

ETHNIC MINORITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A PERSPECTIVE ON HISPANIC
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Embarking on new ventures has been an important factor in U.S. economic growth and will continue to be in the foreseeable future. Minority entrepreneurs, however, have not received as much attention as their counterparts. One common denominator for minority entrepreneurs is a life that consisted of a tough upbringing with a substantial amount of sacrifice that was needed to get to where they are in the business world. There is an ethnic group that has not been predominantly studied in the U.S. and if done accordingly, can better inform us of the entrepreneurial mindset at a micro level, as to know such concept requires information gathered from all race groups. Therefore, we will focus on Hispanic business owners and how each of their backgrounds affects their perspective of what it means to be an entrepreneur. So, in this qualitative study, we use self-determination theory to view interview data and make the best effort to explain how opening a business and the strategic approach used by Hispanic entrepreneurs allows them to fulfill their aspirations and goals. (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). By taking such approach, we believe that that our research answers questions related to 1) Hispanic venture launch; 2) the strategies Hispanic entrepreneurs use to position their business into the competitive market; and 3) the metrics by which Hispanic entrepreneurs measure the success of their business (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Similar to Fox and Ryburn (2022) research on everyday entrepreneurship (more on this topic in the introduction), we find that Hispanic entrepreneurs self-fulfill their needs of independence, purpose, and use of their skills/abilities by launching their ventures and establishing a competitive advantage over the competition (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). More thoroughly, we find that Hispanic entrepreneurs mainly rely on top quality standards of the products they sell, as well as outstanding customer service to differentiate

themselves from other businesses. We conclude with a discussion of the implications for theory and practice (Fox and Rayburn, 2022).

Keywords: Hispanic entrepreneurship, Self-determination theory, Entrepreneurial mindset, Competitive advantage

I. INTRODUCTION

As previously mentioned, by supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs, we spur job creation and economic growth (United States Congress, 2013). The Small Business Administration (SBA) was created in 1953 to “preserve free competitive enterprise” by assisting small businesses, and by doing so, prevent large businesses from forming oligarchies and monopolies that can control the supply of goods and services and the prices paid for those goods and services (Dilger, 2014; Congressional Research Service, 2022). Small businesses can receive funding through loans to start, continue, or expand operations, which in return creates more jobs for Americans. Such help also allows small business owners to stay competitive in the U.S. market and it gives them the ability to obtain a better quality of life and develop new dreams and aspirations. Currently, there are about 33.2 million small businesses in the United States, constituting to 99.9% of U.S. businesses (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2022). Of that amount, racial minorities owned 19.4% of small businesses in the U.S. (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2022). While the significant impact of small business ventures is widely known, there is much we do not know about the strategies and practices that minority business owners incorporate to stay competitive. As our study is focused on Hispanic entrepreneurs, if Hispanic owned businesses grew as fast as the U.S. average, they could add \$1.4 trillion to the U.S. economy (JP Morgan Chase & Co, 2022). If given the same opportunity and tools, Hispanic business owners can contribute even more.

To address this imbalance in the literature, some scholars have called for better contextualization of ethnic minority entrepreneurship research (Sithas and Surangi, 2021; Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Historically, minorities have been considered as a threat to the host country due to the assumption that they exploit labor market opportunities, reduce citizens’ wages, and

underperform because of their lack of skills and poor educational qualifications (Sithas and Surangi, 2021). Consequently, minorities have been pushed towards embracing entrepreneurship as a source of economic survival to overcome their disadvantaged position in the labor market (Sithas and Surangi, 2021). This limits a more contextualized definition of entrepreneurship and extensive information on the concept cannot be obtained without amplifying the perspective of individuals from various ethnic groups who strive for self-employment. Studying every perspective and ethnic group may also allow discovery of new theories and strengthens the credibility of already established theories. For instance, community of practice theory suggests that when people share a common concern or a passion for something they do, they eventually learn how to do it better as they regularly interact (Wenger, 1999). Generally, minority entrepreneurs act as a community through shared learning and knowledge, which supports creating more entrepreneurs from the community (Sithas and Surangi, 2021). Hispanic entrepreneurs are no different, as they aspire to share their knowledge and experiences gained from their ventures to aid future entrepreneurs.

Through qualitative methodology, we allow Hispanic entrepreneurs to share information about the launch of their ventures, describe the details that are essential to their competitive advantage, and how they measure success (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Using self-determination theory as an interpretive lens (Decy and Ryan, 2000; Fox and Rayburn, 2022), we make efforts to highlight how venture launch and strategic choices allow Hispanic entrepreneurs to self-fulfill their psychological needs through their business (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). In this method, we help amplify Hispanic entrepreneurs' perspective on what it means to be an entrepreneur and how important the entrepreneurial mindset is to their success.

This research is a replication and extension of Fox and Rayburn's (2022) research on everyday entrepreneurship. It attempts to extend knowledge on entrepreneurship literature by expanding the everyday entrepreneurship context into a Hispanic entrepreneurship context. As a result, this research locates the importance of a more contextualized approach to entrepreneurship research (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). In addition, this research suggests that focusing on more diverse forms of entrepreneurial activity will result in many benefits (Fox and Rayburn, 2022), which include a better understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship, as evaluating Hispanic business owners will bring new perspectives on the literature, while possibly reinforcing existing literature. Second, this research highlights the different business practices and methods that Hispanic entrepreneurs use to create competitive advantage in businesses that rely solely on products and services (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Finally, this research highlights how Hispanic entrepreneurs describe and measure success, as their evaluation of such may differ from everyday entrepreneurs.

The rest of our paper is laid out as follows. First, we explain the minority entrepreneurship context. Second, we review generic strategy literature and introduce research questions. Third, we describe the empirical study. Fourth, we present the findings, offer theoretical propositions which follow from our analysis, and discuss theoretical and practical implications. Lastly, we discuss limitations and future research directions based on the study.

Literature Review

Minority entrepreneurship research

Most researchers aim to emphasize minority entrepreneurship studies from the host country's perspective by addressing minorities' psychological traits, cultural backgrounds, motivational factors, constraint factors, resource accessibility, and startup activities (Jones et al.,

2012; Roth et al., 2012). However, systematic categorization is required to contribute towards expanding the research field of ethnic minority entrepreneurship. This will facilitate recognizing significant contentions, discussions, and themes in the literature with the current research gaps and novel ways of research (Sithas and Surangi, 2021). Hence, this overview aims to comprehend the current knowledge and provide a vivid image of the research field of Hispanic business ventures.

An entrepreneur is someone who identifies and acts on an idea or problem that no one else has identified or acted on (Lavery and Littel, 2020). In recent years, the concept of entrepreneurship has had a stronger connection to individuals who are predominantly of white race, while minorities' business ventures have not been amplified as strongly as their counterparts. Although minority-owned businesses have grown extensively over the last few years, minority entrepreneurs are significantly more likely to be denied bank credit, and even when successful, receive smaller loans compared to non-minority owned businesses. As a good portion of minority entrepreneurs are obliged to rely on their life savings and loans from family members, one might presume the longstanding question of whether racial discrimination in financial markets had been resolved (Bates et al., 2018). As a result, there has been calls to explore this group to come at a better understanding of minority entrepreneurship and its heterogeneity among entrepreneurial activities (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). In addition, by enlightening minority entrepreneurship, we can inform future ethnic minority generations about entrepreneurship and how to be successful in a new venture. We say this because we know that the teaching of entrepreneurship must have three components. One, youth must be able to understand it; secondly, there must be a practical approach; and there must be an inexpensive methodology of delivering entrepreneurship education (United States Congress, 1999). By doing

this, we allow future ethnic minority generations to think logically and innovatively, as well as allow them to set goals accordingly as it pertains to venture launch.

Despite empirical data showing that ethnicity does not affect the number of self-employed people in each minority (Portes & Yiu, 2013), migrants seem to be more prone to being self-employed than native individuals (Dana & Vorobeva, 2021; OECD, 2010). Without gathering the necessary information on minority entrepreneurship, one may fail to realize that a substantial number of MBEs are present across many industries, such as the technological, farming, remodeling, and even property cleaning industries. Eliminating entry barriers and extending necessary support to minorities would yield better financial returns and strengthen the host nation's local community development by enhancing the standard of living of minorities and non-minorities (Clark & Drinkwater, 2000).

Generic Strategy

The purpose of a business is to offer value (through products and/or services) to customers, who pay for the value with cash or equivalents. Minimally, to ensure survival, the money received should fund the costs of operating the business as well as provide for the life needs of the proprietor (Weiss, 2013). The industries where Hispanic entrepreneurs decide to operate their business have a direct relationship to the opportunities that were presented to them. For example, due to the economic and social constraints that Hispanic entrepreneurs may have experienced in their home country, a large portion had to make difficult decisions, such as leaving their country and their families to strengthen their chances of economic prosperity and family stability. Although this study also focuses on generic strategy, we try to enlighten on the content of the generic strategy in the specific context of Hispanic entrepreneurship. To be

clearer, we articulate the mechanisms responsible for the success of the generic competitive strategy (Fox and Rayburn, 2022)

To examine the strategies that Hispanic entrepreneurs use in their businesses, we first need to understand two key dimensions that are critical to defining business-level strategy, as emphasized by author Michael Porter (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). According to Porter, the first dimension is a company's source of competitive advantage. This dimension involves whether a company strives to gain an edge over rivals by keeping costs down or by offering something unique in the market. The second dimension is a company's scope of operations. This involves whether a company tries to target a broad customer base or whether it seeks to attract just a segment of customers. This section is very important to know as a big question that Hispanic entrepreneurs generally need to answer is what customer base they need to target to keep their ventures alive.

In addition, Porter's four generic business-level strategies emerge from these dimensions: cost leadership, differentiation, focused-cost leadership, and focused differentiation.

Understanding the differences that underlie generic strategies is important because different generic strategies offer different value propositions to customers. It is also important to keep in mind that a company may not match every characteristic that its generic strategy entails.

Meaning, depending on the nature of a company's industry, slightly modifying the recipe of a generic strategy may be essential to build success. Cost leadership strategies consist of offering products or services with acceptable quality and features to a broad set of customers at a low price. Many cost leaders rely on economies of scale to achieve efficiency. This allows companies to withstand price competition from rivals as well as attract a large market share (Auriemma, 2022). A company following a differentiation strategy attempts to convince customers to pay a

premium price for its goods and services by providing unique and desirable features. Successful use of this strategy depends on not only offering unique features, but also on communicating the value of these features to potential customers. This strategy requires extensive use of advertising and brand building. Some advantages of differentiation strategies are buyer loyalty and strong profit margins due to the premium prices paid by customers. The final two strategies are very similar to their counterparts. However, these strategies focus on targeting a relatively narrow and niche of potential customers. Focused-cost leadership entails that a company is competing based on offering a low price to target a narrow market, while focused differentiation requires offering unique features that fulfill the demands of a small portion of the market.

Focused-cost leadership and differentiation-focused leadership strategies are important because small businesses mainly offer their products and services to a narrow, niche market and are not trying to serve an entire region. Hispanic entrepreneurs usually prefer and take advantage of the focus-cost leadership strategy because it creates a substantial amount of capital that can be used to grow their business. This strategy also allows Hispanic entrepreneurs to reduce competition as a vast majority of them primarily focus on providing their products or services to Hispanic customers. However, operating a small business using the focused-cost strategy entails some disadvantages. For instance, a small business may be slow to adapt to market changes, and therefore be unable to prepare for shifts in consumer taste (Auriemma, 2022). To add, small businesses must find ways to maintain a positive image and encourage brand loyalty while offering affordable goods and services, this can be a challenge because if there is no balance between quality and affordability, the perception of quality can become very low, therefore hindering businesses (Kennedy, 2022). In some instances, Hispanic entrepreneurs attempt to establish a focused-differentiation strategy. This requires Hispanic entrepreneurs to implement a

strategy where their company's brand and image fully embraces a customer's culture, as well as make extensive efforts for their businesses to earn long-term and trustworthy relationships (Llopis, 2013). If done accordingly, small businesses can attain buyer loyalty and a substantial profit margin growth, possibly outweighing the benefits of focus cost-leadership.

While there are those who pursue both focus cost-leadership and focus differentiation strategies, many Hispanic business owners prefer to stay constant and follow one strategy. This is due to the limited resources available to them such as the lack of external funding from the banking sector, venture funds, or the federal government (Hare and Cazares, 2022). Another reason is that their level of expertise is in one strategy more than the others, so Hispanic entrepreneurs prefer to embark into an already known field of study.

To summarize, strategy is an important factor to a business' success. However, the literature is still unclear in what strategy yields the best benefits for businesses in the ethnic minority entrepreneurship context. Due to the resource constraints that ethnic minority entrepreneurs face when embarking on a new venture, the cost-leadership strategy seems to be the most desirable yet unrealistic because not all small business owners strive for big scale growth. As mentioned previously, many look to serve a small customer base where customer relationships and product uniqueness is the metric by which they measure their success. This is where the differentiation strategy seems as the best possible strategy to implement, yet the success of such is determined by how innovatively capable a business is, and in this regard, ethnic minority business owners do not see the need to be strongly innovative as their services do not require a substantial amount of innovation. Consequently, ethnic minority entrepreneurs face a dilemma that other non-minority small business owners do not necessarily face when it pertains to adopting a business-level strategy.

There is a lack of guidance for ethnic minority entrepreneurial ventures in how to create market value (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). To fill this void, we turn to Self-Determination Theory to determine how and why Hispanic entrepreneurs make their strategic choices (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Fox and Rayburn, 2022).

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory primarily focuses on individual well-being, and in context, the ability of the individual to self-fulfill three specific psychological needs (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). The theory is particularly concerned with how social-contextual factors support or prevent people's thriving through the satisfaction of their basic psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Autonomy is about the freedom and ability to fight time constraints, while being able to determine one's faith in a given context; competence is feeling capable of doing something successfully and efficiently in a given environment; and relatedness is having the ability to be connected to others in everyday life (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). These needs are all interconnected to one another and influence each other; as making a positive change in one, will allow an individual to "experience a greater degree of satisfaction of their three universal psychological needs" (Deci and Ryan, 2000, p.229). After experiencing personal fulfillment and satisfaction, individuals are motivated to act and serve others, taking leadership and mentorship roles.

Indeed, entrepreneurship is a very important piece for an individual to self-fulfill their three universal psychological needs. Often, an entrepreneur's creativity does not fit the corporate environment (Toren, 2015), as they don't want a life with time and freedom constraints. Entrepreneurs are passionate about learning and always seek to do more. They strive to live a life filled with purpose where their well-being is maximized and their influence changes their

surroundings in a positive way. Evidence is seen by the fast growth of Hispanic owned businesses throughout the United States. For instance, in the past 10 years, Latino-owned businesses have started at a faster rate than other groups—a 44% growth rate—compared to only 4% for non-Latino-owned firms (Hare and Cazares, 2022). As such, we use self-determination theory as an interpretive lens to explain study findings. By doing so, the research addresses three interrelated questions related to minority entrepreneurship and self-determination, competitive strategic choice and need for self-fulfillment, and entrepreneurs' vision of business success:

- 1. How does minority entrepreneurship facilitate Hispanic entrepreneurs' experiences of self-determination?*
- 2. What competitive strategies do Hispanic entrepreneurs choose to enact and how do these relate to psychological need self-fulfillment?*
- 3. How do Hispanic entrepreneurs measure the success of their competitive endeavors?*

Methodology

A qualitative methodology was adopted based on principles of grounded theory combined with elements of phenomenology (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). This method was proper because it allows researchers to understand the candid experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of research participants – in this case, Hispanic entrepreneurs (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). The goal in phenomenology and grounded theory are particularly suited to study how people make meaning of their lived experience in novel and unexplored research areas (Starks and Trinidad, 2007). Grounded theory enables researchers to further the theoretical reach of their studies and to make tacit meaning and processes explicit (Potter et al., 2020). In the end, the basis of grounded theory is to reveal the “how and what” of a phenomenon based on the perceptions of people with

relevant experiences (Brower and Jeong 2008: 826; Fox and Rayburn, 2022). The result is a framework, or theory, of a phenomenon empirically grounded in data reflecting participants' lived experiences (Fox and Rayburn, 2022).

Data Collection and Participants

Data was collected by applying the long interview technique (Boyaval and Herbert 2018; Lent 2020; McCracken 1988; Sen and Cowley 2013; Shantz et al., 2018; Williams and Ramdani, 2018). The long interview technique involves a conversation between the researcher and the research participant and includes a series of general and specific inquiries (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). In this research, interview prompts were used and questions such as 'please tell us about your venture,' 'why did you decide to start your venture,' and specific prompts such as 'why is your venture successful and what do you think contributes to your venture's success?' were used (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). In addition, probing questions were used for further clarification of key topics (Fox and Rayburn, 2022).

Participants were identified and recruited using purposive and snowball sampling techniques (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). These techniques are found useful when populations are small relative to the general population and participants possess a social stigma or particular shared characteristic of interest (Nikolopoulou, 2022). Data collection happened in two ways. First, we identified and contacted an initial set of Hispanic entrepreneurs through the researcher's personal contacts (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Second, at the end of each interview, participants were invited to provide names of other Hispanic entrepreneurs who might be interested in participating in the research. For the second wave of interviews, we contacted the referrals given to us by participants.

Eleven Hispanic entrepreneurs were identified through the sampling technique; a sample size adequate for grounded theory and phenomenology (Creswell and Poth 2018; Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Entrepreneurs used in this research had businesses that operated on a small scale. Majority of the individuals were from Mexico and Honduras. They lived in rural to metropolitan areas and most were diverse regarding gender, religion, and age. Participants, industry experience, and business details are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Participants (Adapted from Fox and Rayburn, 2022)

Participant Pseudonym(s)	Current Industry	Prior/Multiple Businesses	Prior Industry Experience	Parent Entrepreneurs	Gender
Perla	Cleaning	No	Yes	Yes	Female
Elvis	Painting/Resurfacing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Male
Carlos	Restaurant	No	Yes	No	Male
Santos	Restaurant	No	Yes	No	Male
Camelia	Remodeling	No	Yes	Yes	Female
German	Automotive repair	No	Yes	No	Male
Juan	Car sales	No	Yes	Yes	Male
Ariel	Tech Programming	No	Yes	No	Male
Ely	Hair salon	Yes	Yes	Yes	Female
Macario	Product sales	Yes	No	No	Male
Silvia	Product sales	No	No	No	Female
n=11	n=9	Yes n=3	Yes n=9	Yes n=5	Male n=7

Data Analysis

Analysis began with thematic coding to find somewhat similar themes, topics, or ideas in the data (Caufield, 2019; Fox and Rayburn, 2022). This allowed for the recognition of patterns connected to participants’ insight of self-determination, the strategies bridged to their success, and the metrics they use to measure success (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Moving forward in the

coding process (an example of the coding structure is provided in Table 2), we followed three coding steps- open, axial, and selective (Delve and Limpaecher, 2022). In open coding, data was broken into singular concepts based on participants’ use of words to establish properties of each code (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Open coding enables the researcher to continuously compare and contrast similar events in the data, as well as forces the researcher to negate preconceived notions and biases about their own research (Delve and Limpaecher, 2022). With axial coding, the researcher reads over the codes and underlying data obtained from the open code process, to find how the codes can be grouped into categories. In other words, the researcher begins to draw connections between the codes (Delve and Limpaecher, 2022). Selective coding is where the researcher connects all the categories together around one core category, doing so allows the researcher to define one unified theory around their research (Delve and Limpaecher, 2022). Throughout the coding process, the researcher recapitulated between the data and emerging codes to allow for increased understanding of the narrative undergirding the emerging theory (Brower and Jeong 2008; Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Memoing and diagramming were used to describe the model and the network of concepts surrounding the model (Corbin and Strauss 2015; Creswell and Poth 2018; Rayburn and Fox, 2022). This final process brings to light participants’ story in its most complete and connected form (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Most coding resulted in agreement. The result is the highlight for creating unique value and how Hispanic entrepreneurs gestate the success of their ventures. Findings are presented using participants’ voices (Fox and Rayburn, 2022).

Table 2. Coding Process: Strategies and Mechanisms (Adapted from Fox and Rayburn, 2022)

Selective Codes (Theme)	Axial Codes (Sub-Themes)	Open Codes (Participant Voices)
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Overarching Generic Strategy	Mechanisms of Unique Value Creation	
Differentiation Strategy	Customer Experience	<i>I think it is very important to have a lot of persistence to the problems that are going to happen. Try to have the right answers for each customer and keep learning. (Camelia)</i>
		<i>Well, every day is a challenge because some repairs are more difficult than others, and there are always difficulties in trying to repair them. There is also the question of time and customer satisfaction. (German)</i>
	High-Quality Offerings	<i>It's always the motto of my business: quality is above prices. So, I prefer to sell something of quality, and that same quality product is what will lead me to grow and have new dreams. (Juan)</i>

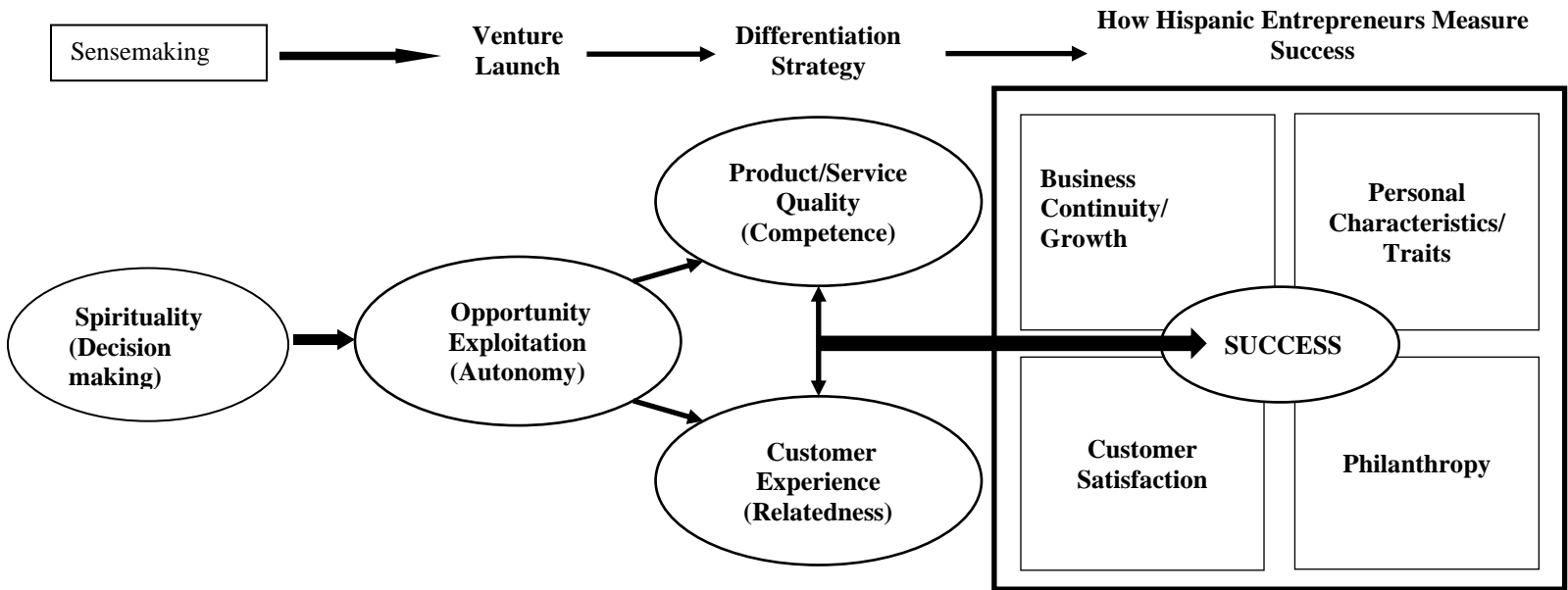
Findings

Study findings are explained based on self-determination theory as we described above (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). As Hispanic entrepreneurs decide to launch their venture, they begin the process to self-fulfill their psychological needs (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). According to self-determination theory, fulfillment of psychological needs catapults entrepreneurs to act and influence others to do so as well. Launching a small business, specifically, allows entrepreneurs to be autonomous and decide their own fate. To be autonomous, entrepreneurs must be aware of their needs, processes, feelings, cognition, and relationships that make up their true or integrated sense of who they are and act in accordance with that integrated sense of self (Decy and Ryan 2000, page 229). Once accomplishing autonomy, an entrepreneur experiences a greater degree of satisfaction of their other two psychological needs, therefore improving their well-being.

Competence is connected to an entrepreneur's ability to provide a quality product or service for their customer base. An entrepreneur's psychological need for competence is highly dependent on the intrinsic value that the individual bestows on its service. Meaning, once the entrepreneur detects the value they want to provide to their customer base, they self-fulfill their need of

relatedness at the same time they are fulfilling their need competence. This is because the intended purpose of their venture is to serve a customer base that is a part of their community. This is further reflected by how Hispanic entrepreneurs define success. Next, we provide supporting details for the model (Fox and Rayburn, 2022).

Figure 1: Self-Determination Theory Based Need Fulfillment through Hispanic Entrepreneurship (Adapted from Fox and Rayburn, 2022).



Self-fulfillment for Autonomy Through Opportunity Exploitation and Experimentation

For Hispanic entrepreneurs, the psychological need for autonomy is ultimately what drives them to start their own business. With each entrepreneur, necessity is also attached to autonomy. Many of them experienced a life where the probability of success in their respective nations is very low. Consequently, Hispanic entrepreneurs make the sacrifice by emigrating to a nation where they can use their skills and knowledge efficiently. Such necessity forces entrepreneurs to experiment by working in diverse industries and learning with each job they decide to take. Once entrepreneurs detect a viable and desirable opportunity, they start

developing the entrepreneurial mindset where they seek to acquire as much expertise on their intended industry. This is where environmental scanning begins to take place.

Environmental Scanning Opportunities

As discussed above, the data suggest that many Hispanic entrepreneurs pursued opportunities they identify during the environmental scanning stage while working in the industry (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). During this period, the entrepreneur analyzes aspects of customers' wants and needs, and strives to find the best possible strategy to satisfy that need. For example, two entrepreneurs found an opportunity to open their own restaurant after detecting a need in the food industry. They accomplished this after working at a local restaurant for a very long time.

I met my business partner, and we worked for about 20 years in the same company, and we saw that there was a lot of opportunity in the agricultural sector. We saw that farmers work hard to give the best quality in their products, and with that we saw that there was a deficit to bring fresh food to the food industry. So, we talked and decided to start this business of making things fresh at home, with all the local products and what better than to do it ourselves and create a business like that. (Santos)

Another entrepreneur saw an opportunity to improve their chances of success after they continued to grow in their prior job. After their employer failed to pay them on time, they decided to venture on their own.

I had already been working in a cleaning company for 6 years and at times, they took too long to pay me. I started as a housewife, cleaning the houses, and after 3 months I was asked to be a manager and then I learned everything. And as I was learning I decided to make the decision to start my business because it was time to improve myself. (Perla)

As mentioned above, entrepreneurs seek opportunities in industries they have knowledge and expertise in. Many of them saw deficiencies in their jobs and looked to provide solutions that enabled them to embark on their own businesses, and not be limited by a nine to five job.

I saw that by operating your own business you could generate more profits. I wasn't going to be limited to 40 hours a week and a certain salary. I wanted to expand my limits and that's why I built the company. (Camelia)

Finally, other Hispanic entrepreneurs saw an opportunity to sell better alternative products after seeing how expensive everyday use products (toothpaste, shampoo, vitamins, etc..) were becoming. This meant that they would sell the product directly to the consumers at a cheaper price without the need for intermediaries or distribution channels that retail stores operate through.

We sell the products directly to the consumer and there are no intermediaries. We buy from the company through direct sale, and we resell to customers, so we have double profit. [company's name] pays us to buy from them and the client pays us that extra fee that is the profit that we earn...we have more than 450 products that everyone uses. Everyone uses personal hygiene products, most people bathe, brush their teeth, etc. We also have clothes, we have household cleaning products, you name it. (Silvia)

The Desire for Personal Growth Through Business

The research also suggest that Hispanic entrepreneurs possess a drive to continuously grow to improve as individuals and business owners. In other words, entrepreneurs strive to challenge themselves and even exceed their capabilities.

The vision I have as a company owner is always, well is not just a vision, but a desire to achieve, to grow even more, not to stay only as far as I have come, but to continue moving forward. And to keep moving forward I have to take risks and in those risks, I have to know at what times to say no to the client, but the greater purpose is always to say yes to the client. I mean, if there is a job and they ask me if we can do it, it is my duty to say to them that we can. (Elvis)

One entrepreneur mentioned how every individual has a potential to exploit, and that it is our duty to make sure the potential is not wasted.

[Company's name] allows you to dream big, to dig dip within yourself and exploit the potential that God has given you. That's why we are going for more. (Macario)

Summary

Autonomy is what triggers the entrepreneurial mindset. It is a way by which entrepreneurs envision themselves being in a situation where they decide what to do with their time, and what areas of their potential to exploit. They become aware of what is needed in the industry that they are involved in and begin to find viable solutions for those needs through self-determination.

Proposition 1: Opening a business allows Hispanic entrepreneur to pursue self-determination, through self-fulfillment of the psychological need for autonomy.

Competence and Relatedness Self-Fulfillment Through Differentiation

Hispanic entrepreneurs in our research highlighted using the differentiation strategy to satisfy their customers and gain competitive advantage in the market. For Hispanic entrepreneurs, the customer is always first, as according to them, the customer is the main driver in determining whether a business is going to succeed or fail. As such, Hispanic entrepreneurs focus on creating value for the customer by providing a very personable and reliable product or service. This means that the priority of Hispanic entrepreneurs is that factors such as product quality and customer satisfaction are met to ensure customer loyalty. This allows the entrepreneurs to self-fulfill their psychological need of competence and relatedness as providing exceptional service to customers means that the business plan crafted by the entrepreneur is working and continues to be better than the competition.

Providing a Quality Product or Service

As mentioned above, Hispanic entrepreneurs want to create value through delivering exceptional quality product or service. For many, one way it can be done is to prioritize making a product at a low cost, but for one entrepreneur is to prioritize product quality over anything else and how that can lead to a substantial amount of success.

It's always the motto of my business: quality is above price. So, I prefer to sell something of quality, and that same quality product is what will lead me to grow and have new dreams.
(Juan)

While it is known that entrepreneurs want to provide something of value to customers, it is equally important for Hispanic entrepreneurs to know what industries they want to venture on. Other entrepreneurs highlighted that venturing on an industry that is unknown or “trending” is bound for failure because a business formed on that premise is not sustainable.

There are people I know, friends who have tried to operate businesses. And it saddens me because they quickly tell me: it is not my ability, but you also must know what you want to get into because a juice seller is a specialist in selling juice and maybe you can say if that person is selling juice, then why can't I do it. But maybe that is not your strength. Think about what you want the business to be about, don't follow what someone else is telling you. Get in a business in which you feel qualified and learn along the way. (Elvis)

You can also see that there are people who open a business and want to see it as a hobby, or many times there are people who get into a business they do not know. I mean, we decided to open a restaurant because we have worked a long time in a restaurant and that's what we know the most. And we cook what we know how to cook... and I think that's why we've done well.
(Carlos)

It is very risky to open a business in an industry that you do not know, because you have no idea how to manage it. Don't open a business just because someone told you that way you can make easy money. (Santos)

Based on the data, Hispanic entrepreneurs value knowledge and expertise because it allows them to mitigate risks and minimize the margin for error for their respective businesses. This fulfills their psychological need of competence as Hispanic entrepreneurs display their ability to make adequate strategic decisions for the business' success that is based on the relevant experience they acquired when working in previous companies.

A Focus on Customer Satisfaction and Relationship

The data suggest that Hispanic entrepreneurs see customers as more than just a source of profit, but as a community that they strive to help through their business. This fulfills the

entrepreneur's last psychological need of relatedness by establishing a connection with their customer base. Hispanic entrepreneurs described how important it is to them in making customers feel comfortable with their purchase from beginning to end. They want to show to the customer that they care about their needs, and many described how their leadership and direct contact with the customer was a good starting point in establishing trust. This meant that their businesses were attention to detail oriented, transparent, honest, and acted ethically when providing products or services to customers. Some entrepreneurs commented:

I always had the dream of one day have business to be able to help people who immigrate to this country, I wanted to make it easier for them to find a vehicle as I did not experience such help when I arrived in the United States. I practically focus on this business so that people had an opportunity to grow faster because a vehicle is essential in this country... I believe that the greatest satisfaction is knowing that I was able to help someone and that someone thanks to that car that I sold is now able to go to work, can support their family, and can serve this country. (Juan)

I believe that the responsibility and perseverance I show helps me form a good relationship with my clients. Also, my presence in the business is important because even if I am the owner, I want to be present to see how it is being handled and be part of the team. For me I see my clients as if they were my bosses, as they trust that I will be providing them with a good service. I also want my employees to know that their leader sets an example by being present in the business. (Ely)

We want to help Latinos and extend a hand to them. Any person who needs our services we want to be there to help. (Ariel)

Beyond customer relationship, Hispanic entrepreneurs attempt to align their entrepreneurial ventures with their religious beliefs, as many pointed out how important their religious beliefs are to their business decision making.

I can tell you with complete certainty that behind all my efforts, it has always been God first, because it is to him that I attach myself to be able to make the best decisions, and for me I do not start doing things without first asking God, because without him I feel that I cannot get anywhere. (Elvis)

I think the most important thing has been my dependence on God. And I think I have those values very tied in my life. I have to believe that things are possible, as long as God is with me. (Juan)

God has to be first for us. I remember when we were about to start this business and my husband and I asked God to give us three signs to know that this is what he wanted us to do. And last thing you know, he gave them to us in less than a week. From there on, we started as fast as a plane, and in our first month, we started seeing results. Everything else is history. (Silvia)

It is imperative to understand that for Hispanic entrepreneurs, building relationships with others and making sure their beliefs are aligned with their business is what ultimately drives them. Most of them showed that they want to live a life that is filled with purpose, and this is mostly attained with their willingness to provide value for others and their spirituality.

Additional Thoughts on Spirituality’s Role in Entrepreneurship

As explained above, participants’ conceptualization of spirituality and how significant it is to their well-being and business success was identified as an important factor in their decision-making and relationships with others. For our participants, spirituality offers an explanation of how Hispanic entrepreneurs persist despite seemingly insurmountable odds by extending notions of future-oriented sensemaking (Gioia & Mehra, 1996; Gephart et al., 2010; Ganzin et al., 2020). In addition, the concept of entrepreneurial spirituality is reinforced by the entrepreneurial mindset that is exhibited by our participants. Consequently, we were encouraged to include an additional psychological need that our participants exhibited to the Self-determination theory framework developed by Fox and Rayburn (2022) (See figure 1 above). Through our study, we learned that Hispanic entrepreneurs attach themselves to a spiritual power to be able to make a “leap of faith” in starting a new venture that is often associated with high risks, uncertainty, and limited information (Judge & Douglas, 2013; Ganzin et al., 2020). We propose that before the psychological need for autonomy is detected and self-fulfilled, Hispanic entrepreneurs need guidance, support, and endorsement from their religious beliefs before making any decision to start their ventures. Meaning, for many of our participants, there was a need to do “God’s will” in order to truly fulfill an important purpose in their life through their business.

Summary

Our data reveals the various procedures that Hispanic entrepreneurs utilize to create unique value through differentiation strategies based on high-quality products or services and exceptional customer satisfaction and relationship (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Launching a new venture and executing unique business strategies is an implementation of self-determination (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). By opening their own business and taking control of their time, Hispanic entrepreneurs self-fulfill their psychological need of autonomy. By providing customers with outstanding product or services and above and beyond customer satisfaction, the need for competence and relatedness is fulfilled, as many entrepreneurs highlighted the importance of industry knowledge and good customer relationship. This in return, allows Hispanic entrepreneurs to provide for their families and make a positive impact in their communities.

Proposition 2: Hispanic entrepreneurs follow a specific differentiation strategy based on product or service quality and customer service.

Proposition 3: Delivering high-quality products and services allows Hispanic entrepreneurs to exhibit mastery of their work environment, thereby permitting self-fulfillment of the psychological need for competence.

Proposition 4: Delivering exceptional customer service experiences and meditating on their religious beliefs permits Hispanic entrepreneurs self-fulfillment of the psychological need for relatedness.

How Hispanic Entrepreneurs Measure Success

In this section, we sought to answer the following question: How do Hispanic entrepreneurs measure the success of their business? Measuring success is predicated on using metrics to help understand the current and future state of a business. To measure

success, Hispanic entrepreneurs need to create goals and not all goals are created equal. However, answering this question provides further insight on whether these types of businesses are successful. Therefore, we will focus on four characteristics that drive success for Hispanic entrepreneurs: Business Continuity/Growth, Customer Satisfaction, Personal Characteristics/Traits, and Philanthropy. For many of our entrepreneurs, success is more than just profit, it is the desire to exploit their potential and be someone of consequence.

Business Continuity/Growth

A good portion of our participants associate their success with perseverance, risk taking, discipline, sacrifice, and fearlessness. All in line with self-determination theory, these all reflect positive impacts on an entrepreneur's well-being. These characteristics are fundamental to success as they allow entrepreneurs to pursue the best strategies to use in a highly competitive market. To add, these characteristics reflect an entrepreneur's desire for business continuity and growth that is future oriented.

One of the characteristics that I think I have is that I am very decisive, and I do not give myself obstacles without first trying. So, that is a characteristic that I think has driven me a lot to have the courage to say that I must achieve this if I really propose it, because I have seen that it has worked for me. (Elvis)

Well, I think it's the consistency and perseverance you have. The effort you must have and dedicate a lot of time to the business. For example, you have to treat your employees well and give them the necessary support and also grow with the community. Because without the support of the community the business does not grow. That is, the business has to be a combination of everything because one thing leads to another. At first nobody knew us, and then you have to work hard and keep working hard and make your product the best all the time. The consistency has to be the same. (Santos)

I think that something Santos and I have in common is determination. This helps us a lot to do what we say we are going to do. And I think that's what has kept us together for the last 10 years and we live like this every day and that's why we're still here. (Carlos)

Well, you have to be very eager and have the mindset that everything is possible. You have to have discipline and be constant, because there are people who are very undisciplined and do not get ahead because of that. (Ely)

Along with persistency and determination, some Hispanic entrepreneurs also mentioned profit and ability to expand as metrics of success for their business.

I see a new job as a potential for more profit. So, I am persistent, and, in every job, I do and I always try to learn more to ensure customer satisfaction. (Camelia)

Well, I'm doing well because we try to do the best we can, cleaning in detail and we have been growing as a company. (Perla)

Even though profit is affiliated with strong competition, one entrepreneur sees his business as a channel to bring success to everyone instead of adapting the traditional business motto of “only the strongest survive”.

In this business, we learn, and as we learn, we can teach others. Here, we are all working as a team and there is no such thing as competition. I remember in traditional business, when I had the restaurant, I asked other people who also had a restaurant what I could do to be more successful, and they did not tell me a single word because I was seen as competition. Meaning, if I grew more, they would move down because the food industry is based on competition and not cooperation. At [company's name], this is completely different because the more people you help, the more you earn in this business. You win friends, you earn money, and you gain success every day. (Macario)

Business continuity and growth is a strong base for Hispanic Entrepreneurs' evaluation of success. For some, it is the main driver of their success.

Customer Satisfaction

Hispanic entrepreneurs emphasized the importance to go above and beyond in ensuring customer satisfaction. This metric allowed participants to determine the best strategies in either improving or change their products and services. For some, when customers and employees had positive things to say about their business, that was the most important form of marketing in their view because it reinforced Hispanic entrepreneurs that they were doing business right.

I define success by measuring customer satisfaction, when I can see a customer happy with the product I give them... one of the things I have always proposed for my business to grow is to give the best treatment to people, I believe that the best advertising is word of mouth (Juan)

I think you see success in the people who work for you. In how loyal they are. In how they treat you, in how you treat them, when you walk on the street or go to the store with your company shirt, which says [company's name] and people know you and greet you. And they tell you: Hey, you work there, I really like the restaurant, it's the best restaurant. So, for me that is how I define success. (Carlos)

I measure it (success) by the extensive work that I dedicate to the automobiles of each client. I strive to treat the client well and meet their expectations as that is my goal. (German)

Due to the extensive resources needed for advertising and marketing, Hispanic entrepreneurs mainly relied on word of mouth to keep their businesses afloat. Many even implemented the idea of walking around their neighborhoods and handing business cards to spread awareness of their business. Popular belief is that the entrepreneurial mindset is associated with big scale businesses, however, further research has shown that small scale businesses have as much connection to entrepreneurship if not more, than their big scale counterparts. Hispanic entrepreneurs continuously look for opportunities to use their skills and abilities, and once they detect such opportunity, they strive to exploit it to its absolute potential.

Personal Characteristics/Traits

Through our research, we asked Hispanic entrepreneurs what personal characteristics or traits they believe they possess that leads to success for their business. In the business world, there must always be a benefit for the entrepreneur, as one of the main goals of such entity is to ensure well-being for the individual starting the business.

More than anything, discipline, and guidance. To do things correctly and to cling to what one wants, to be perfectly informed about it, because knowledge is power. (Ariel)

Punctuality, responsibility and perseverance. (Camelia)

I grew up with a very independent family and it was always a mindset that I could get ahead in life by being independent. Each person is different, but I do believe that independence is very important. (Ely)

Other entrepreneurs mentioned that their ability to ignore and withstand criticism is what ultimately leads to success. Understanding that there will always be doubters and naysayers was key for them, as some businesses fail because of such external forces.

People criticize you when they see that your success in life is imminent. As individuals, we are afraid of criticism, we are afraid of what they will say, we are afraid that people will speak of us badly. I thank God that I have never suffered from that, I do not suffer from fear, from being criticized, from being rejected. I don't care about any of it because at the end of the day, when you are in need, only the most important people in your life will be there to support you. For example, I do not care what the neighbor thinks, if he sees me walking around with a box of products, well dressed, that does not matter because the neighbor is not going to come pay my rent, nor will he bring you food if you need it.... I began to understand that people are going to judge you by everything you have done and not by what you are presently doing. When that happens, I try to find the best way to stand out, how to be a better individual, and move forward. For example, I used to have people make fun of me and tell me that with a suit and tie I looked like a lawyer, or a doctor and I did not like it. But then I started to use that as motivation and instead I thanked them for it because they helped me believe that I actually could become something in life. Back then my self-esteem was very low but when you begin to understand that all that they are telling you doesn't kill you, it makes you stronger and motivates you to move even further. (Macario)

I can say that the bewilderment of certain friends, colleagues, and even past employers. We have felt the doubt, the distrust towards us regarding the project we are operating. But I feel that we must overcome all those doubts and move forward with the project as there will always be people who do not believe that your idea can be successful. (Ariel)

Philanthropy

For an entrepreneur, once their own psychological needs and aspirations are met, there comes the time when they measure the success of their businesses by how philanthropic they are. This means that entrepreneurs strive to help those in need and try to improve success for future entrepreneurs. This is the same with Hispanic entrepreneurs. Many highlighted the need to contribute to their communities, either monetarily or by giving helpful advice to the future generation of Hispanic entrepreneurs.

I see myself as a source of inspiration for women who may not think that they are capable of succeeding. I'm no different from any woman, though I got an education, that doesn't make me any different from anyone. I want people to say that they were glad to have met me and, most importantly, to live with purpose. God's purpose in me is to help people. And in this business, we can help as many people as possible, that is why we love [company's name] so much. (Silvia)

I also see myself going to hospitals so that I am able to help individuals with whatever they need. I want to make a difference in their lives, as money is no longer going to be a problem for us, if God allows it of course. I want to be able to say to someone: Here, take your receipt for a whole year's worth of rent, don't worry about anything, go enjoy your time with your kids and loved ones. (Macario)

The ability to focus on other people and their success is something that Hispanic entrepreneurs see as a direct influence on their overall well-being and happiness. As such, it is one of their most desired goals to achieve through their career as they look to spread a positive change in their communities.

Summary

Our data suggest that while Hispanic entrepreneurs mention profitability as a metric to success, other factors such as business continuity/growth, customer satisfaction, personal characteristics/traits, and philanthropy were deemed as important. These metrics demonstrate how much Hispanic entrepreneurs want their businesses to exist long-term and how much they value their customers' happiness with the product or service. In addition, Hispanic entrepreneurs see their character traits and philanthropic activities as a key to their success because of the external forces that their businesses may face; as well as how their positive contribution to others influences their well-being and happiness.

Proposition 5: Hispanic entrepreneurs measure success of their ventures based on business continuity/growth, customer satisfaction, personal characteristics/traits, and philanthropy.

Discussions and Implications

This research extends current understanding on entrepreneurship by focusing on Hispanic entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship, which are often failed to be observed in the literature (Fox and Rayburn, 2022) We reveal that Hispanic entrepreneurs use their skills and abilities in known fields and primarily focus on using differentiation strategies more than cost-leadership to gain competitive advantage in the market. While most argue that a differentiation strategy is not viable for small businesses because of the extensive resources needed such as time and money (J.F., 2022), Hispanic entrepreneurs have managed to implement a differentiation strategy through two paths.

First, Hispanic entrepreneurs create competitive advantage by providing customers with high quality products and services. Hispanic entrepreneurs build their businesses through their extensive knowledge of their industry and based on the prior experience they acquired when working under previous employers (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). This allowed them to mitigate risks and minimize the margin of error when opening their business. In addition, prioritizing product or service quality above price allows the entrepreneur to build trust with customers, which then results in the customer repurchasing that specific product or service time after time.

Second, a major goal for Hispanic entrepreneurs is to ensure customer satisfaction, and this is done through an extensive focus on being customer oriented. Meaning, to the Hispanic entrepreneur, the customer is always first, and giving a viable solution to their need is the main purpose of the business. There are a few methods to accomplish such tasks. First, Hispanic entrepreneurs ought to act with transparency and honesty when delivering their product or service to customers. Next, our entrepreneurs reported wanting to create long-lasting relationships with their customers, to give them the best treatment, wanting to make a difference in their customers' lives, to see them as the main driver of their businesses' success.

To understand why Hispanic entrepreneurs employ differentiation strategies when launching their ventures, we revisit self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan 2000; Ryan and Deci 2000; Fox and Rayburn 2022). According to self-determination theory, all individuals have three psychological needs that can be fulfilled to achieve personal well-being. As it pertains to Hispanic entrepreneurs, they fulfill the psychological need for autonomy through launching their venture and being masters of their own time. They satisfy their psychological need for competence and relatedness by adopting a differentiation strategy that is comprised of delivering high quality products or services, and by providing the best experience for their customer base. This path of psychological fulfillment delivers the entrepreneur both a contextual state of self-determination and well-being, which is proportionally attached to success (Fox and Rayburn, 2022)

Finally, our research highlights the overlooked aspect of how a Hispanic entrepreneur measures success. While some correlate financial performance with success of a business, our research shows that Hispanic entrepreneurs look at more than just profit as a performance measure for their ventures. This is key to emphasize as Hispanic entrepreneurs adapt the entrepreneurial mindset through a different lens than their other small business counterparts, allowing to expand the knowledge of such concept in a more complete and enlightened way.

Theoretical Implications

This research extends literature in three important ways (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). First, we reinforce Sithas and Surangi's (2021) who argued the positive economic input created by ethnic minority entrepreneurship and the lack of systematic categorization for such. Our data shows that ethnic minority entrepreneurs (Hispanic entrepreneurs in this regard) positively contribute to the nation's economy, employment, and poverty alleviation through the strategic

choices they make to ensure substantial competitive advantage. We illustrate two clear mechanisms, delivery of high-quality products or services coupled with outstanding customer satisfaction (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). They build their strategies based on their industry knowledge and work experience, along with an above and beyond pursuit to serve their customers and their communities (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). This further extends the research made by Sithas and Surangi (2021) which describes the disadvantage position that ethnic minority entrepreneurs are presently in due to resource constraints and lack of funding from the host nation.

Next, we introduce self-determination theory as a theoretical framework to interpret the strategic behavior of Hispanic entrepreneurs (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Self-determination theory reveals the psychological needs that motivate strategic choices. This research proposes that not only are psychological needs fulfilled, but individuals can also act by implementing their own desired strategies to fulfill these needs (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Meaning, our entrepreneurs did not depend on anyone else to fulfill their needs, they were autonomous in deciding their own fate by using their knowledge of their respective industries as well as embraced their differentiation strategies of product/service quality and extreme desired for customer satisfaction. And in return, creating a working environment that was adequate to their well-being.

To conclude, this research shows the metrics used by Hispanic entrepreneurs to measure success (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). While it is popularly believed that small business success is relied solely by profit measures, we demonstrate that Hispanic entrepreneurs utilize various metrics that are different from the general performance measure scorecard. The metrics are business continuity/growth, customer satisfaction, personal characteristics/traits, and philanthropy. Further advanced metrics are mainly used by big scale enterprises; however,

Hispanic entrepreneurs still see such metrics adequate for their relatively simple ventures. As such, we call for attention to more theoretical and empirical research on the utilization of various business performance measures done in the ethnic minority entrepreneurship and Hispanic entrepreneurship context (Sithas & Surangi; Fox and Rayburn, 2022).

Practical Implications

Hispanic entrepreneurship is a different form of entrepreneurship. Resource constraints, lack of funding, and the desire to provide products and services to regional and local markets is what ultimately leads a Hispanic entrepreneur to venture on small scale business (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Consequently, they must look to maximize the limited resources available to them, with most of them pointing out how they acquire the necessary funds for their ventures from prior employment savings and family contributions. In addition, because of their focus on small scale business, it is extremely important to them to establish relationships and connections with their customer base and community (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). Our research shows, how through differentiation strategies, Hispanic entrepreneurs can create a rather unique form of competitive advantage that strengthens customer loyalty and retention (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). This research also suggest that future Hispanic entrepreneurs should consider using the high-quality product/service and tenacious customer oriented strategic approach. If done accordingly, positive benefits such as word of mouth and referrals can improve the likelihood of business longevity and growth, thereby maximizing the venture's success.

Along with various competitive strategies, Hispanic entrepreneurs measure their success based on their personal characteristics/traits and philanthropic activities. Some mentioned how their strong mindset and will when facing adversity and criticism allowed the dreams for their ventures to flourish. To add, Hispanic entrepreneurs want to feel part of their communities by

helping the ones in need and by mentoring future entrepreneurial generations. This can be done through monetary donations or by sharing strategic business insights that can aid future Hispanic owned businesses. As such, for many Hispanic entrepreneurs, helping their communities is also a determinant to their overall well-being.

An additional insight obtained from this research that has yet to be discussed is that some entrepreneurs acknowledged the importance that education has in ensuring success for entrepreneurs. Some participants commented that they were aware of the many entrepreneurship and small business courses that students can now take, which can better prepare them for the business world. They believe that if students are better prepared, they will be able to improve their critical thinking skills and obtain more resources. Others mentioned their continued desire to master the English language as they believed it would open many more doors of opportunity that they can exploit as a language barrier would be nonexistent. This now leads to the overarching question: how can U.S. institutions such as universities, the Small Business Administration, the BBB, government chambers, and many others help these entrepreneurs? We propose that institutions like the ones mentioned should expand their efforts in adding more programs that can help Hispanic business owners get started or find assistance when building a star-up company. Ideally, the aid should be free of charge. We believe that providing Hispanic entrepreneurs with the much-needed knowledge will allow them to be aware of the benefits available to them, such as the lucrative corporate and government contracts. The main goal of these agencies would be to educate and get Hispanic entrepreneurs qualified to be able to secure funding for their ventures. In addition, we identified one major setback that some Hispanic entrepreneurs are currently facing. It is the issue that a good portion of Hispanic entrepreneurs are not formally accredited from a college or university to secure specific jobs within their

industries. Through our study, many of our participants highlighted that their businesses primarily served a Hispanic customer base; however, some commented on not being able to perform jobs or sell their products in some areas of the market due to the accreditation barriers that impeded them from performing certain tasks. As previously mentioned, many highlighted the personal desire to get an education because they knew how significant it would be to their businesses' goals and aspirations. Therefore, we propose a formation of a new program, or an extension of the existing agency mentioned above that is funded by the government. The agency would provide Hispanic entrepreneurs with the opportunity to get the proper accreditation for their respective fields and industries to perform jobs and tasks that need such requirements. It would be similar to an associate or bachelor's degree, but in this case, Hispanic entrepreneurs would be given the option to take courses in English or Spanish, meaning that a language barrier would not be the reason why they would not attempt to gain such accreditation. These courses could potentially instigate Hispanic owned business growth, thereby improving the U.S. economy and success for this minority ethnic group.

Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. First, to identify the sample of entrepreneurs, we employed a snowball sampling technique to identify Hispanic entrepreneurs to interview (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). While this was suited for our research, this technique has limitations because the sample is limited to businesses that survived the start-up stage and are operational (Fox and Rayburn, 2022). We did not interview any entrepreneurs who had a failing business to gain insights on what strategies they used for their businesses. Second, we only interviewed entrepreneurs that were either from Honduras or Mexico. This limited us to gain insight based on only two different cultural backgrounds, therefore still limiting a better finding for a full

contextualization of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial mindset. In addition, due to the qualitative nature of the research and the relatively small sample size (Fox and Rayburn, 2022), full knowledge of Hispanic entrepreneurship, may be limited; to mitigate this setback, we made efforts in including Hispanic entrepreneurs of different gender, age, education, geographic location, and industry to ensure inclusion of varied perspectives.

Future Research

There are still many directions to take to do further research on Hispanic entrepreneurship. Therefore, we will mention a few that would be interesting to follow. Future research can be done regarding Hispanic entrepreneurs who have obtained advance degrees such as a bachelor's or masters. This can better inform us of the strategies used by these entrepreneurs and see if they differ from those of their counterparts with respects to their choice of operating a small or big scale business, what their target market is, and if they prefer a differentiation or cost-leadership strategy. Second, though we learned that some Hispanic entrepreneurs highlighted that their religious beliefs are an important factor in their success, further research can be made on this matter. Interviewing a larger scale of Hispanic entrepreneurs of various religious beliefs may expand the research on entrepreneurship in a more micro level, as well as understand how important an entrepreneur's intrinsic values are to their well-being and self-fulfillment goals.

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