

**WHAT DRIVES AN ENTREPRENEUR? MOTIVES AND THE
INFLUENCE OF INSTITUTIONS AT DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENT
STAGES**

Área de investigación: Entorno de las organizaciones

Elda Barrón

EGADE Business School
Tecnológico de Monterrey
México
elda.barron@gmail.com

Linda E Ruiz

EGADE Business School
Tecnológico de Monterrey
México
linda_elizabeth@hotmail.com

Eric Robles

EGADE Business School
Tecnológico de Monterrey
México
eric@live.com.mx

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Abstract

Entrepreneurial motivations refer to the specific motives that entrepreneurs have to start a business. The classification of these motives into either necessity-based or opportunity-based has been dominant in the field of entrepreneurship. This article deepens our understanding of the motives for starting a new venture by analyzing the influence that an incubator's program exerts on potential entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurial motivation. Based on a study of eight new ventures from prestigious entrepreneurial incubator and accelerator from Mexico, results show that incubators can modify the initial business idea of entrepreneurs, which in turn also modified the entrepreneurs' motivations in different ways and degrees. Data was collected based on twelve in-depth interviews, which were carried out with entrepreneurs at different incubation stages. In addition, data was analyzed through an empirical-interpretative method. Findings are discussed with previous findings on entrepreneurial motivations.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship motives, incubator, entrepreneur motives.



Introduction

"Everyone has ideas. They may be too busy or lack the confidence or technical ability to carry them out. But I want to carry them out. It is a matter of getting up and doing it."- James Dyson

A sophisticated combination of circumstances can lead a specific individual to decide to create a new venture. The same circumstances, however, will not lead another individual to take the same path. For their part, educational programs and governmental and non-governmental organisms try to create the necessary circumstances to develop successful entrepreneurs by helping them discover and improve their initial business ideas.

Essential elements in the development of successful entrepreneurs are the motives that individuals have on creating their new venture. Most studies classify the entrepreneurial motives through a dualistic depiction, necessity or opportunity (Block and Wagner, 2010; Liñan, Fernández-Serrano and Romero 2013). Other authors, however, contend that there are other motives besides necessity and opportunity that lead to the creation of new ventures. In this study, we build on the latter critique and explore other potential motives that drive entrepreneurs to start a new venture. In addition, we also analyze the influence that incubators and accelerators can have on them.

Incubators and accelerators play a central role in helping entrepreneurs shape and develop their business ideas. They provide them with financial help, mentoring and network building (Bergek and Norman, 2008; Soetanto and Jack 2011). We contend that through the incubation and accelerations processes entrepreneurs may modify their entrepreneurial motives since whole business ideas can change through them.

To address our investigation, we analyze eight cases of entrepreneurs in different incubation and acceleration stages. Through an interpretive empirical method, we identify the main motivators of the aforementioned entrepreneurs and the influence incubators and accelerators have on them.





This paper is divided into four parts. The first part describes several arguments about the reasons to start a new venture and the usefulness of incubators institutions. The second part describes the methodology we followed in trying to answer our research questions. In the third part, we draw in a narrative and interpretative way our findings. In the final section, we offer some conclusions about the themes and future directions in the area.

Theoretical background

Entrepreneurial motivation is an individual prior reason that motivates an entrepreneur to start a business (Shane, Locke and Collins, 2003). Entrepreneurial motivation research aims to understand reasons behind an entrepreneurial intention, or specific motives to start a business. In general, entrepreneurial research has followed a particular classificatory pattern of motivations in the last years; this is a basic dichotomous depiction of entrepreneurial motives that differentiates necessity-drivers and opportunity drivers (Williams and Williams, 2012).

The orientation to necessity motivation refers entrepreneurs who voluntarily start their business, by trying to alleviate a specific personal situation, like unemployment or the need to increase their incomes. On the other side, those entrepreneurs lead by opportunity motives, usually recognize a business idea by in many cases knowing the needs of a market. Diverse studies approach this dualistic depiction of entrepreneurial motives to differentiate and compare them (Block and Wagner, 2010; Liñán et al., 2013).

Other authors, however, have attempted to study motives beyond the duality of opportunity-necessity. For example, Uddin and Bose (2013) suggest that entrepreneurs are looking for their personal and their family's security. Besides, other motives for entrepreneurs are the desire for financial success (Edelman, Brush, Manolova and Green, 2010; Friedman, Keles, and Sayfullin, 2012), the recognition from family, friends, and colleagues (Friedman, Azis, Keles and Sayfullin, 2012), and looking for independence (Barba-Sánchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo; 2012). Giacomini, Janssen, Pruett, Shinnar, Llopis, and Toney (2011) argue that motivations can differ geographically, arguing that environmental and contextual factors (see also Autio, Kenney, Mustar, Siegel and Wright, 2014; Liñán, Urbano, and Guerrero 2011; Meek,



Pacheco and York, 2010) play an essential role in constructing entrepreneurial motives.



Around the world, different institutions (e.g., incubators and accelerators) support entrepreneurs in the creation and development of their ventures. For example, accelerators may support entrepreneurs by helping them find funds for their ideas (Dempwolf, Auer and, D'ippolito, 2014; Katz and Green, 2009) and incubators may help entrepreneurs in shaping their business ideas. Incubators also may provide facilities to entrepreneurs like office-space, training, and assistant on specific subjects like finance, special themes, and some other topics.

Research on the previously-mentioned institutions has emphasized on understanding the implications that incubator or an accelerator has on entrepreneurs. Most of this research has focused on analyzing the effect that these institutions have on the performance of entrepreneurs and their ventures (e..g, Mian 1997). Besides, other researchers have also analyzed the importance that incubators have on facilitating the construction of networks that help entrepreneurs run their business successfully (Bøllingtoft and Ulhøi, 2005; Ebbbers, 2014). Complementarily, some researchers have studied the effect that incubators and accelerators have on the economic development of the region they are located (Al-Mubarak, Muhammad, and Busler, 2015).

The incubation process comprehends four stages: 1) Business Idea 2) Attempt 3) Development, and 4) Commercialization (Brooks,1986). For Bergek and Norrman (2008), incubators follow a model of three components: selection, business support, and mediation. Both perspectives match with our research of Mexican incubator dynamic that mentions three stages: pre-incubation, incubation and post-incubation. In the first stage, pre-incubation, selected entrepreneurs work to develop a business plan based on canvas methodology. The second stage, incubation, begins after a business plan presentation and consists in develop each section of this plan. Finally, the third stage, post-incubation starts when the firm launches their product to the market, this stage does not have an end, entrepreneurs could continue indefinitely in this stage.



Method

For the present study, we identified and analyzed eight new ventures within an incubator environment from three different institutions and at different maturity stage. Data were gathered from in-depth interviews and observation of different entrepreneurial activities. The aim of this investigation is focused on the motives that lead an entrepreneur to engage in the creation of a new venture and to develop it under an incubator context. We decided to adopt this approach because we wanted to understand in detail the interaction of the determinant key elements surrounding a motive to start a new business. This approach let researchers discover rich experiences from the people, enabling the participants select the aspects they want to emphasize (Barbour, 2014).

We selected entrepreneurs in which their companies are within one of the stages of incubator development: pre-incubation, incubation, and post-incubation. Those entrepreneurs started working under incubator processes from the notion of the idea. Enterprises lead by those entrepreneurs was all less than three years old at the moment of this research. These businesses kept the same founders since the beginning of the startup. The interviewers were around their 30s, male and females (see table one). The business orientation was different for every new venture, from technology development to finance and educational approaches. Those companies were relatively small, with an average number of four members.

The context was necessary for our study since our objective is to analyze the dynamism under incubator processes. We observed entrepreneurs in different activities related with the incubator by assisting to pitching and networking events. We also observed them interacting with their team during regular working hours. We selected those entrepreneurs that from our perspective were constant on the tasks required by the institution. After we observed them, we got in touch with every new entrepreneur that was working in that period. It was also necessary to interview the coordinator of the institution to make sure the different development business stages and the agenda for the entrepreneur sessions.





We then perform semi-structured interviews that lasted around 30-40 minutes. These types of interviews are ideal because we can potentially acquire more knowledge allowing that the interview gets into the subject from different perspectives (Brinkmann, 2013 p.18). Since we wanted to inquire into their motives for starting business and the impact of the incubator processes, this approach was beneficial. We asked questions like: How did the business idea was developed? What was the decisive event that led you to create a new venture? How did you get into the incubator? How useful have been this process?



Most of the interviews took place in the same environment, either the incubator institution or the place where entrepreneurs perform some activities. Even though we had limited time due the agenda of the entrepreneurs the available time was enough to understand their dynamism and their motivations. All interviews were recorded with previous authorization from the entrepreneurs and after an explanation about the purpose of study. Once we had all the interviews, we proceeded to transcribe them and place them in ATLAS Ti for the analysis.

Description of companies and entrepreneurs

New ventures selected were part of a university seed incubator, corporate accelerator, and an independent commercial incubator. All of the entrepreneurs started with the idea of shaping a business idea and have a successful company. The companies' orientation varies from technology to education. Entrepreneurs also have different backgrounds; the majority of them initiated the new venture with a partner. Table one summarizes each entrepreneur information, market orientation of the new venture and their development stage. Names have changed to keep confidentiality.



Table 1
Description of entrepreneurs and new ventures.

Entrepreneur	New venture	Entrepreneurial stage	Business orientation	Position	Age
 Mary	Agroconsultant	Pre-incubation	Consultancy	Founder	35
Elia	Agroconsultant	Pre-incubation	Consultancy	Co-Founder	39
Paul	Agromex	Pre-incubation	Technology	Founder	24
Edgar	Factumex	Incubation	Finance	Founder	33
Anne	Factumex	Incubation	Finance	Co-founder	30
Barbara	Security First	Incubation	Manufacturing	Founder	24
Cool	Prector	Incubation	Technology	Co-Founder	30
Roy	Unlockers	Incubation	Technology	Founder	35
Michael	Unlockers	Incubation	Technology	Co-Founder	25
 Marilyn	Foodesign	Post-incubation	Consultancy	Founder	26
Alan	Schooleasy	Post-incubation	Education	Founder	24
Edson	Schooleasy	Post-incubation	Education	Co-Founder	24

Analysis

We started doing an extended literature review to find the research work about motives from different authors, and use those approaches to initially pre-code our interviews using ATLAS.ti software. The set of interviews were originally split into groups based on the development stage in the incubator institution, Pre-incubation, incubation and post-incubation. We then empirically code those aspects we realized were relevant and continuously mentioned and linked with the interviewees, in this step we used the approach of inductive coding.

We next tried to identify patterns based on the first round of codes and proceeded to name them and try to relate them. At the end, we group codes into three categories, causes, motives and expectations. In this way, we were able to cross-case the analysis. Based on this approach we can identify main similarities and differences within cases.

Narratives and results

Pre-incubator stage



Agroconsultant

The stimuli that guided these entrepreneurs to create Agroconsultant are based on previous entrepreneurship informal attempts for both of the members. Moreover, one of the members has a business family background. However, they mentioned that their primary motive is related to family role issues and the lack of understanding from their superiors. Both of the founders have received complaints from their families about the long hours they spent at work. Under these circumstances, the feeling of frustration and the desire of having more freedom and flexibility to spend with their family arose. Consequently, they found an excellent business opportunity to explode in their area of expertise.

Independence

*"Mom come for me, mom do not go to work,
stay and play with me."*

Elia

*"By the time we asked for permits (to attend children events),
they made a face as: again?"*

Mary

Agromex

The founder of this business relates that he has had the idea of doing business because he likes doing business. So during a technology festival, he saw a prototype that seems to him was very innovative and exciting and thought he could apply that prototype to a different context. Then, he decided to talk about his business idea to somebody else and start looking for experts to develop this idea. During the incubation process he expects to make this business feasible. However, he cannot fully dedicate, because he is still at college, so there is a lot of pressure from his family on finishing it. The primary motive was the sense of challenge and joy in doing business. This entrepreneur also refers to have more motivations about the business due to the awards he had received by presenting to different institutions their innovative idea.



Challenge

*"It was my idea, in reality, and I put the whole team together,
I started asking them if we could do certain things."*

Paul



In this stage, we can realize that the motives are diverse, and the situational factors are also important since the first one relates to an association or the desire on looking independence, the second one refers to just doing something, whatever it is. However, being in the incubator process allows formalizing the business. Entrepreneurs are attached to their initial ideas. They both participate in entrepreneurial events. The alertness on these entrepreneurs is based in two perspectives, previous experience and a desire for achievement and challenge.

Incubation stage

Factumex

Edgar is an entrepreneur that likes the entire finance environment. He previously worked in a company with this business approach and based on his excellent skills he moved up so fast. Hence, at an early age, he directed the company and created and launched important finance products. But one day he realized that he wanted to do something else, he was just at the top and he could not continue moving up, because the only above head was the owner of the company. This situation headed to think about developing his own business and being his own manager.

He planned for several years what he wanted and how to achieve it. However, he started a company out of the initial approach. He worked on that company for several months but he did not feel satisfied, he did not think that the company was part of their life objectives. Then, he decided to open another business along with a friend, but again out of his main area of expertise. This business did not run as he desired, so all these experiences guided him to think on developing a new venture based on his finance experience and knowledge (their initial idea). He then went to an incubator institution to look for help on shaping the business idea. Resulting from this mentorship he now has a well-developed business plan and he is already selling products. He is the



leader of this company that already has four members which they are also investors.

Challenge



"I started working and move up so fast, I feel that moved up very young, the next level was the owner."

Edgar

" I decided to look another thing in line what I developed (in previous job)."

Edgar

Security First

Barbara had the opportunity to take an entrepreneurial course in college, in that course she was part of a team, and their task as part of the programme was to develop a feasible business idea. The business idea was selected as one of the most interesting and innovative projects within several groups. They were awarded due to their innovative idea. Nevertheless, most of the team members decided to take another path away from the entrepreneurship field, except for Barbara and a friend. Thus, they decided to apply to an incubator institution and other startup programmes. They kept motivated by winning another prize that guided them to Silicon Valley. In this city, they stayed several months learning about how to create, start and run a business. This city is well known because many startup businesses take place there.

During this time their initial idea suffered many modifications due to the feasibility of the business. They finally came up with a final product and decided to continue applying to programmes that let them get resources to continue developing the business. As they get resources, their team grows considerably, and they find more motivations for moving forward. An entrepreneur family also surrounds Barbara.



Enjoyment

"The idea was born in the entrepreneurial class."

Barbara

"We grow little by little [...] I still do not believe it jaja."

Barbara



Prector

Cool is an entrepreneur with a master degree and work experience. He expresses that he used to enjoy working for a firm because of his job activities like traveling and establishing networks with valuable customers. However, he decided to quit and start a new venture because he felt disappointed about company benefits and rewards. After a disappointing experience with his employer, he met with a friend who shared with him a business idea. Cool felt that idea was so fascinating. So, Cool and his friend decided to start the new venture because they also consider possessing the necessary skills to develop it. They later contacted another friend with other complementary skills to run the business. They are now in an incubator process, and they expect they can sell their technology soon.

Dissatisfaction

The day I decided it was when I closed a deal of 6 million dollars and they (top managers) told me: congratulations! An I get 6000 dollars, so I said: no!

Cool

Unlockers

This new venture belongs to the technology sector, the case of these entrepreneurs are particular. For two of the entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurial process is attractive and exciting. Since they enjoy the entrepreneurship field, they met in events related. They are always looking for business ideas due to the environment they are surrounded. One day Roy decided to launch a question through *Twitter*® asking for support for a problem he was facing, due to the lack support he realized he could create a solution and turn it into a business. Both



entrepreneurs shared their thoughts to formalize and execute the business idea. Later a third member joined the team to complement the team. Roy relates that they are working within an accelerator with the firm objective of obtaining resources to make his company run it.



Enjoyment

"Since I was young I have been interested in technology business."

Roy

"I loved his previous startup, so I become involved in the business "

Michael

The entrepreneurs from this stage also started with different motives to run a new venture, they are characterized by an entrepreneurial background from education, previous experience and family businesses. Their initial business idea suffered, in some cases transformation because they were exposed to different mentors in the incubator stage that help them to evolve the concept. For some, these institutions have enabled them to shape the business, and others look the institution as a platform for looking resources.

Their motive has not changed; however, being in entrepreneurial events motivates them with the desire to run businesses. We can see that interaction with people that are creating, starting and leading ventures can work as motivators for other entrepreneurs they are around.

Post incubation stage

Food design

Marilyn

Marilyn started the new venture with the help of another classmate. Before this, the entrepreneur worked for a firm, but she did not enjoy it. During her last semesters at college, Marilyn had the opportunity to take an entrepreneurial. Derived from that experience her well-developed idea, she and their team won a prize that leads them to Europe for a competition. But the project did not flourish, because of different objectives to pursuit from the members. Close to the graduation, she and



another classmate received several offers for helping to perform projects related to their bachelor degree. They then realized they could develop a business idea with strong potential. After this, they decided to create a new venture.



They decided to formalize the new venture by asking for professional help in shaping businesses, so they went to an incubator institution. Currently, they are in a post-incubation stage, and they do not think about leaving the institution soon. For them, this institution has helped them to grow the business substantially. They have attracted around 80% of their sales from customers that contact the incubator for help in these kinds of businesses. Her expectation on growing is clear; she wants the business to cover different regions of the country with a representative team in those cities.

Alan

Alan took an entrepreneurial course; in that course, one of his tasks was related to developing a business idea. While he was looking for one opportunity, he met with his roommate who told him he was having a problem with a subject and could not find somebody to help him, at that moment Alan was very alert on entrepreneurial opportunities, so he thought that having a platform with experts in different subjects could be beneficial to different students for looking for help. He and his roommate then talk about developing business in this direction.

After several talks, they decided to formalize it and invite to join some other friends. He expresses that this has been one of the most difficulties that the team has suffered. When he concluded the course, he received an offer to join an incubator institution to develop his business idea. He accepted because he thought was an excellent opportunity. The business initial idea has suffered some modifications, now the business is broader and is running successfully. He expects to grow in diverse regions of the country. He describes this opportunity as an outstanding experience and he says: *“at the time of my graduation I did not expect to be here”* I did not plan anything. He and his team have also participated in other entrepreneurial programmes.



Edson

Edson's family has always been in business, so he grew up by looking at his parents doing different businesses. Due to the desire for better education he and an old friend moved from the city they born to study for his bachelor degree. During one of his last school subjects he has problems on understanding some themes, he looked for help but, he could not find it. He expresses that he thought: *"how hard is to find someone to help you"*. Then he met with his roommate who was attending the entrepreneurial class and talked about doing business to help people with these kinds of situations.

Then he started working with this roommate and another friend on developing the business idea. He narrates that the incubator institution has helped them on settle down the business. He also expresses that this experience has been as one of the biggest he has taken. This situation also has enabled him to know many people with knowledge in the area.

Frustration and community motivations

" I realized that is very complicated to find someone that helped me (with the problem)."

Edson

"I like a lot what we are doing [...], we can socially impact [...], I am very motivated with the cause. "

Edson

In this stage, teams and entrepreneurs increase their knowledge about how to do business; they already cover essential topics such as finance, leadership, business legal aspects, etc. Now entrepreneurs are focused on growing the company and making it successfully. Their motives present in this stage are same than early stage. Their entrepreneurial background goes from education, previous experience and from family businesses. Also, in the path they found more motivators to continue, these motivators are derived from the incubator environment and their achievement that guide them to be recognized as excellent entrepreneurs by different prizes from competitions they have won.



Table 2
Summary of the results

Entrepreneur	New venture	Entrepreneurial stage	Identified Motive
Mary	Agroconsultant	Pre-incubation	Independence
Elia	Agroconsultant	Pre-incubation	Independence
Paul	Agromex	Pre-incubation	Challenge
Edgar	Factumex	Incubation	Challenge
Anne	Factumex	Incubation	Challenge
Barbara	Security First	Incubation	Enjoyment
Cool	Prector	Incubation	Dissatisfaction
Roy	Unlockers	Incubation	Enjoyment
Michael	Unlockers	Incubation	Enjoyment
Marilyn	Foodesign	Post-incubation	Challenge
Alan	Schooleasy	Post-incubation	Frustration and community motivations
Edson	Schooleasy	Post-incubation	Frustration and community motivations

Discussion

The objective of this research was to find the motives that lead an entrepreneur to run a new venture and the impact of incubator institutions on the project. We found that every entrepreneur has different and diverse motives to start a business, like enjoyment, frustration, independence, challenge and social motivations. We recognize a pattern in each case. Their entrepreneurial antecedents related to family business, corporate entrepreneurial experience, and/or entrepreneurial education. For us the combination of these two situations makes an entrepreneur be alert for looking business opportunities. For Kirzner (2009) entrepreneurial alertness is related to the ability to noticing earlier than others an opportunity in the market. This author emphasizes that this alertness has nothing to do with creativity. In our research, we can see that the majority of the entrepreneurs were alert to take an opportunity to explode, but they did not use any creative process to create a new venture.



Kirzner's interpretation overlooks the origins of this alertness, however, in this research we argue that this can be based on the context in which the entrepreneur moves, adding a specific situation that can act as a cue to have a strong motive on developing a business. Those motives are the same through every developing stage, however, at every phase entrepreneurs find more motivations to continue on the entrepreneurial path. We found those motivators can be associated with the interaction with other entrepreneurs or the discovery of the potential of the project they are trying to launch. Our findings are aligned with McMullen and Shepherd (2006), who suggest that there are three essential elements of considering an entrepreneurial opportunity: knowledge, motivation and a stimulus. These authors remark that alertness is not entrepreneurial unless a motivation and expertise are part of the dynamism.

In the cases reviewed we found knowledge is associated with background. Consequently, we identified three critical elements of this: education, family, and work experience. The motive is associated with a specific circumstance, that situation depends on the environment where the entrepreneur interacts. Besides the initial motive, during their path, they continuously add more motivations, so at the last phase, they have more motives than the initial ones. At the pre-incubator stage, the interaction with other entrepreneurs and different instructors are determinant to continue working in a new venture. In the second stage, the desires on putting in place their business idea and start selling their services or products are strong motivators. In the final stage, the primary motivator is related to making the business bigger.

Entrepreneurs find very useful to work under incubator context. The most impact of these institutions is situated at early development stages. In the pre-incubator stage entrepreneurs usually shape their idea. So the initial stage is about learning, the second stage about putting in place what they want to achieve and how do they plan on doing that, the final stage is about putting in practice their business. In our cases, all the initial ideas suffered modifications on expanding the vision of the company. Entrepreneurs described that they arrived at the incubator with a specific idea, but all the incubator processes help them to grow that idea, they feel comfortable with that. For some, the incubator facilities help them reduce their operations cost. This last statement could be associated with Grimaldi and Grandi (2005) who suggest that



most of the objectives from an incubator are associated with reducing new venture costs.

Resulting from the analysis of the different strategies that each entrepreneur follows, we propose the following model. In this model, we summarize what we explained in early paragraphs, about the interaction of previous knowledge which probably alerts the entrepreneurs on detecting business opportunities besides a situational experience that leads to a strong motive. Being part of an incubator institution can add more motivations to continue this path and also add the possibility of expanding the business vision.

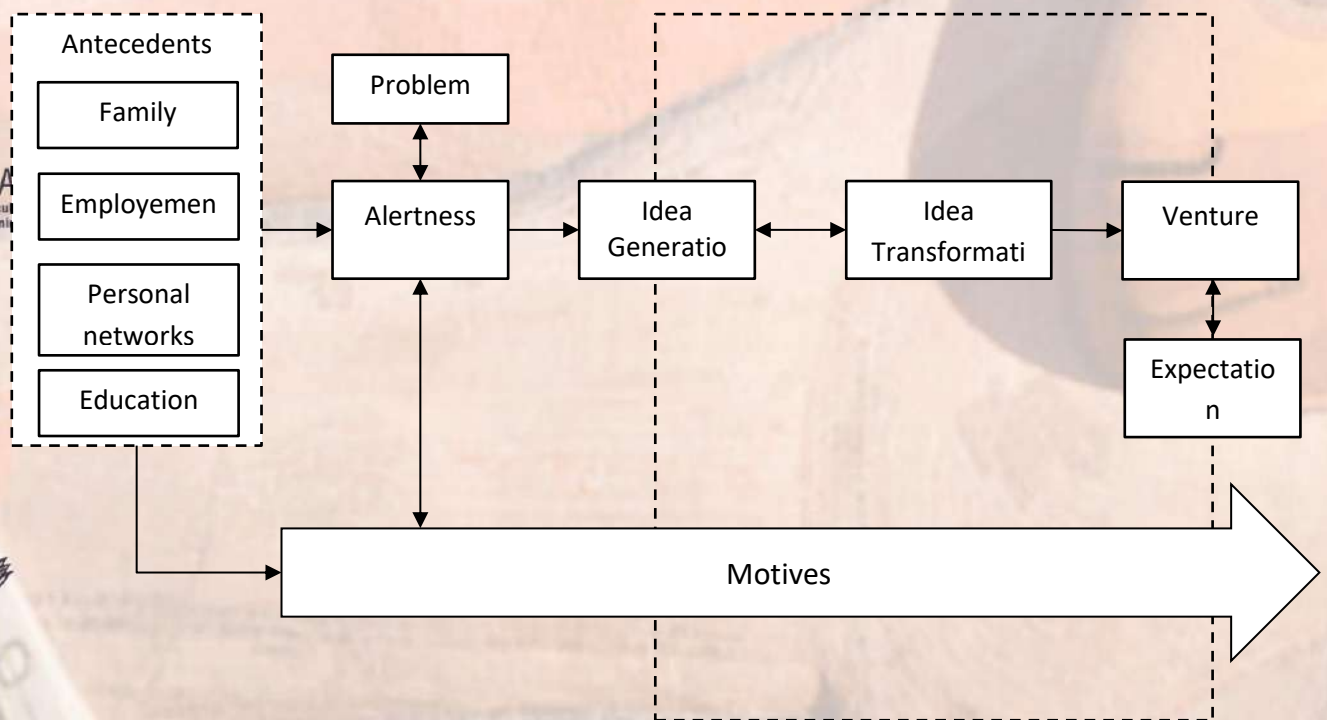


Figure 1. Model of factors that contribute to the creation of new ventures.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to explore the motives that guide entrepreneurs to create new ventures. Our findings contribute to the literature by describing several circumstances that lead an entrepreneur to create a new venture and identifying an opportunity. However we found the primary motive is a continuum; it means that is the same



through the different business development stages, but entrepreneurs add more strong motives to continue working on their venture. Entrepreneurs create an entrepreneurial alert according to their backgrounds. Under certain circumstances that entrepreneurial alert help entrepreneurs to have a strong motive to start a business based on different approaches.

Entrepreneurial motives are diverse; entrepreneurs main look for achievement or challenge and independence, enjoyment and because they want to solve a dissatisfaction or frustration. Those motives are firm and do not suffer any modification, that motivation lead entrepreneurs to generate a business idea, in most of the cases they look for a friend to help them to develop the business. Once the business idea is mature, they seek for specific professional help to continue growing the business. The professional help can either be hired or seen as an investor with a formal deal.

Entrepreneurs get into incubator institutions, with the firm idea of modeling their business idea, during this process, they find different incentives to change that idea and make it more robust and workable. Expectations evolve through the stages and become more achievable to the entrepreneurs. We attempted to develop a conceptual model in which all the factors involved in the business creation process are identified. In sum, this paper contributes to the literature on the motives that lead to an entrepreneur to develop a business and the different factors that contribute to this happening.

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