a pressing need to teach digital capability not only as a technical skill, but as a strategic behavior embedded within broader business logic. This emphasizes the need for entrepreneurs to prioritize co-creation strategies and real-time engagement to generate customer-driven innovation. Social media platforms should therefore be viewed not only as marketing channels but also as spaces for network building, idea validation, and product iteration.

4. Traits for Success

Participants in this study emphasized that entrepreneurs must have certain traits critical to their venture's success, with emotional and mental resilience being the most frequently mentioned as

key to navigating the ever-existing challenges in volatile environments. Ahmed et al. (2022) proposed that entrepreneurship itself can be a mechanism for building resilience within individuals. Moreover, entrepreneurs should show empathy and understating toward consumers, by viewing resilience not just as stoicism but as awareness, adaptability, and openness (Cardon et al., 2012). Additional core traits stressed by the interviewees include: social intelligence, building a wide network, discipline, integrity and honesty in every step of an entrepreneurial journey.

5.11 Academic Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

This section outlines the theoretical and academic contributions of this study as well as highlighting some directions for future research based on both the findings of this study and the scholarly literature. The integration of firsthand insights from diaspora and diverse entrepreneurs with some empirical studies offers valuable contributions to strategic entrepreneurship, diaspora entrepreneurship, and strategic management.

1. Contributions to the Literature on Strategic Entrepreneurship

The findings of this thesis reinforce and extend the literature on strategic entrepreneurship, specifically by examining how entrepreneurs operate and plan strategically in dynamic environments across different phases of their businesses. Covin and Slevin (1989) and Wiklund and Shepherd (2011) emphasized through their research that strategic posture emerges from the interplay between internal traits and external turbulences. This study's findings support this claim, particularly through real-world examples of how entrepreneurs practice agility and strategic management. Furthermore, this thesis contributes to the strategic entrepreneurship literature by reinforcing the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory and the Dynamic Capabilities theory. Through the insights drawn from diverse entrepreneurial stories, the research demonstrates how unique resource combinations and adaptive capabilities drive strategic decision-making in dynamic and uncertain environments. Additionally, this research contributes to the Knowledge-Based View (KBV) (Sirén et al., 2012) by revealing how entrepreneurs in diverse and resource-constrained contexts leverage contextual knowledge and experiential learning as strategic assets. The findings of this study show that beyond tangible resources, the ability to mobilize and apply localized and experiential knowledge critically shapes entrepreneurial strategies and performance, especially

under uncertainty. This extends the KBV by illustrating its relevance in dynamic, and diasporic contexts.

2. Implications for Diaspora and Transnational Entrepreneurship Research

This study contributes to the discussion around diaspora entrepreneurship by demonstrating how identity, emotional and mental resilience, and contextual grounding shape business strategies within diaspora enterprises. Syrett and Keles (2022) and Nkongolo-Bakenda and Chrysostome (2020) present both complementary and contradicting views on local versus international strategies. Their findings suggest that diaspora entrepreneurs often start within the local markets of their host countries, integrating themselves into their immediate communities, before selectively expanding internationally. Building on these findings, the present study offers new insights by combining both qualitative narratives and quantitative patterns from diaspora entrepreneurs across multiple regions, highlighting how personal challenges, strategic choices, and environmental factors interact to shape entrepreneurial posture and long-term success. Further research is needed to better distinguish between diaspora entrepreneurs with international ambitions and those focused solely on local markets in their host countries, as well as to explore how these strategic intentions are shaped by factors such as background, cultural identity, access to resources, and cross-border challenges.

3. Business Planning

The findings of this study affirm the importance and value of business planning, while also highlighting the need for flexible, context-sensitive operational systems. These findings support the conclusions of Ma et al. (2021), Nakajima and Sekiguchi (2025), and Welter et al. (2021), who suggested that business planning is useful, but it also depends on several variables such as, the entrepreneur's experience level, gender, industry, and planning style (formal vs. informal). Future studies on the current topic are therefore recommended to examine how planning interacts with adaptability for example, the negative impact emerges when planning becomes a constraint rather than a support, and to explore how planning affects entrepreneurs in different sectors and identity groups, particularly in diaspora communities where institutional and financial support may be limited. Additionally, further analysis is needed on the impact of pre-entry knowledge and the use of new technology on adaptability and business model evolution (Dencker et al., 2009; Isaksson et al., 2021)

4. Human Capital, Emotional Intelligence, and Experiential Learning

The present study's findings on experiential learning and emotional intelligence suggests a need to expand how human capital is defined in entrepreneurship research. As Ucbasaran et al. (2008) argued, general education and managerial experience are crucial for an entrepreneur before starting a venture. However, the findings of this thesis show that experiential learning and emotional self-management are equally crucial for success. Further studies, that consider these variables such as, creating a theoretical model that integrates technical experience, strategic flexibility, and emotional intelligence, may provide more precise insights into what drives performance in high-risk and low-resource environments with diverse and diaspora entrepreneurs.

5.12 Conclusion

In summary, the findings of this study provide a clear answer to the main research questions: "How do successful diverse and diaspora entrepreneurs from different industries, backgrounds, and countries apply strategic entrepreneurship to overcome challenges, achieve success, and navigate failures? What strategies do they recommend for startups and entrepreneurs to adopt and to avoid?". The study reveals that strategic entrepreneurship is not just a technical use of market logic or formal planning. Instead, it is a lived experience deeply influenced by emotion, identity, and context.

The entrepreneurs in this study showed a variety of practices that focus on seeking opportunities and building advantages, which are central areas to strategic entrepreneurship (Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland et al., 2003). What makes these practices unique is how they are developed, changed, and used through the entrepreneurs' journeys. For example, adaptability and agility were not simply a response to market changes; but they were learned behaviors that were shaped by past challenges or experiences. Likewise, planning varied among the entrepreneurs; it was influenced by their mindset, previous experience and knowledge, or backgrounds in risk and structure. The results also reveal that emotional discipline, resilience, and mental clarity were not just supportive qualities; they were key strategic tools. For many entrepreneurs, the emotional work involved in entrepreneurship was tightly linked to strategic leadership. Emotional intelligence, which is gained

through experiences such as failure, became essential in decision-making, building trust with customers, and navigating risks. Thus, the entrepreneurs' personal stories are not separate from their business; rather they are embedded within them, shaping the pace, approach, and practice of strategy itself.

Additionally, the social aspect of strategy proved to be a crucial part of building and growing a venture. The participants used the social networks they built over time, within various communities, across borders, and in digital spaces, to recognize opportunities, gain legitimacy, and support growth. These trust-based networks were not randomly accessed; they were closely related to personal backgrounds, cultural identities, and past contributions to community life.

Overall, this chapter demonstrates that diverse entrepreneurs engage in a complex form of strategic entrepreneurship, which was best understood through an approach of storytelling interviews. Their experiences reveal that strategy arises not only from recognizing and seizing opportunities or conducting environmental analysis but also from who they are and what they bring to their ventures. These insights directly address the main research question and broaden the understanding of what strategic entrepreneurship should include, promoting a more human-centered and context-aware view of entrepreneurial strategy. In answering the research question, it becomes clear that strategy does not only come external factors; but it also emerges from within the entrepreneur's personal journey. The entrepreneurs in this study crafted their approaches not merely through theoretical frameworks, but through lived experiences, stories of challenges, insights, trials, and market navigation. Their journeys influenced how they strategized, how they perceived risk, and determined what they deemed worth pursuing. These findings show that for diverse entrepreneurs, strategy is not only a static set of tools but also a dynamic and personal strategy as well.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Study Overview

This study set out to explore the lived and real-life experiences, strategies, and insights of diverse and diaspora entrepreneurs working in different countries and industries. This research used a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from 30 international entrepreneurs with qualitative interviews from five diaspora entrepreneurs. Together, these two methods sought to enhance the general understanding of strategic entrepreneurship, which is a concept that sits at the intersection of strategic management and entrepreneurship, especially within the context of real-world complexity and uncertainty.

Through quantitative analysis by using SPSS, the study examined how environmental hostility and organizational practices influence strategic posture. The subsequent Moderate Regression Analysis revealed the critical roles that these variables play in shaping an entrepreneur's ability to navigate challenges and maintain a successful strategic posture within a venture. The qualitative interviews analyzed by using MAXQDA, offered rich narratives and in-depth stories of the participants' entrepreneurial journeys, revealing personal insights, pathways to success, lessons learned from failures (e.g. unsuccessful strategies), and breakthrough strategies that quantitative metrics cannot fully capture. By integrating both measurable patterns and rich insights from the interviews, this study contributes to the strategic, experiential, emotional and socio-cultural understanding of how entrepreneurs think, adapt, and act strategically across different contexts.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings

The main findings of the study can be summarized as follows: First, strategic entrepreneurship is not a one-size-fits-all approach, as entrepreneurs use a wide variety of strategies based on their environments, available resources, and personal values. While some strategies fit established strategy models in the literature, others are creatively developed in response to specific challenges and goals. Furthermore, environmental hostility (EH) was found to significantly influence strategic posture (SP), as shown in the quantitative analysis. In this context, entrepreneurs who perceive higher levels of external threats often take more aggressive or adaptive strategic approaches. In addition, organizational practices (OP) act as mediators between environmental hostility and

strategic behavior, supporting resilience, creativity, agility, and adaptability. Moreover, it was proved that strong internal structures often help compensate for volatile or hostile external environments. Similarly, the interviews from the qualitative narratives highlighted some common themes regarding strategic entrepreneurship approaches such as taking risks, iterative learning (learning through experimentation), quick decision-making, and building customer trust. These stories confirm and expand existing theories, while they also challenge the straightforward assumptions that are sometimes found in strategic entrepreneurship models. Additionally, many participants openly shared their experiences with failure as part of their journey, stressing its importance for learning and adjusting their strategies that eventually led their ventures to success. This aligns with some current entrepreneurship research that focuses on resilience, agility, and experimentation. Finally, the entrepreneurs' sample of diaspora and international entrepreneurs, because of their ability to navigate across various institutional, cultural, and geographic boundaries, offers unique strategic insights. Their mixed perspectives helped in demonstrating creative and innovative approaches to identifying opportunities and mobilizing resources for the findings of this research.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

While this research offers rich insights, it is not without limitations. To begin with, the quantitative research approach (survey) included only 30 entrepreneurs; therefore, the small sample size did limit the statistical power and broader relevance and applicability of some quantitative findings. Moreover, this study's main focus was on the qualitative data of interviews and personal stories, which allowed for an in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences. However, it did not include large-scale surveys or statistics, and because of that, the findings cannot be generalized to all entrepreneurs. Consequently, future studies should incorporate more quantitative methods to test or expand on these results. In addition, some physiological themes like emotional resilience and social intelligence were significant in this research. However, this thesis was not designed to explore the psychological aspects of entrepreneurship in depth. A more thorough examination of these areas would require different research methods, such as psychological studies or in-depth ethnographic work; thus, this would be a fruitful area for further research. Nevertheless, these

limitations do not lessen the value of the insights but rather emphasize the need for further research that continues this exploratory approach.

6.4 Final Reflections

At its heart, this thesis is not just about strategies, but about people, individuals who dream, fail, adapt, and build something against all odds. Strategic entrepreneurship is not solely about frameworks or business models; it is about how people find meaning through action in an uncertain world. The voices captured in this research reflect a broader truth: that strategy is lived, not just planned.

By sharing the experiences of entrepreneurs from around the world, this research emphasizes the power of storytelling and the importance of diversity in shaping the future of entrepreneurship. It is hoped that the insights gained from this study may be of assistance to not only the academic discussions, but also to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs, wherever they may be starting from.

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APPENDIX 1: Entrepreneurial Strategies Survey Questions

This survey aims to identify key the strategic practices that are employed by entrepreneurs. It seeks to understand how these practices align with strategic entrepreneurship literature, and to offer actionable insights for aspiring entrepreneurs.

The Environmental Hostility Scale

How would you describe the external environment in which your entrepreneurial venture operates?

- Very safe, little threat to the survival and success of my venture

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Very risky, where a single mistake could lead to major setbacks for high rewards

What is the level of opportunity and challenge in your field?

- Rich in growth and investment opportunities

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Very challenging, stressful, and highly competitive

How much control does your venture have over external factors?

- My venture can shape and influence the environment to its advantage

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- My venture operates in a highly restrictive and uncontrollable environment

How does the cultural environment influence your strategies?

- Minimal influence, with strategies remaining largely consistent

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Major influence, requiring significant adjustments to align with local norms

What impact does the regulatory framework in the country where your venture operates have on your business?

- Few barriers due to supportive regulations

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Significant challenges due to complex or restrictive rules

Organizational Practices Scale

In general, how would you describe communication within your venture?

- Communication is tightly controlled, and only certain people can access important financial and operational information

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Communication is open and shared freely across all levels of the organization

How does your venture respond to changing circumstances?

- A consistent, uniform management style across the venture

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Quickly adapts to new conditions, prioritizing flexibility over tradition

What is your approach to processes and control?

- Strict adherence to formal procedures

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Focus on outcomes, even if it means bypassing formalities

Strategic Posture Scale

What is the focus of your venture's strategy?

- A strong emphasis on the marketing of tried-and-true products or services

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- A strong emphasis on R&D, technological leadership, and innovations

How active has your venture been in introducing new lines of products or services?

- No new lines of products or services

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Many new lines of products and services introduced

How significant are the changes your venture has made?

- Minor adjustments to existing products or services

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Major, transformative changes in products or services

What is your competitive approach?

- Reactive, responding to competitors' actions

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Proactive, initiating actions that competitors respond to

What is your venture's stance on competition?

- Prefers to avoid competitive clashes, preferring a “live-and-let-live” approach

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Typically adopts a very competitive, “undo-competitors” approach

How often does your venture lead in innovation?

- Rarely the first to introduce new products/services, ideas, techniques, or operating technologies

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Very often the first business to introduce new ideas, techniques, or operating technologies

What level of risk do you embrace in decision-making?

- Preference for low-risk, predictable outcomes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Willingness to take high risks for potentially high rewards

How do you handle uncertainty in strategic decisions?

- Cautious and incremental approach

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Bold and aggressive strategies to seize opportunities

APPENDIX 2: Entrepreneurial Strategies Interview Questions

Section 1: Introduction and Background

* Brief introduction, name, age, nationality, place of operating business

1. Can you briefly describe your business, its focus, and your role in it?
2. What inspired you to start this venture?
3. How long has your business been operating, and how has it evolved since the beginning?

Section 2: Strategies at the Startup Stage

4. What were the first steps you took to launch your business?
5. What key resources (financial, human, or others) did you prioritize during the early stages?
6. Did you face any major challenges when starting your business? How did you overcome them?
7. Were there specific strategies you used to identify and target your first customers or clients?

Section 3: Current Strategies and Growth

8. What are the most prominent challenges you currently facing? and what are your approaches to dealing challenges.
9. What strategies are you currently using to maintain and grow your business?
10. Do you focus on innovation, customer retention, marketing, or something else?
11. How do you manage risks and uncertainties in your decision-making now?
12. Have you had to pivot or change your strategy as your business grew? Can you share an example of when a pivot was necessary?
13. In your opinion, what is the most critical element of strategic entrepreneurship?
14. How do you balance short-term goals with long-term strategy?

Section 4: Lessons Learned

15. Looking back, what mistakes did you make in the early stages that you would avoid today? Are there specific strategies or practices that didn't work for your business?

16. If you were to start a new business today, what would you do differently based on your experience?

Section 5: Advice for Aspiring Entrepreneurs

17. What key strategies would you recommend to someone starting a business in your industry?

18. How should aspiring entrepreneurs prepare for challenges in the startup phase?

19. Are there specific traits or habits you believe entrepreneurs need to succeed?

20. What's one thing you wish someone had told you before you started your business?

CURRICULUM VITAE

Primary education was completed in Doha, Qatar in 2010. Secondary and high school education were completed in Sanaa, Yemen in 2016. Undergraduate studies began in 2018 at Bursa Uludağ University, Business Department, and were completed in 2022 in Bursa, Türkiye. Graduate studies in the MBA program at Yalova University, Business Department, began in 2023 and were completed in 2025 in Yalova, Türkiye. Work experience includes roles as a business consultant and manager.

PUBLICATIONS AND WORKS DERIVED FROM THE THESIS

Alaa Abdullah Yahya Musleh 2025, Crossing Borders, Building Futures: Entrepreneurial Strategies in International Trade and Logistics, Bursa 3rd International Trade and Logistics Symposium, ISBN: 979-8-89695-078-3, Verbal Presentation.

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

İlköğretim 2010 yılında Katar, Doha’da tamamlanmıştır. Ortaokul ve lise eğitimi 2016 yılında Yemen, Sana’da tamamlanmıştır. Lisans eğitimine 2018 yılında Bursa Uludağ Üniversitesi İşletme Bölümü’nde başlanmış ve 2022 yılında Türkiye, Bursa’da tamamlanmıştır. Yüksek lisans eğitimine 2023 yılında Yalova Üniversitesi İşletme Bölümü MBA programında başlanmış ve 2025 yılında Türkiye, Yalova’da tamamlanmıştır. İş deneyimleri arasında iş danışmanlığı ve yöneticilik görevleri bulunmaktadır.

TEZDEN TÜRETİLEN YAYIN VE ESERLER

Alaa Abdullah Yahya Musleh 2025 Sinirlari Aşmak, Gelecekleri İnşa Etmek: Uluslararası Ticaret Ve Lojistikte Girişimcilik Stratejileri, Bursa 3. Uluslararası Ticaret ve Lojistik Sempozyumu, ISBN: 979-8-89695-078-3, Sözlü Sunum.