



Challenges and Enablers of African Migrant Entrepreneurship in Ireland

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Abstract

Purpose: African migrant entrepreneurs are increasingly contributing to the vibrant Irish entrepreneurial scene. With a focus on the interplay between resource access, support networks, and cultural assimilation, this study explores the challenges and enablers presented to these entrepreneurs.

Methodology: This study used semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to investigate the effects of social capital, funding constraints, and cultural variations on market entry, business performance, and overall integration into the Irish ecosystem.

Findings: The findings of the qualitative analysis detailed cultural prejudice, difficulty in accessing funds as some of the challenges, while stating personal drive and Irish entrepreneurial ecosystem as some enabling factors. These findings add to our knowledge of African immigrant entrepreneurs' experiences, as well as presenting insights for policy makers and support groups to create focused initiatives promoting greater inclusivity and fostering a more dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Limitations: The major limitations are basically two: first is insufficient research work on African migrants in Ireland which could be due to African population to Ireland's native citizens ratio (67,546 to 5.127 million). Second is the small sample size of interviewees available to the researcher.

Conclusion: African migrant entrepreneurs are often faced with challenges of poor cultural embeddedness, and for those who do not have prior entrepreneurial experience or access to funding, this could be a precursor to failure.

Keyword: Migrants, Entrepreneurs, African, Ireland, Enablers, Challenges, funding, community.

Declaration

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Globally, the world has witnessed a surge in international entrepreneurship (Cavusgil and Knight, 2015), where individuals migrate to new countries to establish and grow businesses. According to the European Commission (2024), there have been about twenty-five (25) million legal migrants to Europe in the past decade, of which, as of 2022, approximately ten (10) million of those immigrants were employed in Europe. It suffices to then infer that out of the economically active populace, a vibrant entrepreneurial force can grow. Nathan (2014) wrote that these skilled migrants, who in the space of a decade included educated people whose population went up by well over 50% university degree holders in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, foster economic dynamism and innovation in host countries. Migrant entrepreneurs play a crucial role in stimulating economic growth by introducing new ideas, engaging in job creation, and promoting international trade (Naudé, Siegel and Marchand, 2017). The Centre for Entrepreneurs (2015) outline that 14% of companies in the United Kingdom (UK) were started by migrant entrepreneurs, whose number at the time of reporting was 456,073 migrant entrepreneurs. One example is Dr. Gerry Ford of California, who founded Paladin Associates to invest in a variety of food businesses, including Caffé Nero, which at the time was operating from five locations and now employs more than 4,000 people (Centre for Entrepreneurs UK, 2015). Another example is Perween Warsi, the Indian founder and chief executive of S&A Foods, whose company produces up to 1.5 million chilled ready meals a week. It can thus be seen that the ventures of these highly skilled people often bridge the gap between their home and host countries, fostering cultural exchange and knowledge transfer, and economic empowerment.

1.1 African Diaspora in Ireland

Ireland, with its robust economy, skilled workforce, and supportive government policies (Haugh, Jin and Pandiella, 2016), has become an increasingly attractive destination for international entrepreneurs. In recent decades, Ireland has experienced a significant influx of migrants from Africa, particularly skilled professionals seeking new opportunities (Central Statistics Office, 2023a; Ruhs and Quinn, 2009). This could have been influenced by the vital information and communications technology (ICT) value added to Ireland's economic performance, as the country is recognized for housing some of the largest technological enterprises (Roughneen, 2017), such as Google, Amazon and Microsoft. It is also important to note that amidst the range of industries that could have been started by Africans in Ireland (food, fashion, entertainment), there has been a major surge in the technology culture in Africa. Atiase, Kolade and Liedong (2020) noted that African technology hubs have led to the start of hundreds of businesses. It is therefore logical to seek to understand why a country like Ireland may tend to attract Africans, because there is enough room to grow for the African, even for those who are not actively in technology whose business would need technology to grow, and Ireland also gets a unique opportunity to leverage the entrepreneurial spirit and diverse skillsets of the ensuing African diaspora community. While an individual diaspora effort on the African continent may not bear so much weight, on a corporate level, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs (2024) has it that Irish government is stepping up its support for innovation through its Africa Strategy, with a focus on fostering collaboration between the Irish and African business sectors. Some examples of this include funding climate innovation and female entrepreneurship, extending the Africa Agri-Food Development Programme, and establishing a Tech Challenge Fund. In addition, this study seeks to examine the current potential of the African community in Ireland.

1.2 Justification for this Research Work

This research study focuses on a specific segment of the Irish entrepreneurial landscape: African migrant entrepreneurs. While the contributions of migrant entrepreneurs are widely recognized, their journeys are often fraught with challenges. This study aims to shed light on the specific hurdles faced by African migrant entrepreneurs in Ireland, alongside the factors that enable their success. In understanding how African entrepreneurs navigate cultural differences, social networks, and institutional barriers in Ireland, it is needful to examine the motivations and strategies employed by ethnic minorities in establishing and running businesses (Legros *et al.*, 2013). According to Glanville (2022), who wrote about the life of Jewish Dubliner Stuart Rosenblatt, who became the president of the Genealogical Society of Ireland, James Joyce was drawn to the family life and solitude of Jewish minorities who migrated to Ireland in the 19th century and thought there was no animosity toward Jews as long as they didn't fear the unknown. McWilliams (2024) in his podcast also engaged a couple of Italian migrants who are arguably the most successful migrants in Ireland. He inspected their impact on the Irish culture and the ease of integration they had in Ireland, while emphasizing on how that even though they're in the minority, they made significant economic and social impacts in Ireland through sports (football), food industry (ice cream shop, Italian fish and chip shop). These backdrops of other ethnic minorities in Ireland mirrors this study of how African entrepreneurs leverage their cultural heritage and existing Irish social networks to build successful ventures.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

Research Aim

To identify the key challenges and enablers faced by African migrant entrepreneurs in Ireland, focusing on how these factors influence their access to resources and networks.

Research Objectives

1. Explore the challenges faced by African migrant entrepreneurs when establishing and running businesses in Ireland, and the enablers that made their successes realizable.
2. Examine how personal drive, and professional networks help in overcoming market entry challenges and building trust for African migrant entrepreneurs.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of existing support structures for African migrant entrepreneurs in Ireland, identify gaps in these systems, and propose recommendations for a more inclusive and supportive environment.

The unspoken inquisitiveness surrounding African migrant entrepreneurs in Ireland is clarified by these objectives. A comprehensive picture of their experiences, including the factors that made them successful, and how well support systems worked is painted. This also allows for the spotting of gaps that can enhance future studies and aid an inclusive business ecosystem.

1.4 Chapter Roadmap

The flow of this research work has been sectioned into chapters as shown:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This presents a general overview of migration trends, migrant African entrepreneurs in Ireland and an expectation of the results of the subjects that this work inspects.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The review explores existing research on international entrepreneurship, African diaspora communities and the Irish entrepreneurial landscape. It also identifies the challenges and enablers

that are a characteristic of migrant entrepreneurs across territories, and gaps in previous studies as it pertains to this project's aims and objectives.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The methodology employed in this study is qualitative research. This chapter contains a detailed description of the data collection and thematic analysis processes.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

The outcomes of the semi-structured interviews conducted with African migrant entrepreneurs Ireland is extracted and written in this chapter, this includes a summary and visualization where necessary.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

This chapter contains a keen look into the challenges these entrepreneurs had to deal with in doing business in Ireland and enablers that support their success, including social networks, cultural resources and government initiatives.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendation

This chapter summarizes the key findings and highlights the potential contributions of this study to the broader understanding of international entrepreneurship and the experiences of African migrant communities, while offering recommendations for policymakers, support organizations and aspiring African migrant entrepreneurs.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In recent times, migration trends in Europe have provoked the curiosity of many (De Haas and Vezzoli, 2018), especially considering how globalization continues to reduce literal geographic and economic distances (Hollensen 2020; Dicken, 2007; Levitt, 1983). This is majorly due to heightened competition amidst the highly skilled and unskilled working-class part of the population, for scarce jobs and resources (Vogt Isaksen, 2019). In 2020 alone, statistics put global migrant figures at 281 million (3.6 per cent) of the world's population, of which about 30% of all migrants settled in Europe (International Organization for Migration, 2022). As of the year 2020, according to the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2022), African migrants rank 4th among the global migrants' stock as shown.

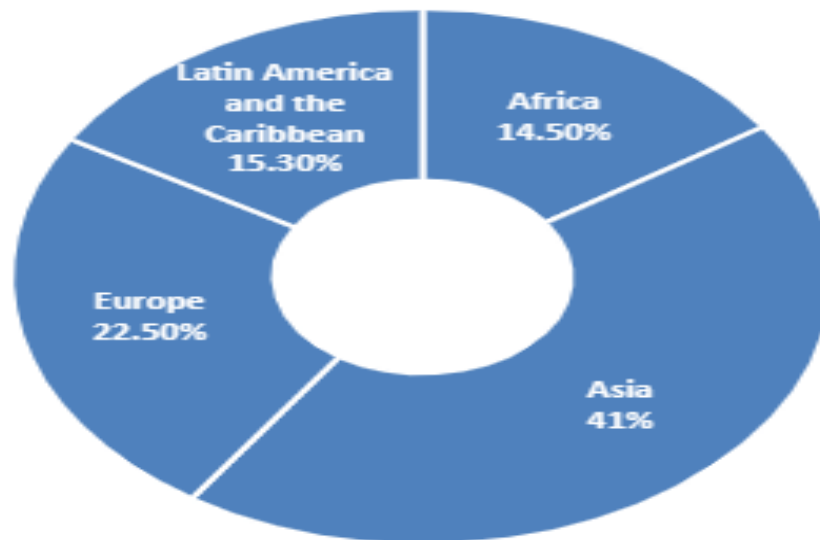


Figure 1: World regions: Share of international migration stock (2020) (Data Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2022)

2.1.2 Migrant Entrepreneurs

A study by Khosa and Kalitanyi (2015) showed that entrepreneurs migrate to South Africa due to better business policies and to record more profitability. According to Scheel and Tazzioli (2022), migrants face a myriad of challenges including bordering practices and boundary-making processes that are ingrained in the national order of things. This is why the choice to move to or remain in a desired location goes beyond the literal perception of viewing migrants as people who physically transition between nations. Based on the qualities proposed by Filion (2021) for describing an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur can be defined as an individual who identifies opportunities, and through the process of innovation, takes measured risks, and mobilizes resources to create and deliver value, ultimately driving positive change. Entrepreneurs who have immigrated to a new nation and launched their own enterprises are known as migrant entrepreneurs. They are vital to their native and adopted communities, serving as cultural bridges, and making major contributions to the advancement of the economy and society (Tolciu, 2011). According to the OECD/European Union (2019), Estonia, France, Greece, Latvia, the Netherlands, and Spain have had the highest growth in self-employment rates among immigrants in the European Union in ten years. Some affluent investors immigrate on special visas and operate large firms in many countries, providing more job opportunities. Other immigrant entrepreneurs typically have fewer resources. However, even refugees can start successful enterprises and create jobs.

2.1.3 African Migrants in Ireland

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ranked Ireland's self-employment rate at 14% (OECD Data, 2023). As such, it is important to assess what fraction of that are African migrants. The key question of who qualifies as a migrant affects both the identification and

assessment of migrants as well as the evaluation of the effects of migration. Various standards have been put forth, such as foreign citizenship, foreign birth, or moving to a new nation, either temporarily or permanently (Anderson and Blinder, 2024). The United Nations (2024) define migrants as individuals who change their place of residence from one destination to another for a specific period, excluding tourists and business professionals. For example, seasonal workers fall under the category of 'short-term migrants' (Batsaikhan, Darvas and Raposo, 2018). Since the 18th century, there has been a small population of Black people, Africans, and individuals with African heritage residing in Ireland. They were primarily concentrated in major cities and towns such as Limerick, Cork, Belfast, Kinsale, Waterford and Dublin (Hart, 2002). Over time, increased immigration has contributed to the growth of this community throughout Ireland. Table 1 shows data curated from the Central Statistics Office (2023c).

Table 1: One Year Ireland Population Change Data from April 2022 to April 2023 (Source: Central Statistics Office, 2023c)

CATEGORY		VALUE	DESCRIPTION
Population increase		97600	Largest since 2008
Immigrants		141600	16-year high
	Returning Irish citizens	29600	None
	Other EU citizens	26100	None
	UK citizens	4800	None
	Other countries	81100	Including 42,000 Ukrainians
Emigrants		64000	One of the highest figures
	Natural increase	20000	(Births: 55,500, Deaths: 35,500)

Further data sourcing from the Central Statistics Office (2023b) revealed the total population of Africans in Ireland to be 67,546. From that data source, the chart in Figure 2 was derived to include

the working-class age group. It is important to note that there are people, about 8,699 people, who identified as Blacks from other backgrounds (Central Statistics Office, 2023b).

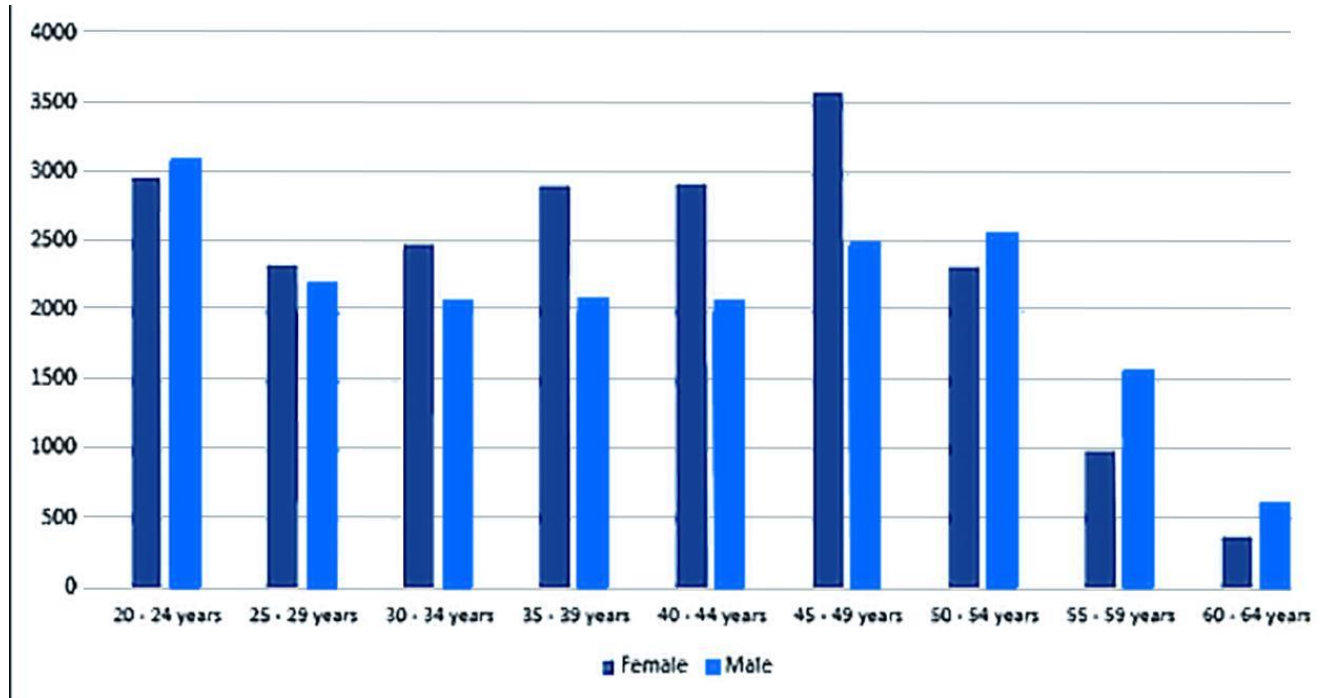


Figure 2: African Population Usually Resident in Ireland, 2022 (Data Source: Central Statistics Office, 2023b)

This demographic information shows that African migrant communities can be said to present a potential transformative shift in the landscape of Irish entrepreneurship. Here are a few reasons:

- The African American Irish Diaspora Network (2021) launched its Scholarship and Student Exchange Program for Emerging Entrepreneurs initiative.
- The All-Ireland Business Foundation (2021) highlighted a certain Emeka Ikwukeme, an Irish African, who was named “Irish African Businessperson of the Year”.

According to a study by Cooney and Flynn (2008) as shown in Table 2 below, African entrepreneurs bring their unique skills, cultural perspectives and business adeptness to Ireland,

contributing to economic growth, fostering innovation and diversifying the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Table 2: Africa's Occupational Group in Ireland (Source: Cooney and Flynn, 2008, p. 28)

Occupational Category	African Nationals (%)	Number
Farming/Fishery/Forestry	3	62
Manufacturing and Construction	9.3	1,732
Clerical/Management/Government	7.7	1,439
Communication/Transport	3.4	633
Sales/Commerce	8.8	1,645
Professional/Technical/Health	15.8	2,955
Services	14.6	2,732
Other	29.0	5,399
Looking for First Regular Job	11.1	2,074
Total	100	18,671

Recognizing this potential, it becomes crucial to delve deeper into how these burgeoning ventures can serve a nation's economy. Hence, the need for this study.

2.2 Challenges facing African Migrant Entrepreneurs

Golob *et al.* (2020) found that the laws and the peculiarities of the local business environment pose unique difficulties for migrant entrepreneurs. These could be policies that migrant entrepreneurs must get used to or culture shocks that constitute setbacks. Regarding policies, for instance, two of the most common usages of online services are social media and information searches (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). These are tools that have been found to enrich individuals' offline social networks, and by consequence, enhance market entry (Wang *et al.*, 2020). However, a study

revealed that restrictions in the use of social media and information searches, as it is obtainable in countries like China, pose managerial challenges and could affect entrepreneurs that are into tourism (Fu and Timothy, 2021). In the same vein, internet restrictions in countries like South Korea could also limit migrant entrepreneurs in that region from having global trade views. For instance, according to Yoon (2027), a Daum Agora user was imprisoned for breaking the Telecommunications Business Act in 2009 after he made an online prediction that South Korea would experience an economic crisis. Twitter users from South Korea have also been detained for discussing North Korea on their platform. In a different instance, in 2008, online demonstrators who opposed the import of beef from the United States faced consequences.

On the cultural aspect, Oyelana (2016) and Chimucheka, Muchineripi and Chinyamurindi (2019) mentioned that in South Africa, xenophobic episodes occur often when company owners are attacked, and these dangerous and unsafe times deterred many inbound African investors from visiting South Africa. Charman and Piper (2012) wrote that is common to use violence against Somali shops as proof of xenophobic violence and attitudes in South Africa. Furthermore, there were legal and incorporation concerns as the bureaucratic procedures included attempting to legalize their enterprises in South Africa which caused dismay among migrant entrepreneurs. They now detest the procedures that must be followed to regularize and legalize their business activities. Numerous immigrants stated that they are deterred from establishing their enterprises with the appropriate authorities due to the complex procedures governing foreign company registration (Chimucheka *et al.*, 2019).

To examine potential roadblocks that could impede the smooth operations of African migrant entrepreneurs in Ireland, this study explores the experiences of migrant entrepreneurs in other nations. Shi and Wang (2011) highlight how the Hofstede tool makes it possible to compare

nations' cultural dimensions. Henley & Partners (2024) wrote that according to the UN Human Development Index, Ireland is one of the five most developed countries in the world and third place in the 2023 Index of Economic Freedom places. As such, it is logical to compare Ireland with other developed economies that have taken ample numbers of African migrants in recent times, especially countries in Europe. Among the countries captured by Okeke-Ihejirika and Odimegwu (2023) as places where African migrants moved to are the United Kingdom and Canada. According to the figure below, Ireland, the United Kingdom (the UK) and Canada share similarities in their cultural dimensions (Countries of the World, 2024), and with the UK being a European nation like Ireland, it is used to understudy the challenges that African entrepreneurs might face in Ireland.



Figure 3: Hofstede Metrics for Countries that share similarities with Ireland (Hofstede Insights, 2024)

Power Distance Index (PDI)

Ireland ranks lower in the PDI, a society that prioritizes minimizing inequalities. For instance, in an exclusive meeting with the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) raised important concerns about the consequences of impoverishment, especially for vulnerable groups. The panel discussed how the state addressed poverty by enacting temporary relief measures and stressed the importance of funding and developing in an environmentally responsible manner in order to address the root issues (IHREC, 2024). A hierarchy is established for convenience, and managers rely on individual employees and teams for expertise. Communication is informal, direct, and participative. At 35, Britain ranks higher in the PDI, with research showing a lower PD index among the higher class than among the working classes. The United Kingdom has long been known for its stark differences in social class and economic status (Savage *et al.*, 2013). According to the findings by Tubadji *et al.* (2020), cultural discrimination has five times more of an impact on cases like COVID-19-related deaths than it does on the economy.

Motivation towards Achievement and Success

Ireland, at 68, has a strong sense of achievement and success, and its common values encourage a "winner takes all" mentality. This encourages people to aim for excellence at work, play and school. Individuals settle disputes with the intention of triumphing. Britain is a decisive society at 66, motivated by achievement. On the other hand, the success-driven value system is at odds with the modesty and understatement culture. While great progress has been made to ease the everyday entrepreneurship experience of Africans in the UK, there are still challenges as much as there is excitement (Ojo, 2018).

Mendy and Hack-Polay (2018), in their study, identified among other factors like a lack of finance, that cultural issues contributed to the failures of most African businesses.

It can thus be seen that the challenges faced by migrant entrepreneurs revolve around:

- Compliance with a new legal structure
- Raising finances
- Adjusting to new environmental peculiarities
- Dealing with cultural differences/discrimination

Anecdotal evidence suggests that cultural differences bear the most weight in terms of the failures of migrant entrepreneurs (Hollensen, 2020; Mendy and Hack-Polay, 2018). This research work seeks to find if Ireland also mirrors the same realities or if the nation has measures to ease the process for African migrants.

2.3 Enablers of African Migrant Entrepreneurship

Abbas, Nejati and Taleghani (2024) wrote that migrants are a great source of economic potential, who in their host communities may contribute to economic growth, job creation and cultural exchange if enablers like focused training, inclusive networks and supportive policies enable them to thrive (Desiderio, 2014). However, as discussed earlier, managing the difficulties of starting and growing a firm in a foreign setting poses difficulties. For budding entrepreneurs to maximize their potential for significant economic and social impact, it is important to inspect the elements that make success possible.

2.3.1 Internal Enablers

From an internal perspective, an entrepreneurial mentality and set of abilities are essential. This is an important starting point, as it is the inherent propensity for taking risks and being resourceful

(Markman, 2014; Kobia and Sikalieh, 2010) which is frequently refined by previous economic involvements in smaller capacities. However, more training and business understanding are needed for easy adaptation. Programs designed specifically to meet the requirements of migrants can help close this gap. For instance, those provided by the London African Network (a group for those who wish to drive the expansion of this ecosystem who are employed in or want to enter the UK-Africa startup, tech, investment, innovation, and creative corridor) (London Africa, 2024) or MEST Africa (an incubator for entrepreneurs from different parts of Africa) (Naisubi, 2020). Furthermore, having access to finance and financial awareness are essential. Government financing schemes in South Africa and microfinance efforts like Zidisha in Kenya (Ahmed and Lema, 2017) can offer vital resources. Robust networking and social capital both within immigrant groups and the larger business community provide priceless resources and assistance. The thriving African diaspora groups in the United States, for instance, offer marketplaces and crucial mentorship.

2.3.2 External Enablers

Nontrivial alterations to the corporate environment that support entrepreneurial endeavours are referred to as external enablers. This was the position of Davidsson, Recker and von Briel (2022), who mentioned that it includes new technologies, legislative changes, demographic and sociocultural trends, macroeconomic fluctuations and modifications to the natural environment. Favourable migration policies can foster an enabling environment. These include being open to skilled migrants like Canada and Australia are currently doing (Chand and Tung, 2019), providing clear paths to residence and streamlining company registration procedures. One such is the Canada Start-up Visa Program which grants qualifying immigrant entrepreneurs and their families permanent residency (Lee and Glennon, 2023).

Furthermore, access to capital is a key enabler for migrant entrepreneurs. Teevan and Domingo (2022) mentioned how the EU-AU Summit in Brussels in February 2022 revealed the EU's Global Gateway Strategy which includes an ambitious €150 billion Africa-Europe Investment Package by 2030. These are corporate efforts that at governmental and global levels can encourage migrant entrepreneurs.

2.4 Ireland 's Entrepreneurship Environment - A PESTLE Analysis

The PESTLE analysis is the foundation for identifying the dangers and opportunities that could affect a people, brand or FDI venture (Perera, 2017).

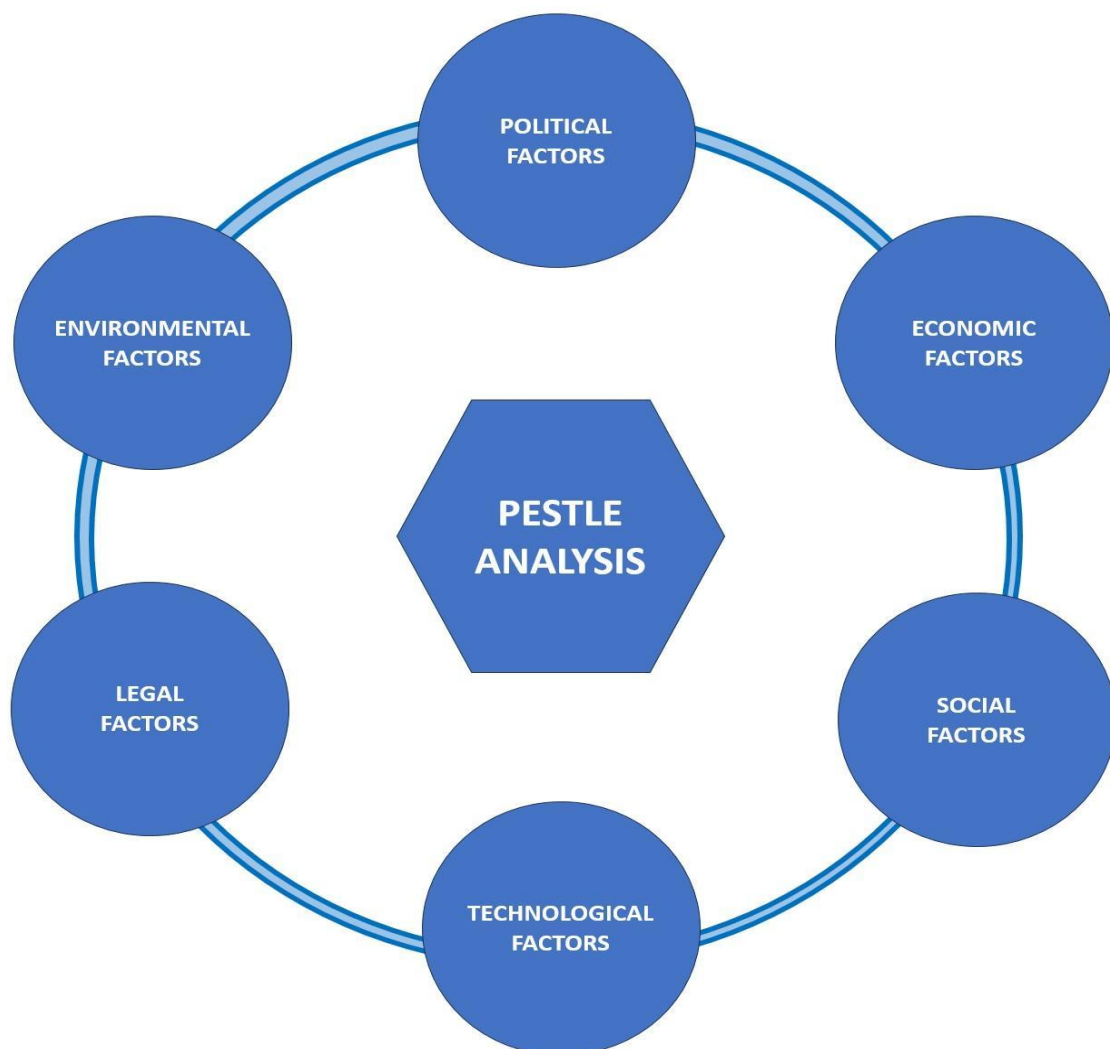


Figure 4: Pestle Analysis (Source: Author's Compilation)

The table below contains five years of data extracted from the World Bank to better understand how Irish political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental (PESTLE) factors affect entrepreneurship in the country.

Table 3: Doing Business in Ireland (Source: World Bank, 2024)

Series Name	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Dealing with construction permits: Time (days)	164	164	164	164	164
Enforcing contracts: Attorney fees (% of claim)	18.8	18.8	18.8	18.8	18.8
Starting a business: Time - Men (days)	12	11	11	11	11
Starting a business: Time - Women (days)	12	11	11	11	11
Starting a business: Cost - Women (% of income per capita)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Starting a business: Cost - Men (% of income per capita)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Resolving insolvency - Score	80.00655	80.0134	78.99926	79.11937	79.15016
Registering property: Time (days)	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5
Protecting minority investors: Extent of director liability index (0-10) - Score	80	80	80	80	80

Paying taxes: Total tax and contribution rate (% of profit)	26	26	26	26	26.1
Paying taxes: Profit tax (% of profits)	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.4
Getting electricity: Procedures (number) - Score	66.66667	66.66667	66.66667	66.66667	66.66667
Getting electricity: Cost to get electricity (% of income per capita)	84.8	76.8	65.6	59.2	57.1
Enforcing contracts: Trial and judgment (days)	500	500	500	500	500
Enforcing contracts: Filing and service (days)	60	60	60	60	60
Enforcing contracts: Enforcement fees (% of claim)	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8
Enforcing contracts: Cost (% of claim) - Score	69.85377	69.85377	69.85377	69.85377	69.85377

Source: (World Bank, 2024)

Drawing deductions from this data, the different components of PESTLE are explored with respect to Ireland's entrepreneurial environment.

2.4.1 Political Factors

The results of a study conducted by Molloy (2016) on sixty-three micro and small business owners in the Dublin region of Ireland showed that, despite the presence of other variables like funding

and mentorship, government assistance policies and entrepreneurial education were ambiguous. Although, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs (2024) listed multiple government efforts including a postgraduate fellows' program, bilateral trade and inclusiveness events to appreciate its African populace. The constant value of the taxes and reduction in the cost of amenities over the five years as captured in the data could also be a pointer to some efforts by the Irish Government to strengthen entrepreneurship. This could be due to their response to the housing crisis as written by Healy and Goldrick-Kelly (2017). They wrote that people clamoured for the reduction of significant cost components, such as value added tax (VAT) rates, and also demanded further financial support for households, whether in the form of direct financial aid, tax breaks or a loosening of lending criteria for first-time purchasers.

The following efforts have been made by the Irish Government as captured by the Department of Foreign Affairs (2024):

1. In November 2019, the Irish Government unveiled its Africa Strategy, demonstrating its commitment to the region by establishing two new embassies in Senegal and Morocco. This appears to be an ongoing and long-term strategy as Whelan, Holmes and Rees (1994) also mentioned that in the 1990s, non-resident diplomatic ties were established with Zimbabwe, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya in North Africa.
2. The Africa Ireland Fellows program has seen a rise in postgraduate students from Africa, with Ireland pledging to increase the number of Fellowships offered to African students to 150 by 2025. This appears to be an offshoot of European strength as Forster (2024) reiterated that the government in the UK keeps increasing funding for schools in England,

as well as providing more possibilities for adults to retrain, upskill and train and that, from 2025, this Lifetime learning scheme will also revamp the student finance system.

3. Trade and investment have increased, and Ireland has fortified its political ties with African nations and institutions. Trade in products reached a record level of €2.8 billion in 2022 while trade in services reached an all-time high of over €5 billion.
4. The bilateral trade in commodities and services between Ireland and Africa has increased by over €2 billion since 2019.
5. The 7th Africa Ireland Economic Forum (AIEF) in Dublin in June 2022 drew approximately 400 attendees, many of whom are influential figures in industry and politics.
6. Every year on Africa Day, local authorities organize community-based events to honour the culture, cuisine, music and fashion of African Americans.
7. Ireland views the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda as a crucial part of the framework for preventing and resolving conflicts (Irish Joint Consortium on Gender Based Violence, 2008)

This research work adopted standard and creative interview methods to explore how these efforts by the Irish Government and the European Union have spurred African migrants into entrepreneurship in Ireland.

2.4.2 Economic Factors

Amenities

Getting electricity procedures remain constant at 66.66667 (World Bank, 2024), reflecting stability in the administrative aspects of obtaining electricity. The cost to get electricity as a percentage of

income per capita has seen a significant decline from 84.8% in 2016 to 57.1% in 2020, indicating a positive trend in the affordability of this amenity for entrepreneurs.

Ease of Startup

Currently, 13 Member States have implemented specialized admission programs to facilitate the entry of start-up founders and innovative entrepreneurs from non-EU countries. Ireland is also committed to fostering entrepreneurship, as outlined in the National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship in Ireland (Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, 2014). This is further corroborated by Fitzsimons and O'Gorman (2022) who mentioned that in 2017, almost 30,000 individuals in Ireland reported their involvement in starting a new business. Furthermore, some individuals or organizations facilitate support for entrepreneurs in functional areas of their professional development by offering guidance, coaching, data, talent management, access to these resources or offer psychological and social assistance through business or life coaching and monitoring.

2.4.3 Social Factors

Gender Inclusiveness

A partial individualization of the Irish income tax structure was started in 2000 to increase the inclusion of women in the workforce (Doorley, 2018). This effort is mirrored in the time required to start a business for both men and women as captured by World Bank (2024), in how it has decreased from 12 days in 2016 to 11 days in subsequent years, for both men and women, further contributing to a more favourable start-up environment. This suggests gender inclusiveness in the entrepreneurial process, as the time required is the same for both genders. Cost as a percentage of income per capita is also the same for men and women and has decreased over the years, indicating

an equal financial burden for both genders. Although there is no systematic national data on the gender pay gap in Ireland, O'Connor, and Irvine (2020) highlighted Eurostat's findings that the gender pay gap in Ireland is 14.4%. These findings partly reflect the underrepresentation of women in senior positions and partly reflect the higher valuation of areas of predominantly male employment.

2.4.4 Technological Factors

Dublin, a major European digital hub, attracts international tech companies such as Google, Facebook and Microsoft (Roberts, 2015), resulting in a thriving environment for innovation, cooperation and job possibilities (Tvedt, 2019). Ireland's highly educated and competent workforce, with a heavy focus on STEM education (Freeman, Marginson and Tytler, 2019), serves as a reservoir of talent for technology businesses. The Irish Government helps the technology industry via tax breaks, research money and initiatives that encourage entrepreneurship and innovation (Lin, Shen and Chou, 2010). Fritzen (2021) wrote about how Ireland's robust infrastructure, which includes a dependable and fast internet network, encourages remote work, advancement of innovative technology and a thriving start-up ecosystem with venture capital investment and support for creative technology firms. However, housing shortages, rising rent rates, a digital divide, a skills deficit and rivalry from other European innovation clusters like Luxembourg and Amsterdam poses challenges (Silicon Canals, 2023). Addressing data privacy issues, AI's ethical ramifications and the hazards associated with digitalization for vulnerable populations are imperative (Rodrigues, 2020). There are also strong laws like the Irish and UK laws to protect a digital creator's intellectual property (Ethics4EU Consortium, 2021) and strong enforcement of European data protection rights (EDPR) (Hoofnagle, van der Sloot and Borgesius, 2019).

2.4.5 Legal Factors

Regulatory Environment

Dealing with construction permits remains constant at 164 days throughout the years (World Bank, 2021), reflecting a consistent regulatory timeline in this aspect. The regulatory environment for enforcing contracts shows stability with attorney fees, trials and judgment days, filing and service days, enforcement fees and costs all remaining the same each year. The scores for protecting minority investors are also consistently high at 80, this could be due to entrepreneurs being unable to guarantee dividends which in turn could discourage investors.

Risk

The time involved in enforcing contracts, both trial and judgment and filing and service, remains high at 500 days (World Bank, 2021), indicating a potential challenge in the legal aspects of the business. However, the enforcement fees and costs as a percentage of the claims remain consistent with relatively high scores (69.85377) (World Bank, 2021), suggesting a stable and manageable level of risk in the process of enforcing contracts. The insolvency score has shown a minor decrease over the years but remains high, indicating a reasonably low risk in the process of resolving insolvency.

It is, however, important to consider the works of authors like Pinkowski (2009) who posits that migrant entrepreneurs in Dublin (Ireland) have their share of challenges to battle, some of which include, but are not limited to, access to finance for business start-ups, lack of regulatory awareness in the country and the language barrier. The Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research (CEEDR) (2000) also noted additional fundamental obstacles that face migrant entrepreneurs, including language barriers, discrimination from finance providers, ignorance of or

access to business support, awareness of and access to business support, adaptation to quality standards, growth funding, access to technology, intellectual property protection and market and management skills.

2.4.6 Environmental Factors

Natural Occurrence

Ireland has four different seasons, clean air, lush green scenery and warm temperatures (Aalen *et al.*, 1997). The Gulf Stream, which has average temperatures between 4 and 7°C, helps prevent severe extremes (Met Office, 2023). The nation's location offers clean air and fresh winds, creating an impressive natural atmosphere. But outdoor activities are difficult in Ireland because of the country's frequent rain, abrupt temperature and wind fluctuations, little sunshine and strong winds. Its lush hills and meadows are the source of the moniker "Emerald Isle". These fluctuations may discourage certain economic activities, however, despite these difficulties, outdoor enthusiasts find Ireland to be a compelling destination due to its diverse landscapes and natural beauty.

Government Initiatives

Ireland's natural resources and biodiversity are safeguarded by Government initiatives. Ireland's principal Government organization in charge of habitat preservation and wildlife conservation is the National Parks and Wildlife Service (2024). It oversees multiple natural reserves, six national parks, and Special Areas of Conservation. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (2024), creates national plans for biodiversity conservation, manages environmental laws and regulations and finances conservation initiatives. Urban green spaces, controlling invasive species and restoring peatlands are examples of conservation initiatives (O'Callaghan *et al.*, 2017).

2.5 Future Outlook for African Migrants in the Irish Economy

Vandor (2021) alludes that unforced migration and entrepreneurship meet at the intersection of an increased affinity for risk-taking and an unbridled appetite for accomplishment. Migrant entrepreneurs can prompt increased tax returns, products and inventions (Li *et al.*, 2018; Kerr and Kerr, 2016; Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp, 2009).

As of 2019, approximately three-quarters of foreign-born residents in Ireland hailed from EU member states. For EU migrants, employment serves as the primary impetus for relocating to Ireland, while non-EU migrants predominantly choose Ireland for educational or work opportunities (McGinnity *et al.*, 2020). According to McGinnity *et al.* (2020), one notable characteristic of the immigrant community in Ireland is their high level of education. Immigrants—especially those from Western Europe and Asia—have more schooling than native Irish citizens. Furthermore, a significant percentage of migrants are fluent in English, particularly those from non-EEA nations like the US, Nigeria and India, who frequently show remarkable fluency in the language.

Within the Irish context, in the McGinnity *et al.* (2020) study, Black adults have better credentials and backgrounds, although their employment rates are still far lower than those of White Irish adults. The study also revealed that Black non-Irish respondents commonly reported incidents of discrimination in hiring procedures and the workplace, and this group was five times more likely than White Irish respondents to experience discrimination during the hiring process. In another study conducted by Coakley and Mac Einri (2007), they discovered the organizational culture of work frequently leads to criticism of Ireland's social support system's administration for lacking in management. Participants in the research report that institutions are less accommodating and that

official application procedures are confusing. Numerous individuals have expressed dissatisfaction with workers, particularly CWOs and housing office staff, who may not have understood their needs. Joseph (2018) discovered evidence of a White migrant group-dominated racial hierarchy in Ireland. All these results point to different integration outcomes for people from different ethnic backgrounds in Ireland with Black migrants frequently facing the most difficult conditions (Crowley, Gilmartin and Kitchin, 2016). It is imperative to recognize, nevertheless, that not all ethnic distinctions can be solely ascribed to discriminatory practices (Farkas, 2017). Hitti, Mulvey and Killen (2011) opined that cultural elements, religious affiliations and social networks may all play a role in the observed variations. A primary focus of this study is investigating how employment or unemployment rates of Africans in Ireland (Ugba, 2004) contribute to the phenomena of migrant entrepreneurship.

This emphasis aligns with existing research that underscores the substantial significance of migrant entrepreneurship in actively contributing to the economic development of host countries (Piergiovanni, Carree and Santarelli, 2011). It is, however, noteworthy that research on African immigrant enterprises in Ireland is still in its infancy.

2.6 Research Gap

The survey of entrepreneurship in Ireland by Fitzsimons and Gorman (2022) revealed how in many classifications including entrepreneurship activity, reasons for discontinued businesses, age of early-stage entrepreneurs, and even gender, no African country ranked among the top 20 performing nations in Ireland's entrepreneurial space. Consequently, despite the availability of data from notable databases like the World Bank Data and Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), there appears to be little research work done on African migrant entrepreneurship in

Ireland. This could be because of the total population of Africans (67,546) (Central Statistics Office, 2023b) to the total Ireland population (5.1 million) ratio, making it logical to infer that the percentage of the working population that will constitute entrepreneurial capacity constitutes a small fraction.

The review above has identified that there are myriad challenges facing entrepreneurs in Ireland, however, we still do not know those that are unique to African migrant entrepreneurs, who are steadily forming a critical mass of entrepreneurial talent in Ireland. Additionally, there is no up-to-date knowledge about possible enablers that encourage these entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses within the country. These are two critical gaps, linked to the first two objectives of the study. Lastly, beyond the challenges and enablers, there is a need to design policy-led initiatives to promote African migrant entrepreneurship in Ireland which forms yet another gap that needs to be filled. These gaps formed central themes that warrant further investigation in this study, and which are addressed in further detail in subsequent sections.

2.7 Conclusion

Migrant entrepreneurs are an integral part of the economic and social evolution of their host countries who can contribute because of existing and evolving and enabling cultural and political environments. However, this is not without its share of challenges. The European Union has in recent times witnessed an influx of migrants (Csanyi, 2020), and as such, it is imperative to investigate the entrepreneurial impact of these migrants in the Irish context. The study focuses particularly on African migrant entrepreneurs who are becoming a reckonable force within the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Ireland. The goal of this investigation is to fill the gap in knowledge about these entrepreneurial ventures, the challenges they face within the Irish business

environment, the enablers of their businesses and how Irish Government led policy may help in creating an enabling environment for them to thrive.

2.7.1 Highlight of the Research Questions and Objectives

This research works seeks to answer the questions of what factors pose a challenge to African entrepreneurs in Ireland, while also exploring the enablers that contribute to their success. It then examines how personal drive and professional networks help them overcome market entry difficulties and build trust. Finally, it evaluates existing support structures for these entrepreneurs, pinpointing weaknesses and proposing improvements for a more inclusive environment.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the research methodology used to explore the challenges and enablers facing African migrant entrepreneurs in Ireland. A qualitative research approach was carefully devised to capture the essence of their lived experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using Microsoft Teams which was the major tool for acquiring in-depth data. The core themes of the interviews are aligned with the research objectives as shown:

Table 4: Interview Guide According to Research Objectives

Interview Theme	Focused Topic	Research Objective	References
Challenges facing African Migrants Entrepreneurs in Ireland	Culture (Prejudice/Discrimination)	Objective 1	Gawlewicz (2016), Lougui and Nyström (2014), DeBerry-Spence and Elliot (2012), Dickson, Den Hartog and Mitchelson (2003)
	Funding Difficulties		
	Poor Networks or Communities		
Enablers of African Migrant Entrepreneurs in Ireland	Access to funding	Objective 1	Cho (2022), Griffin-El and Olabisi (2019)
	Personal Drive and Corporate Networks/Communities		

	Cultural Enablers in Ireland		
Motivation	Passion and Family	Objective 2	Mats and Alves (2018), Laure Humbert and Drew (2010).
	Education		
	Previous Experiences		
Support Structures and Future Expectations	African Entrepreneurial Communities	Objectives 3	Cabras and Mount (2016), Huang, Khwaja and Sudhir (2015), Makura (2008)
	Government Initiatives		
	Expectations for Future Success of African Entrepreneurs in Ireland		
	Recommendations for Aspiring Entrepreneurs		

According to Fuster Guillen (2019), the qualitative approach makes it possible to examine individual goals, struggles and victories in the context of Irish entrepreneurship. This method emphasizes understanding African migrant entrepreneurs' life experiences through their own perceptions and viewpoints while acknowledging the subjective character of information.

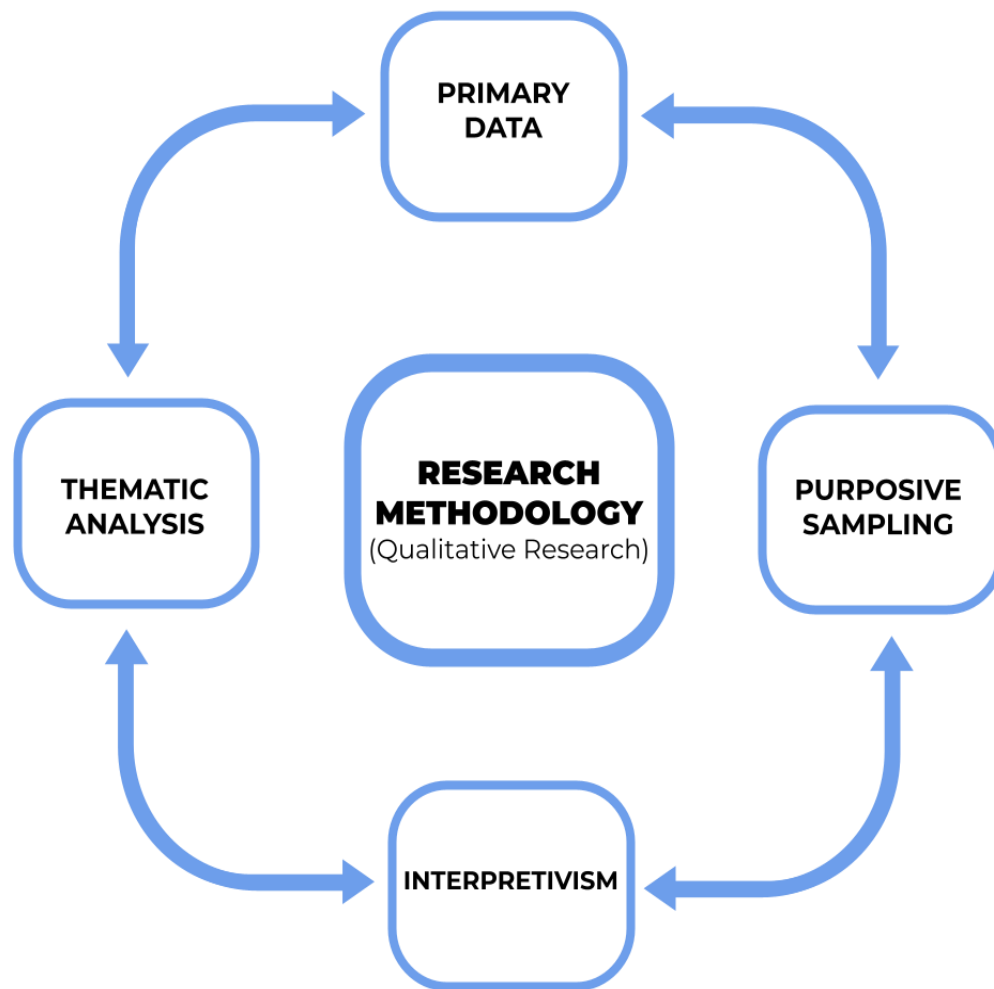


Figure 5: Research Methodology (Source: Author's Compilation)

Rich and enlightening discussions are possible by using the semi-structured interviewing technique. Interviews allow for consistency while allowing for flexibility with a pre-made interview guide filled with open-ended questions and primary themes (Reay and Zhang, 2014). This makes it possible to examine the many experiences that each person had. The Microsoft Teams virtual platform made it easy to stay in touch with all participants, even with their diverse and hectic schedules, and encouraged a feeling of camaraderie and understanding despite geographical distance.

3.2 Research Philosophy

In the work of Alharahsheh and Pius (2020), they pitched interpretivism against positivism as summarized in the table 5 below:

Table 5: Research Philosophy – Interpretivism vs. Positivism

Aspect	Interpretivism	Positivism
Ontology	Reality is subjective and varies among individuals	Reality is objective and exists independently
Epistemology	Knowledge is subjective and context-dependent	Knowledge is objective and based on observable reality
Axiology	Emphasizes understanding and interpretation of values and meanings	Emphasizes objectivity and detachment from values and meanings
Methods	Qualitative methods like interviews, observations	Quantitative methods like surveys, experiments
View of Reality	Reality is constructed and interpreted by individuals	Reality is fixed and discoverable through empirical observation
Goal	Depth of understanding and insight - Individual experiences and meanings.	Simplicity and predictability - Generalizations and universal laws.
Generalization	Limited, context-dependent	Extensive, applicable across contexts

Source: Author's Compilation

As such, given the aim of this study, the chosen research philosophy is interpretivism.

The emphasis here is on gaining insights from firsthand knowledge, specifically understanding how African migrant entrepreneurs handle the obstacles of establishing and operating enterprises in Ireland. The semi-structured interviews will reveal the specific challenges they encounter, along with the creative solutions they've developed to navigate them. This not only enriches the understanding of African migrant entrepreneurs but also sheds light on the enablers that empower their success. This knowledge can then be used to inform support systems that address their unique needs and empower future generations of entrepreneurs. Interpretivism makes possible the investigation of their subjective experiences, motivations and the cultural factors that influence their viewpoints (Chowdhury, 2014).

3.3 Research Approach

A qualitative research approach is commonly used in which interpretations are drawn from data using participant vocabulary rather than theoretical terms or the researcher's inclinations. This method is the inductive approach, and it promotes open-mindedness by reflecting the actual content of the data (Skjott Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019). It is the same research approach employed in this study.

Benefits of the Inductive Approach for this Study

Flexibility and focus: It is essential to comprehend the distinctive experiences of African entrepreneurs in Ireland. For this kind of work, an inductive research design is ideal. Inductive research enables academics to collect data directly from entrepreneurs, in contrast to traditional methodologies that rely on predetermined ideas (Azungah, 2018). This adaptability enables them to learn about the particular difficulties and decision-making procedures this particular group faces. Researchers can identify areas of deficiency in assistance and create programs that

effectively cater to the requirements of African entrepreneurs in Ireland by obtaining these facts.

Building theory from scratch: The inductive technique eliminates the need for preconceived assumptions (Bahari, 2010) and enables the creation of theories based on information gathered directly from participants. This information will include the number of jobs these Africa migrants were able to create in Ireland, their contribution to Irish social wellness, their resourcefulness in their homeland, the challenges they surmounted to achieve success and the enablers that eased the process.

Adaptability: From a study conducted by Mei *et al.* (2024), it is seen that because inductive reasoning is flexible, researchers can address a wide range of subjects and progressively provide answers to specialized, sector-specific queries across multiple disciplines.

Through qualitative data collection methods, the study builds a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of African entrepreneurs in Ireland. This approach assisted in generating new insights based on their unique perspectives.

3.4 Research Method

A semi-structured interview format was selected as the primary research method which is a characteristic of qualitative research. This method offers a balance between flexibility and standardization. A pre-defined interview guide ensured consistency while allowing for exploration of unique participant experiences through open-ended questions. Busetto, Wick and Gumbinger (2020) captured the process as follows:

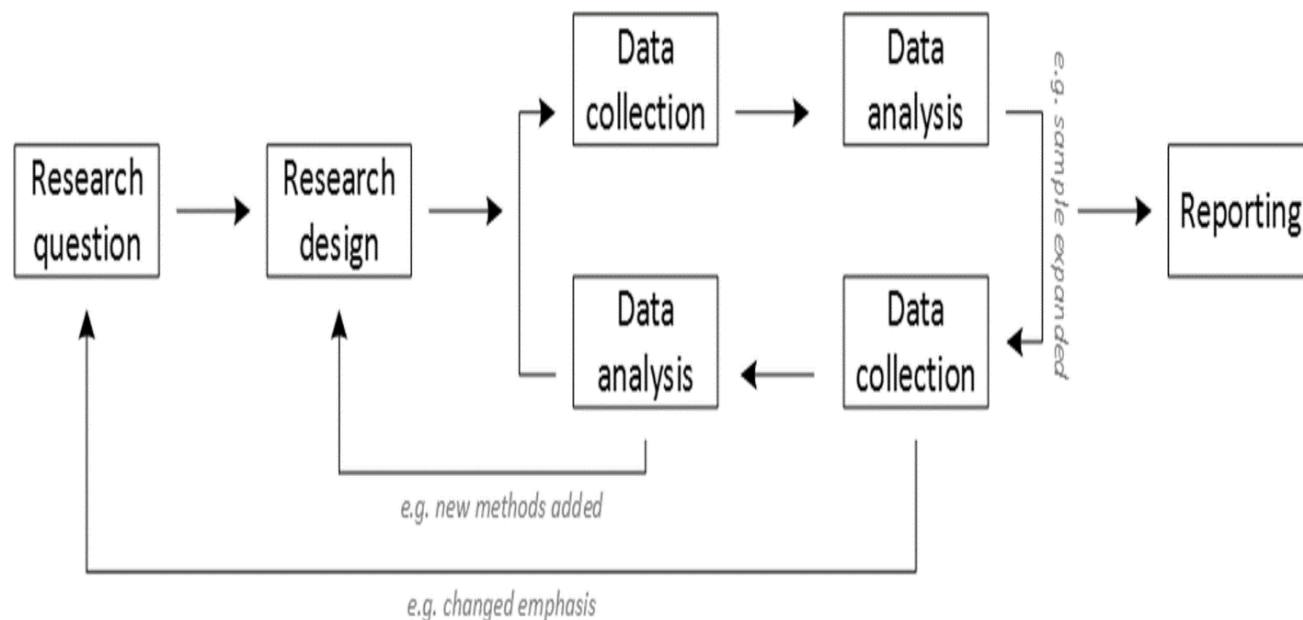


Figure 6: *Qualitative Research Methods* (Busetto et al., 2020)

Interviews with twenty (20) migrant African entrepreneurs in Ireland were performed as part of the data collection phase. The participants were chosen based on their experience in various fields as foreign-born individuals. Purposive sampling was used to identify and choose participants who had unique experiences and characteristics relevant to the investigation.

The interview recordings were transcribed automatically by the MS Teams software and the transcripts verified by an independent transcription service provider to ensure data correctness. Using this strategy eliminated researcher bias while ensuring accurate, error-free transcripts. After the transcripts were anonymized, the individuals' experiences were meticulously evaluated using NVivo software to categorize the data and extract the most important details.

3.5 Sampling Strategy

While probability sampling (also known as random sampling), even though expensive (Emerson, 2015), remains the preferred approach for assuring generalizability in research, purposive

sampling, which falls under non-probability sampling, provides a more purposeful method for studies focusing on specific populations (Rai and Thapa, 2015). In this study on the experiences of African migrant entrepreneurs in Ireland, a random sampling approach would have most certainly resulted in an insufficient number of individuals who fitted the tight criteria of nationality, legal status and entrepreneurial activity. However, purposeful sampling allows for a direct targeting of this specific group, and it enables collaboration with established African community groups and individuals, resulting in access to a larger and more representative pool of participants.

As such, purposive sampling was employed in recruiting participants who met specific criteria. The people interviewed needed to meet the following minimum criteria.

Table 6: Research Sampling Criteria

Nativity	African
Age	18 years and older
Migrant Status	Legal occupant in Ireland
Job Status	Entrepreneur (Business Owner)
Gender	All genders
Industry Sector	All legally recognized sectors
Tax Status	Compliant
length of residence in Ireland	6 months and above

Source: Author's Compilation

Below is a quick summary that the data captured from the 20 participants by applying the qualifications listed above.

Table 7: Summary of Research's Primary Goal

ID	GENDER	START OF BUSINESS	INDUSTRY	CHALLENGES	ENABLERS
P1	Male	Africa	Fashion	Logistics and Bureaucracy	Nigerian Culture, Ireland, social media
P2	Female	Africa	Tech	Discrimination	Family, African Professionals Network Ireland, women in AI Ireland
P3	Male	Ireland	Fashion	Lack of Mentorship	Enabling Community
P4	Male	Ireland	Tech	Cultural Difference, VC funding tough to get	Angel Investors, VC funding, Enabling Ireland Entrepreneurial Ecosystem
P5	Male	Africa	Advertiseme nt	None stated	Previous Experience, Interpersonal Relationships for sales and funds
P6	Male	Africa	Consultancy	Discrimination and Undervaluing	Peer-to-peer fundraising, Cultural adaptation to Irish networking norms
P7	Female	Africa	Money Market	Lack of Funding and Stereotypes	Enabling Ireland Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (100-fold community)
P8	Male	Ireland	Tech	Unsupportive Culture, Difficulty in finding Community	Computer Science Society, The Hundredfold Collective
P9	Male	Ireland	Civil Engineering (Construction)	Market Entry Trust Issues	New entrepreneur (None now)

P10	Female	Ireland	Tech	Challenge building trust for market dominance	EU funding, Networking in Europe
P11	Male	Africa	Tech	Poor Perception of African Products	Interpersonal Relationships, Competence, Professional Portfolio
P12	Female	Africa	Writing	Market Entry, No experience of discrimination	African groups
P13	Female	Africa	Events Management	Discrimination (Race and Gender)	Personal Drive, Networking
P14	Male	Ireland	Travel & Logistics	No experience of prejudice or discrimination	Mentoring, Networking
P15	Female	Africa	Food	Self-Doubt	Enterprise Board, Training, Mentoring, Food Academy programme
P16	Female	Africa	Beauty (Hair)	No negative things to say	Networking, Personal Funds, Family, Enabling Irish Environment
P17	Male	Africa	Travel & Logistics	Discrimination (Acquiring & Property and Bank Account)	Family Contribution, Irish Setting
P18	Male	Africa	Grocery Store	Sourcing and Customs Issues	Government support for eco-friendly practices
P19	Female	Ireland	Events Management	Racism, non-supportive community	Leveraging creative industry connections, The Hundredfold Collective
P20	Male	Ireland	Civil Engineering (Construction)	Networking Difficulties	Inherent culture of respectfulness, personal network

Source: Author's Compilation

3.6 Data Collection Tool

Frey and Bloch (2023) carried out a study to highlight why Microsoft Teams could be easily preferred over traditional focus groups. They highlighted the following advantages:

1. Flexible Conversation Flow: Microsoft Teams allows participants to jump between topics and questions more freely compared to traditional focus groups.
2. Precise Discussion Moderation: The platform facilitates refined control over the discussion, enabling moderators to guide the flow with more precision.
3. Challenges with Nonverbal Cues: It is more difficult to establish emotional ties and decipher important nonverbal clues like body language and facial emotions when there is a physical absence. But Teams provides other means of communication, like as emojis, tagging and access to user profiles, which helps to somewhat compensate for the lack of in-person connection.
4. Enhanced Support Material Sharing: Teams allow participants to easily share additional information and insights during discussions, even if further research is needed by the moderators.
5. Varying User Comfort Levels: While researchers are familiar with Microsoft Teams, some participants may find it difficult to use.

Therefore, having examined the listed points, and considering that every participant being entrepreneurs is proficiently IT savvy, Microsoft Teams was used in conducting the interviews. This online platform offered several advantages, including ease of scheduling, accessibility for geographically dispersed participants, the option for audio and video recording of interviews with participant consent and a transcribing feature for the first phase of data extraction.

3.7 Data Analysis

This analysis was achieved using Nvivo 14 software, a qualitative data analysis software (QDAS) (Lumivero, 2023) which, according to McDonnell (2024), allows for the organization, analysis and visualization of different forms of data. This tool was utilized to identify themes from the transcripts of interviews with African immigrant entrepreneurs in Ireland for the aim of this study. To achieve anonymity, the participants' names were coded as P1 for first participant, P2 for second participant, and P3, P4, ... P20 in that order.

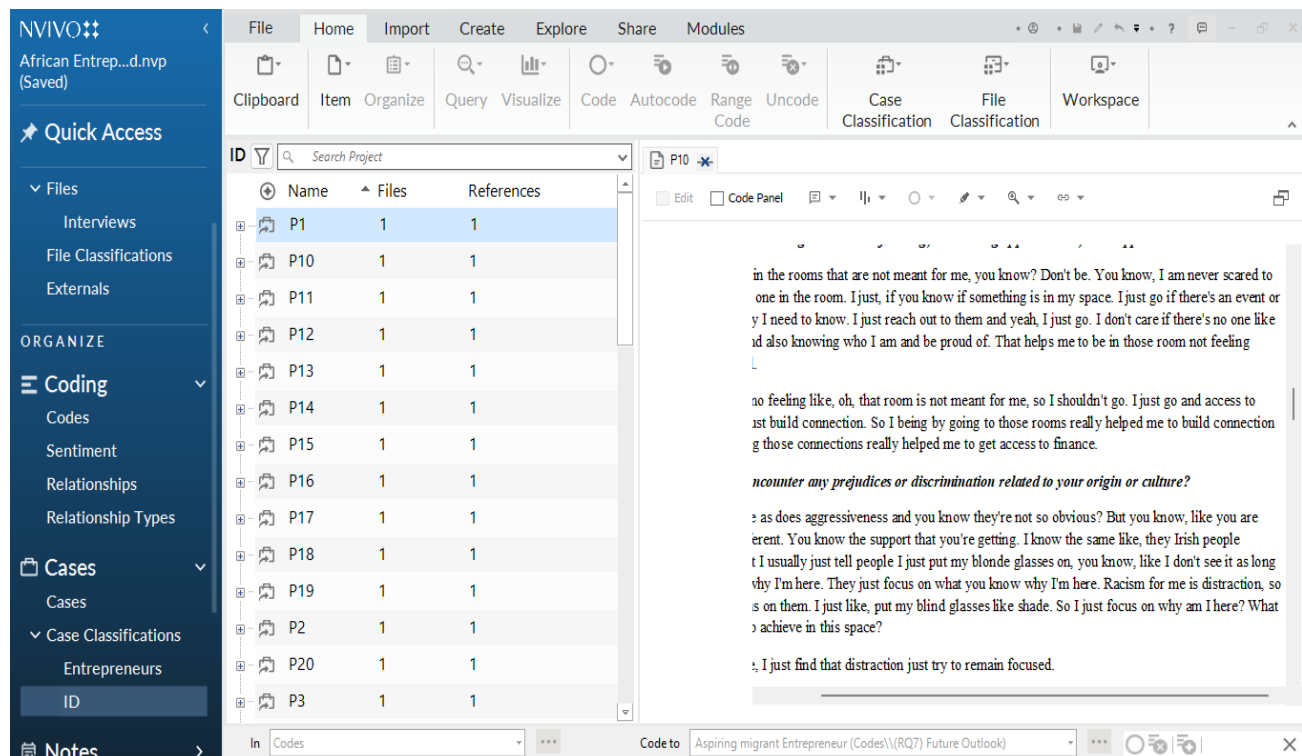


Figure 7: Anonymized Interview Data

The responses were also combed to identify key themes that are common to all the interviewees as shown in the figure below. This is to ensure ease of coding and a categorized data. In this categorization, Research Question 4 (RQ4) captured the challenges, while Research Question 5 (RQ5) captured the enablers.

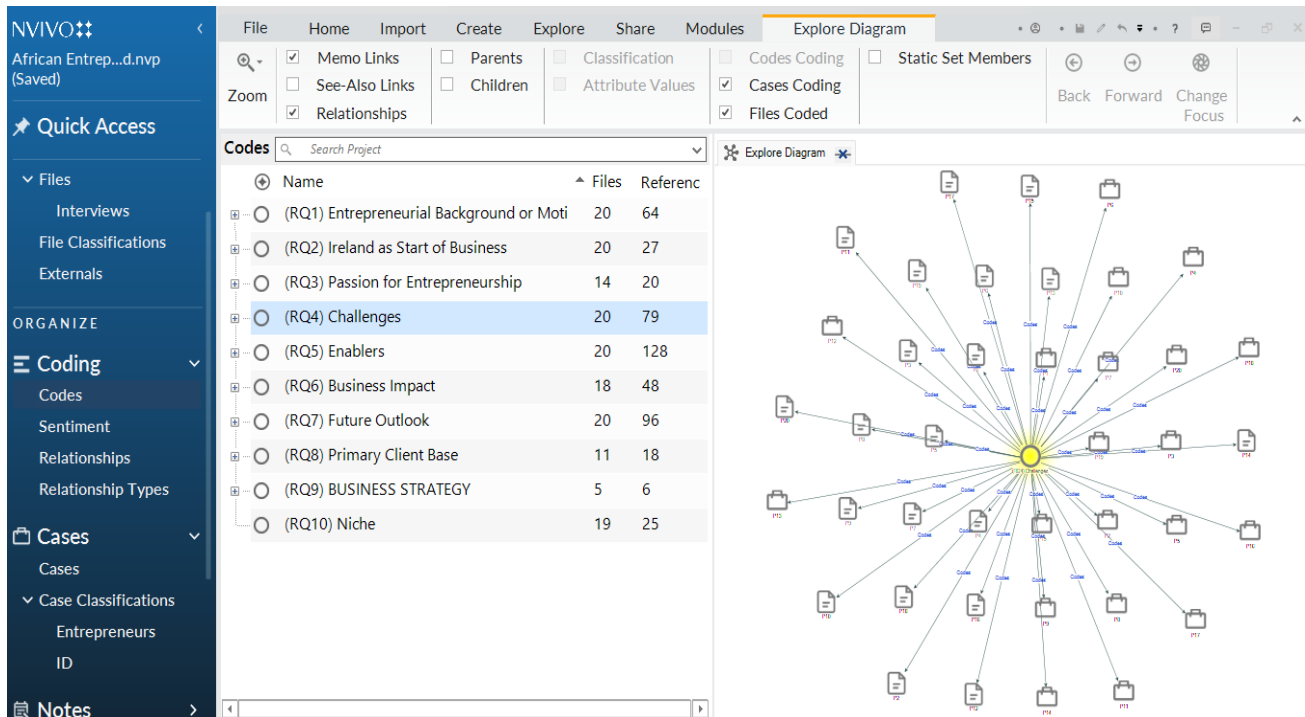


Figure 8: Analysis Explore Diagram

Identifying Motivations

The interview questions and data analysis of the transcripts were designed to identify the driving factors that inspired the African entrepreneurs to conduct business in Ireland. Some themes that were explored include economic opportunities, education, and family background.

Navigating the Startup Landscape

The specific challenges faced by these entrepreneurs in the Irish startup scene and the enabling factors that eased their struggles and shaped their successes were a focal point of the analysis. Themes such as culture, access to funding and Irish entrepreneurial environment were examined.

Entrepreneurial Impact

As a measure of how well the enablers imparted the performance of these entrepreneurs, this study also inspected their contributions in terms of job creation, civic responsibilities and their contribution to the African entrepreneurial network in Ireland.

Intersectionality Analysis

Other factors including gender, industry and previous exposure to other industries or countries were also explored to understand the experiences of these entrepreneurs. According to Showunmi (2020), studies have shown that the intersectional approach is used by researchers to study how social institutions, laws and practices that are based on race, class or gender are constructed and maintained using power structures. Hence, making it easier to identify with people is the social construct of their everyday life.

3.8 Limitations

A primary limitation of this project is little secondary data and research about African entrepreneurs in Ireland which is understandable considering Ireland's population (5.1 million) and the percentage of the population that are African migrants (67,546) (Central Statistics Office, 2023b). This inherently limits the sample size researchers can access, potentially impacting the generalizability of the findings to the broader African migrant entrepreneur community in Ireland.

Additionally, Polakowski and Quinn (2022) mentioned a study that estimated the number of undocumented migrants in the state to be about one hundred thousand as at 2017. The percentage of these that are African entrepreneurs may be hesitant to participate due to concerns surrounding their immigration status, potentially causing the project to miss out on a crucial segment of this entrepreneurial community.

3.9 Ethical Issues

To protect participants' privacy and well-being, this study prioritizes ethical concerns at every stage of the undertaking. A key component of this investigation was obtaining participants' consent. Participants received a comprehensive information sheet detailing the goals of the study, the methods of data collecting and any potential dangers prior to any interviews. By doing this, participants were guaranteed to comprehend the research completely and be able to decide whether to participate.

Data gathered was treated strictly in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the EU's data protection law for organizations and individuals who at any point handle people's personal data (GDPR.eu, 2020). All information was anonymized, as counselled by Rubinstein and Hartzog (2016), so participant names or email addresses would not be connected to their answers. The interviews took place in quiet areas and recordings were safely stored with access limited to this project work alone. Participants were made aware of their freedom to leave the study at any time and without consequence. A copy of the signed consent form is included in Appendix 1 at the end of the dissertation.

3.10 Research Timeline

The provided table outlines the project schedule for researching African migrant entrepreneurs in Ireland. It details eight tasks, including securing ethical approval, developing interview guides, conducting a literature review, recruiting participants, conducting interviews, transcribing interviews, analysing data and writing a report. The project took 120 days, starting on January 3rd, 2024, and concluding on May 6th, 2024.

Table 8: Research Timeline

Task	Start	Finish	Duration
Ethical Approval Process & Interview Guide Development	3/1/2024	22/1/2024	19 days
Initial Data Search	22/1/2024	2/2/2024	11 days
Participant Recruitment & Scheduling Interviews	2/1/2024	22/2/2024	20 days
Literature Review	16/2/2024	4/3/2024	15 days
Conduct Interview	23/2/2024	27/3/2024	32 days
Transcribe Interview	18/3/2024	2/4/2024	15 days
Data Analysis & Interpretation	3/4/2024	20/4/2024	17 days
Report Writing	12/4/2024	30/4/2024	18 days

Source: Author's Compilation

Nurre and Weir (2017) recommend that researchers execute a more comprehensive examination and collect numerous performance measures using various evaluation techniques. Bednjanec and Tretinjak (2013) opined that educational procedures can benefit from the usage of Gantt charts, a project management tool for organizing and scheduling tasks. The project timeline in Table 5 was prepared using Microsoft Excel and has been depicted using a Gantt Chart tool by Online Gantt (2024), as shown in the figure below:

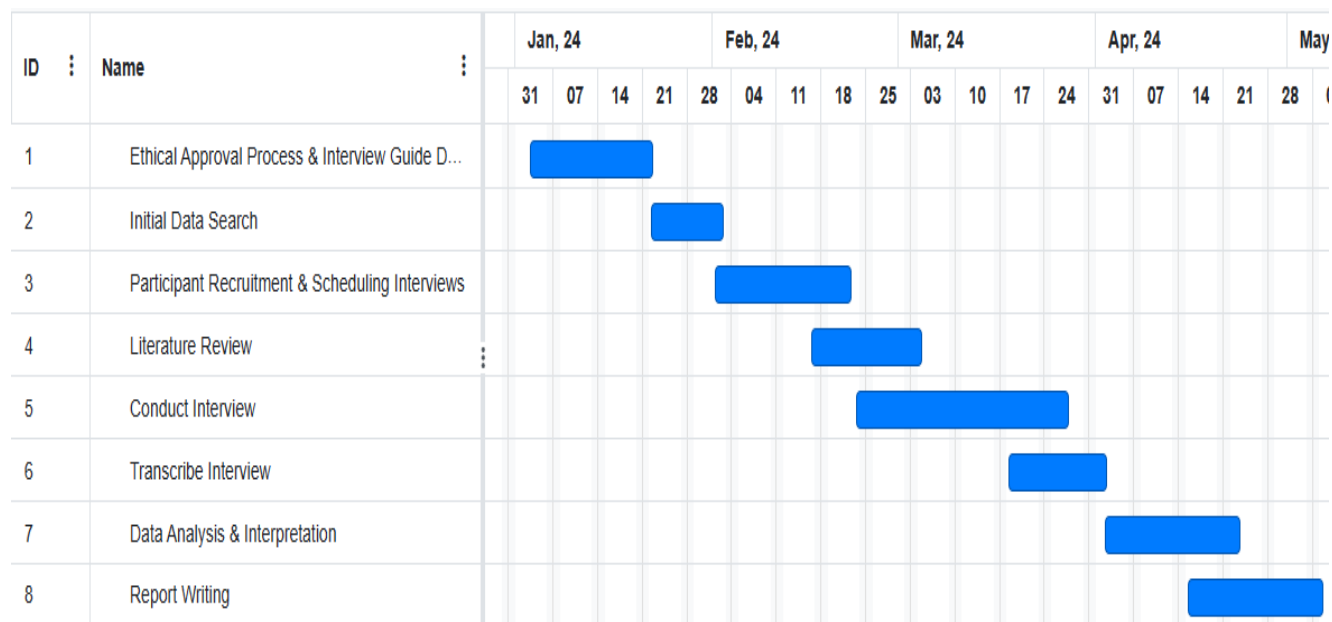


Figure 9: Research Gantt Chart (Author's Compilation)

3.11 Conclusion

The methodology used for this study project was described in this chapter. Along with the considerations for sampling, data collecting, constraints, ethical behavior, the research philosophy, approach and methods that were selected were also explained. A road plan for carrying out the research is provided by the timeline. Doing this ensures a rigorous and ethical exploration of the experiences and contributions of African migrant entrepreneurs in Ireland.

Chapter 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This section examines the main conclusions drawn from the interviews with African business owners in Ireland as well as the technique used to extract the provided data. Their motivations for starting their businesses, their experiences navigating the Irish startup scene and their economic contributions to the community are all included in this shared material. A thematic framework is frequently used in psychology and other domains to identify patterns in qualitative data and generate themes using codes (Terry *et al.*, 2017). In all, there were twenty (20) participants of different academic and entrepreneurial backgrounds, business niches, motivating factors and possibly different challenges and enablers, but with two common denominators, they are all Africans, and they do business in Ireland.

4.2 Summary of Findings

The motivating factors for all the entrepreneurs are also harvested as shown:

Table 9: Motivation for Entrepreneurship

MOTIVATION	SOME PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES
Necessity	<i>"When you look at food, this is something that is necessary for human beings, so we need to feed; we need to eat in order to survive." - P18</i>
Innate Desire	<i>"I will say it's a flare because it's something I, I love to see you look good. So, I didn't find it hard to make a choice when it came to what do I what? You know I wanted to do so I remember my friend. I had a cosmetic. Then I will say to her grace, let me make your hair. Begging hard to say let me make your hair. You know, we would sit way back after lectures to make hair. So, it was just it was natural for me. So that's it." - P16</i>
Education (School)	<i>"I just really liked entrepreneurship very well in school. Basically, we did a course on entrepreneurship life and the course was very interesting to me in all honesty. I just liked it and because the cost was</i>

	<i>very practical where we had to sell some things within the school. and that basically shows your entrepreneurship skills, what you're able to sell, what you made. And also, I did that course and that was the first time I actually sold something in my life with a group. So, we're in different groups. And yes, I sold. I was interested. It was interesting to me. And I just decided one day that, what do I really like? What would I like to sell? What excites me, and I looked at what I'm passionate about and I decided to start selling it.” - P1</i>
Enabling European Environment, Financial Freedom	<i>“And then, you know when you come to Europe, there's a lot more opportunities, thankfully. And you see what people are doing around you, and it just it just inspires you. If you've been to Europe, they give me the platform and I want to take it to the next level. I want to be able to first create wealth and for myself and for my family. I also want to have an impact as well. And I felt that entrepreneurship was the best avenue for me to do that.” - P4</i>
Opportunity Recognition	<i>“I decided to go into an industry that aligns with my background because, I have an academic background. I knew that in Ireland most of the entrepreneurs, African entrepreneurs we have are product entrepreneurs. So, they sell products, African products, they sell wigs; the service focused ones are very few. So, I decided to focus on rendering services instead. Service industry and doing business consulting, consulting for organizations, grant writing, business plans etc.” - P6</i>
Previous Experience, Family, Passion	<i>“I just love the things I love. I love to work with technology a lot and AI, you know, is the one that is the technology now... And of course, having a support system, my husband is always my support system, really. Like I'll just tell him, can I resign? Will you pay me? Then my first job was in tech, and it was when I was in tech in that company that I really, really fell in love with technology and what really got me into the technology thing was the fact that the fact that I loved it.” - P2</i>

Source: Author's Compilation

The summary of the motivating factors for all interviewed entrepreneurs for this study is shown in figure 10 below.

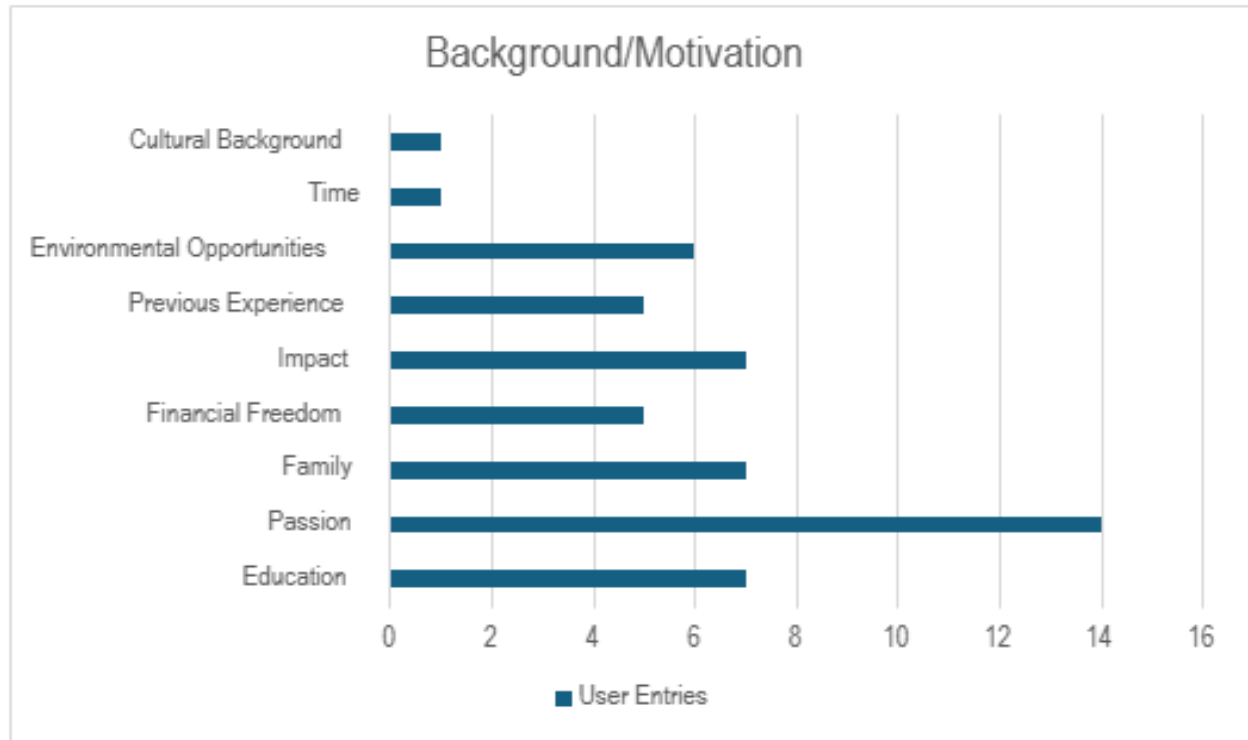


Figure 10: Visualization of Motivation

It was also discovered that, of all these participants, only 40% (8) started their entrepreneurial journey in Ireland. 60% (12) of them had started out as full-time or part-time entrepreneurs before moving to Ireland.

Ireland as Start of Business?

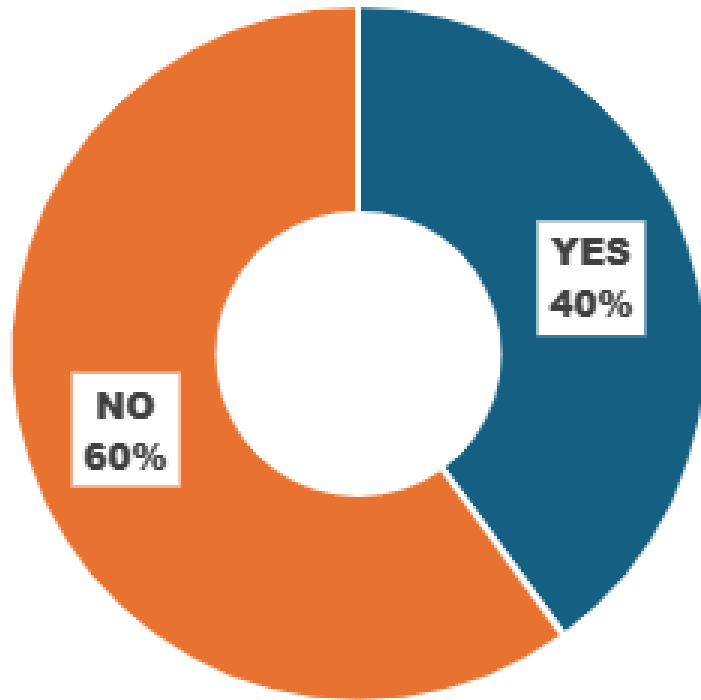


Figure 11: African Startups that Started in Ireland.

4.3 Challenges facing African Migrant Entrepreneurs in Ireland

Many of the interviewees acknowledged that the Irish people have an inclusive culture which also reflects efforts made by the nation in cultivating a culture of inclusivity right from educational institutions (Faas, Smith and Darmody, 2018; Jameson and Carthy, 2012) and in governance. For example, Rotimi Adebare, a Nigerian, became the first black Mayor in Portlaoise, an Irish town, 7 years after he came to the country (deFaoite, 2007). However, some other interviewees recounted their share of prejudice as migrant entrepreneurs in Ireland. These challenges are thus presented.

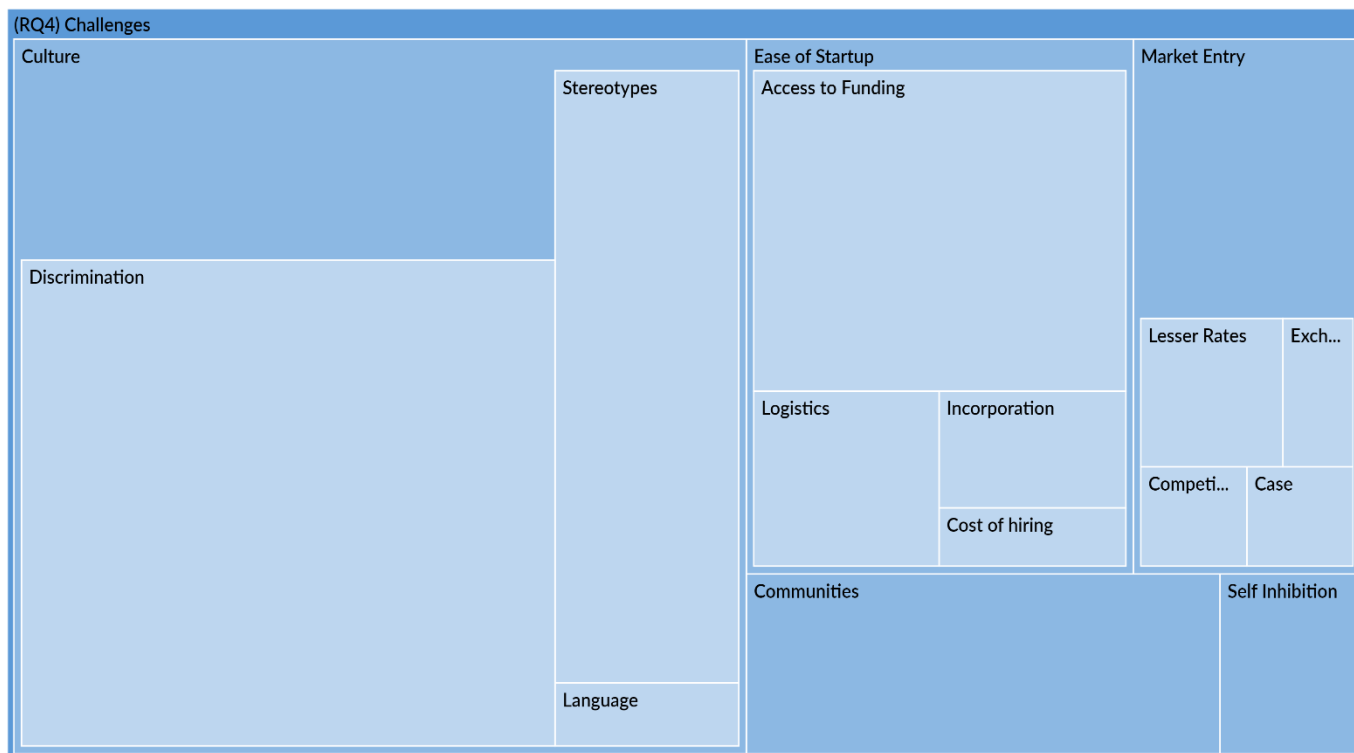


Figure 12: Treemap of the Challenges facing Migrant African Entrepreneurs in Ireland

Incorporation Challenge: For a business to be legal, it must be incorporated. Demircug-Kunt, Love and Maksimovic (2006) noted that this helps foster business success faster. One person has this to say about the challenges encountered while incorporating.

“Registering business even though you can find a lot of information online, but always good to have someone that has done before and there's no lot of people you could go to for advice, especially in fashion industry. So that would be one of the biggest challenges” - P3

Prejudice/Discrimination Challenges: The bulk of the challenges stated by the interviewees are culturally related and most of it borders on prejudice.



Figure 13: Word Cloud of the Challenges faced by Migrant African Entrepreneurs in Ireland

Among the many challenges that migrants face while settling into host countries, Hasanović, Šmigalović and Fazlović (2020) identified cultural dimensions including language barriers, cultural expectations and varying belief systems as prevalent ones. Some interview participants have these things to say:

“I realised that day that I was the only one in my class that was asked to come in for an interview. I didn't know that before. So apparently, they saw my CV and did not think that I was going to be that experienced and they asked me to come for an interview to know whether I was that good. Another example is when we're going to buy our home. They kept saying no, no space, no. Every time we put our hand up, no space. They will say the place

is vacant. But once we put our hand up, no space. I replied to one of the emails and said there's something cynical going on here. There's something about diversity that is making you tell me no space the next, the next e-mail to me was, oh, somebody just dropped off. Do you want that space?" - P2

"I had done one project for the government before. Now, but then the only problem is just that all my colleagues have been called back, some of them several times again, but I haven't been called back to do any work, even though the report that was submitted was written nearly 70% by me. But then, even though I did nearly like almost 70% of the work. But despite all that effort, you find out that you are just not being called back for whatever reason, you're not told why. The moment they see a consultant from Nigeria you are they. They assume you are scammer, or you are going to scam them so and they also try to price you cheaper. So, if I don't if I don't make it this cheap, even nearly almost there. So those are some of the challenges that you have that you are priced cheaper than the standard people. For example, if someone is getting 50 Euros, €60.00 per hour consulting time you might get something less than that." - P6

It's important to note that the participants in these cases mentioned experiencing racial prejudice in Ireland. Examples include having their qualifications questioned during job interviews, having their ethnicity cause them to be mistrusted by real estate agents while seeking for a place to live, and losing out of deals that had their major contributions, for which their other colleagues got contacted. They believe that in order to be taken seriously and given equal chances, they must go over these obstacles. Here are more of such challenges:

“A woman business to limited, you know, that poses a challenge. You understand? They want to know, or they want to know what and what you want to do. They want to have your business case. They want to know this and that. I remember getting a phone in Ireland is a bit hard since you are especially you have people of colour, they you know they have at the back of though they are trying to, they are trying to protect the economy. My first bank account, I had a challenge in opening it, you know there's one particular bank that I don't want to mention the bank anyway. I first I went to the bank, I told them I want to open a business, I want to open a business account. So, they actually opened that business for me. They've given me the cheque book they've given me, the bank, debit, the bank. but maybe under a week I got a letter from them again that they can't open up.” - P17

“Most especially, once you know you're black or African, there's that issue of element of lack of trust. Can this person deliver? Is this person trustworthy? So, in that way, you know, yes, discrimination is there and those are the kind of prejudices. And then people have already Preformed ideas. They've already made their judgments on. You know, Africans, you know, and then you that you're a woman you're walking against, you know, your race. You're walking against your gender and also different things as well, so. There are many. There are many barriers.” - P13

“I think the biggest challenges would be trust. That was one perception that probably you are developing these applications in Africa and there is that mindset that everything else which is coming from Africa is not. It's not good enough. I saw the discrimination here was there, but it was a little bit subtle.” - P11

Other cultural related challenges

“I just felt anytime I'm on a call, maybe it's with a potential investor or something like that. Oh, you feel like instantly you're on the back foot because there's so much difference between you culturally” - P4.

Funding Challenges: Funding is a necessary component for business success (Beck and Demirguc-Kunt, 2006) and the absence of it can hamper progress. Two responses stated the following funding challenges.

“I think lack of funding first has to be it. When you are providing services again there's a language barrier. If you're providing goods, they might be disputed that we can't use something that's coming from an African. The stereotyping, the cultural bias is and the cultural differences, the biases” - P7.

“In terms of access to fund grants provided by government or provided by private organisations, the knowledge is very, very low within and also, I'm not really sure that the access is there because many of these funds are targeted as medical technology startups. They are targeted at fintech startups and not many African entrepreneurs are in those business sectors, not because they are not qualified for to do it but because the support system is not there “- P6.

Market Entry and Logistics Challenges: Prah and Sibiri (2021) mentioned how in China, during Covid-19, factors such as rent and logistic related issues disrupted business operations for African migrants. It is, therefore, important to see how such factors could also inhibit business operation in Ireland with or without Covid-19.

“The biggest challenges here are the sourcing of these goods. The country we are in has not made it that easy for us to source our goods. At the moment we do call get some of these things through UK. And now that there is pre-exist, it is now something that we are paying more in taxes and the import or export duties to get these things done to Ireland. The customs here and their rules are not helping at all.” - P18

“Logistics in terms of shipping items to Nigeria, you cannot use normal DHL because you would pay a whole lot of money for customs and clearing. if you are shipping to other close countries like anywhere in Europe or in UK, shipping cost is cheaper, but if you're shipping to Nigeria as an African or anywhere in Africa, basically you're going to pay way more money than you would when shipping to Spain or shipping to Italy. Exchange rate is also a problem, because by the time you ship the items to Nigeria, the exchange rate might have escalated or might have decreased but most times its increasing and where you've shipped, you have charged the customer with a lower price and then you're getting to Nigeria, and you have to pay more because the exchange rate has increased. Even registering your business is not the easiest because you have to be on a particular stamp and needs to have some particular document.” - P1

From the responses, it can be seen that African enterprises in Ireland confront three major challenges with respect to market entry and logistics: obtaining products owing to customs restrictions and post-Brexit import charges, high transportation costs for exporting beyond Europe, and difficulties developing confidence in Irish and EU markets, particularly for non-EU enterprises. Just as Dehani and Hägerström (2021) wrote, Brexit increases the cost of commerce by introducing value added tax (VAT), as well as levies and fees that did not exist prior to Brexit.

“I think in terms of challenges I would say that the first thing is how to build trust in the market. It is very difficult to build trust especially from the local Irish population or from people within the EU. I remember going to this is certain university that I wanted to work with on a on a project in Belfast and I sent the application, and they sent me a rejection letter. Instantly, and I emailed them to say. Thank you for sending me the rejection letter. Can you please provide some feedback as to why? My stuff was rejected. Someone from the organisation wrote me back and said I am sorry. Is the machine that reject it was an auto reject because of your name so but then they still ask me that. OK, please. We are sorry. That was the machine doing that. Not me, not us. So, if I had not responded to that e-mail, what would have happened? Was that the machine would have just automatically kind of Screen me out without ever even reading the application.” - P6

Self-Limiting (Imposter Syndrome) Challenges: At times, an entrepreneur’s challenge is not from any external source but an internal unhandled problem. Eliyan *et al.* (2020) did a study that showed that entrepreneurial success is linked to motivation and self-efficacy is a key influence on motivation. One participant had this to say.

“The biggest challenge I had I faced was myself, my mindset, you know, I was always thinking. You know the way I looked at myself, maybe at my colour, the way I perceive myself initially. It was like looking down on my ability, looking down on myself like oh, I am not able. Oh, he would do it. It is not possible. How would people see you? How would I wish people see you? You know, how would they? What would they think about your product? No. There was so much going on in my mind. I was. I was almost like not going into it, you know, you know not.” - P15

Networking/Community Challenges: Lassalle *et al.* (2020) found that the degree to which migrant entrepreneurs are entrenched in host nation communities, networks of migrant origin and that of indigenous people in the host nation varies dynamically. They become part of connections, society and systems, often relying on middlemen to give them access to possibilities that are available to them locally. As such, this participant’s experience is worthy of note.

“One of the biggest challenges will be the fact that you, your network. You need to build a kind of a network of clients’ association and since we didn’t study or we’ve already studied your master’s, but you have limited relationships with people here. You did not do your primary school here. Your parents are not from here, so that might just be a kind of a big barrier.” - P20

4.4 Enablers of African Migrant Entrepreneurs in Ireland

Some interviewees had recorded and continue to record success as migrant entrepreneurs in Ireland. A number of these success indicators are shown:

Table 10: Economic and Community Impacts

Participant	Economic Contribution	Community/Social Contribution
P4	Investments from a London-based VC, 11 members of staff	Speaking at the Hundredfold Collective session
P1, P4, P3, P15, P17, P9	Tax remittance	Patronizing service providers
P2	Working interns, seeking opportunities to train public officials.	Home for all – An online community of over 1000 participants, Panel of 100 participants.
P3	Paid members of staff	Gives space to young people for free regular use.

P16	Customer satisfaction through resourceful members of staff	Charity companies that help Indians, support other businesses that do wholesale in African countries
P5, P18, P20	Tax, remittance, job opportunities for brand workers	Room for amateurs in the same industry to learn
P6	Consulting for government and individuals	Wrote a policy paper in 2016 that is one of the things that led to the vacant property tax that is now being levied in Ireland

Source: Author's Compilation

These business owners' successes can be linked to a number of things, such as having access to capital, being part of a supporting network and having a beneficial effect on Ireland's economy. P4 had a clear plan and was able to win investment from a London-based venture capital group. P3's communal space and P2's internship program, for example, offered invaluable tools and contacts. Every participant made an impact by creating jobs and remitting taxes, illustrating the economic advantages that entrepreneurs have for their local communities. It is in light of these individual and consequently corporate impacts that the enablers of their entrepreneurial activities would be considered.

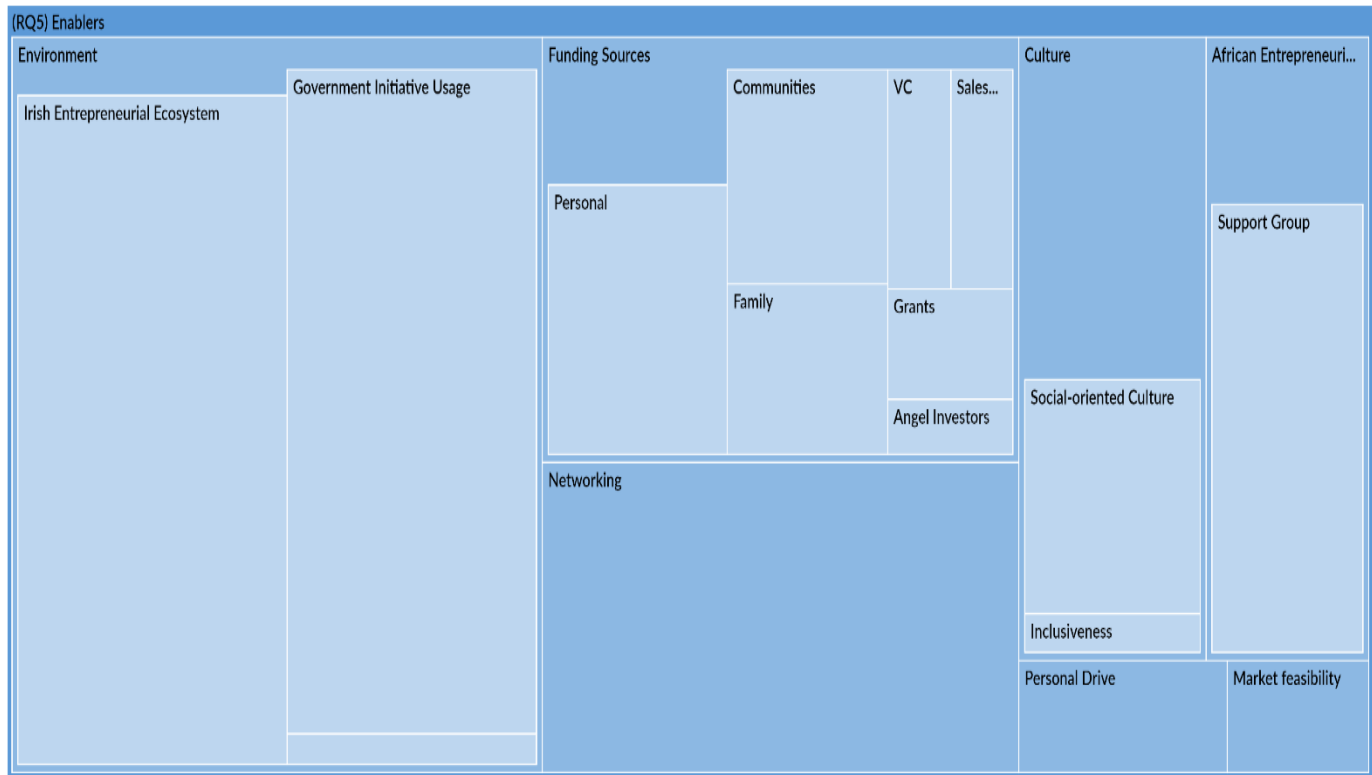


Figure 14: Treemap of the Enablers of Migrant African Entrepreneurs in Ireland

Cultural Enablers: Cultural difference is not always an inhibitor to progress. Audretsch, Belitski and Korosteleva (2021) argued that diversity culture affects entrepreneurial outcomes directly as well as indirectly. It helps business owners find opportunities and gather resources which produces a variety of results. Cultural diversity impacts start-up survival and community values as well as the integration and application of market and technological information. One participant mentioned how her country's culture and that of Ireland facilitated progress.

“My own culture, Nigerian culture, kind of facilitate my progress more in terms of knowing what people like because I've lived in Nigeria, the culture, the system helped in shaping me, to know what people really need and how to get it through to them. I would say Ireland

facilitate the progress too because I'm able to access all these things in Ireland. I don't have to travel to another country before accessing all these things. Social media would be my number one networking Channel. Basically, that way I'm able to get more clients. I'm able to build more relationship; I'm able to get more referrals.” - P1

Financial Enablers: It was observed from the interview sessions that entrepreneurs who secured good financing were able to break certain barriers which reflects how well they understood their industry and environment. Malki, Uman and Pittino (2020) stated these barriers as low social integration within the hosting community, poor economic integration, lack of governmental backing, discrimination based on demographics in the formal credit market and information mismatch.

“So, I feel like right now in Ireland for black entrepreneurs, there's a lot of opportunity because the system is changing and the Society actively trying to include people like us, and if you're there with the right idea, it's an opportunity. I start off with VC funding. We raised them small rounds of about €65,000 from angel investors and that was actually the thing that changed everything for us. We found the VCs ourselves, but these people vouch for us and that we're solving a real problem. And they opened up so many doors to different clients and everything. For example, in Trinity College, I was part of this scholarship, the Laidlaw Foundation, and it's basically to empower people and reduce the inequality gap. And it's a very amazing foundation and they've helped me a lot. They released \$50 million fund to fund businesses that are created by scholars. \$50 million is a lot of cash, you know, and these are very smart people. You do academic research, all that kind of stuff, and they fund it. Yes, It played a huge role because when I was when I was in college, I knew nothing about entrepreneurship, and it was only true. The ecosystem that I learned, and I saw

opportunities. I did a launch box in Trinity College. It's a programme run by tangent. They give you €10,000 to work on your idea over summer. We did that and that's how we just got started. And then from then, because we won launch Box that year, we came into Dogpatch Labs, which is the epicenter of the Irish startup ecosystem.” - P4

Networks or Communities: Most of the responses linked the entrepreneurs' success, access to funding and market entry to their ability to either start or connect to a network that fostered such possibilities. Berntsen *et al.* (2022) also noted that personal relationships and the ability to utilize institutional communities has been known to encourage entrepreneurship and spur business expansion.

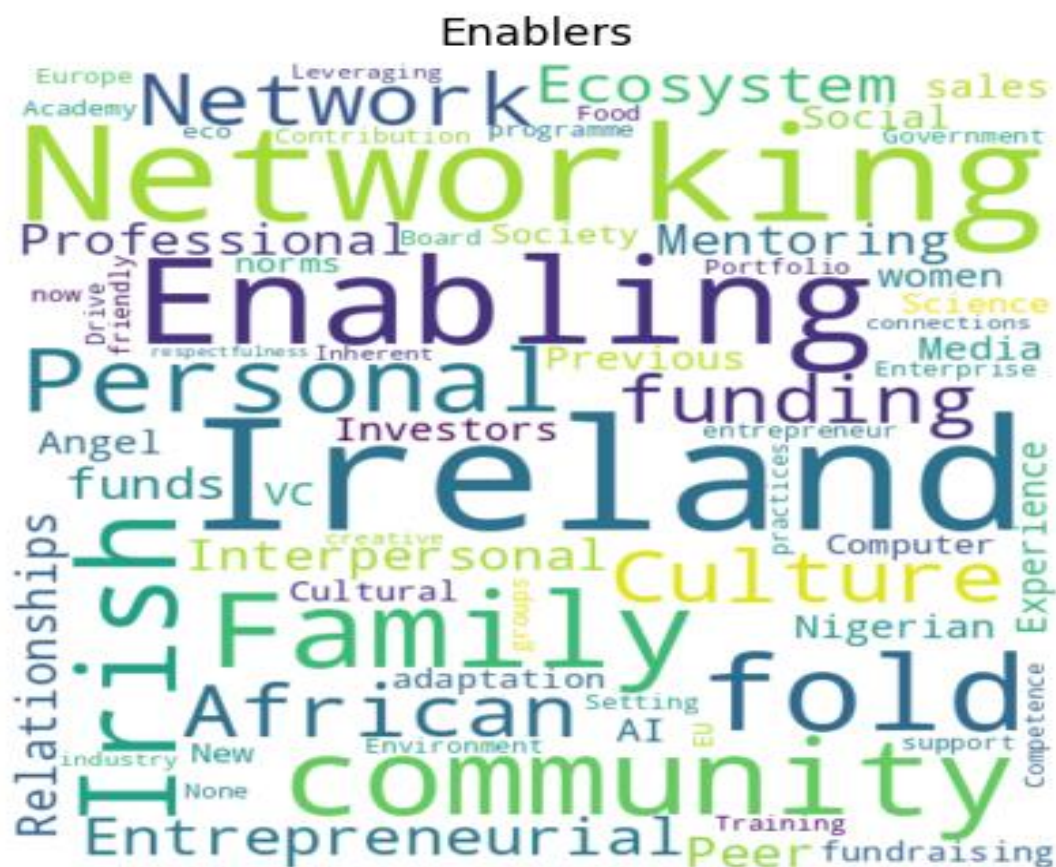


Figure 15: Word Cloud of the Enablers of Migrant African Entrepreneurs in Ireland

“I would say that's learning the Irish culture early enough kind of help me. I'll say this because when I first came to Ireland, I didn't know that most of the deals were settled in the pub or in social gatherings. When I began to understand that you don't just bid for stuff. Most of the stuff in Ireland is done by recommendation. So as an entrepreneur, I've learned that you don't just sit in your own bubble. You don't just sit in your own closet even though you are qualified, even though you have a track record; you still have to do that networking. You still have to do that social element, you know, for example, I don't drink, but I still have to go to the pub because that's where I meet with key people that can leave me with the right people that can give me the jobs that I want. I would say the African community, so some of us have to raise funds internally through kind of peer-to-peer systems or kind of our social cycles.” - P6

“Regards to networking opportunities we're just utilising everybody we know. So, like I said, I know people in the creative industry, they know more people in the creative industry. They've put me on to, you know, developers, Photographers, videographers, DJs, everything. So, it's in a way, networking is. I have an Irish man he works with like the young film directors of Ireland. He's like literally the national director. So, I spoke to him late last year about helping us apply for funding as a group so that we can continue our work. Will see the Hundredfold Collective is a great kind of support for that, even if that's my first time attending. My boyfriend has attended it a couple of times. He's been telling me that, oh, it's, you know, it's a good thing me as I'm not interested, but they drag me along

so, but it is it is a good thing that you can bash minds together with other people in a similar mindset.” - P19

“The biggest investing of college is networking. That is where you'll get to meet like future entrepreneurs, future people that could potentially help you along your way in your future, right. So, I was part of the Computer Science Society, I would also say communities like the Hundredfold Collective, which we you know we've been to and many other LinkedIn and other tech events, I've gone to meet really like amazing people that really inspire you and help you get along your way” - P8

The participants all highlighted different aspects of networking for entrepreneurs in Ireland and the importance of it. P6 emphasizes understanding Irish business culture and attending social gatherings to build relationships. P19 stresses leveraging existing connections and participating in events like the Hundredfold Collective. P8 sees college as a prime networking ground and suggests joining relevant communities. P10 highlights the value of international connections and organic networks, while P16 underscores the power of word-of-mouth marketing fostered through social connections.

“That's why I even ended up, you know, starting my own network organically. last year, we won one EU funding. I started networking with people in Europe and that's how I ended up having this grant. Ireland can be very because also the pie here is very small and everybody is competing into the small pie and when you're migrant is even less chance for you to get.” - P10

“Well, the first time the very first time I had an Irish girl called me to make her hair, she said. Oh, I love your hair. I love your people's hair. I want my hair to be like this. I love

being that. And all of that, so I think. The very first girl, the day I made her hair, I did that. You know the same day she got home, ten of her family wanted to make the same hair. Yes, I tell you that week I had. If I say 15 of them in one week, that is word of mouth. It's word of mouth. You know, the funny thing is, I was saying to somebody the other day. I said most if I say 70% of my customer come from outside. I have people from Dublin, Sligo, and Kinnegard... people come from outside. I got a letter there from post office. They want me to come and advertise and put this business on some kind of platform I have a few silent owners that we talk, and they tell me their experiences and all of that and especially when it comes to meeting some kind of client, how to deal with them.” - P16

Ireland's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Ireland, in addition to be a technological hub, has an environment that encourages entrepreneurship and innovation via tax breaks, grants and initiatives (Fritzen 2021; Lin *et al.*, 2010). Some of these initiatives are detailed by the participants as follows:

“I went straight to the Enterprise board and meeting them, the Enterprise Board gives you the whole picture of what they do and what apart from the grant and loan. And the offer, they also have different kinds of mentoring, different kind of business and training. And you know that is very relevant for somebody going into business, especially people like me coming from a different culture. You need to know things you don't know so it was really helpful. I was able to accept mentoring, mentoring sections, training sections, training sections. And these were all free of charge. I applied for, you know, I don't know if you heard about Food Academy programme. It's good academic programme, it's Irish programme run all over Ireland the food businesses. You know, people that want to go into food business besides it. And I must say that was that was the Food Academy exposed me

to so many things about go and doing running a food business. It took me to the next level of my business.” - P15

“But the cool thing about Island is that in the AI space, because I was in there early, I am a big voice in there. I am someone that they respect for that. And then they see a black woman. Do you know? They give me the platform I need. They push me right out there, you know? So, I have to give that back to them. I joined a particular community and I tell you how different they were. One was African Professionals Network Ireland, and the other was women in AI Ireland. Another unit I joined was remaining AI that was a diverse team and what they do is they put their people out there, you know. So, someone comes to them, they’ve built their name on the fact that, oh, we are a set of people that are professionals. We are researchers. We are professors in this field of artificial intelligence and technology. So, people come to them, they bring it out to their own people and say, guys, who's going to speak here, who's going to do this? And that's exposure for you. That's them pulling you forward and that so. So, I'll say that being strategic in the places I put my hands up has helped my growth when it comes to networking, you know” - P2.

“There are gatherings that we go to. In fact, last week we had the women in Business conference in MOOLINGA. So, a lot of businesses, no matter what level of business you are, whether your startup, whether you're growing or whether you know your expansion. We gather there and there are talks, you know, and more, you know, motivational talks and things like that. And at the end of the day, we had lunch. We did a lot of networking.” - P13

“Oh yes, I think was it two years ago that the enterprise sent someone here that came to check the freezers and all the rest to see if it is power consumption friendly? It is, I think. That's what they came for and whatever they asked me to do is something that I know, and it will be difficult to manage such ideas so based on that I decided to get a new freezer instead of all those ones. Those ideas they gave me. So, I decided to get eco-friendly freezers.” - P18

These comments demonstrate the excellent resources accessible to Ireland's immigrant businesses. P15 describes government initiatives such as the Enterprise Board, which provide mentorship, training, and funding expressly for startup firms. P2 seeks funding and speaking opportunities through professional networks such as African Professionals Network Ireland and Women in AI Ireland. P13 discusses industry conventions such as the Women in Business Conference, which offer networking opportunities and knowledge sharing. Finally, P18 demonstrates how the Enterprise Board provides practical advice, such as proposing energy-efficient equipment, to assist immigrant company owners flourish.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter inspects the collected data from the transcribed interviews and presents evidence that aligns with the project's objectives and intent to contribute to the academic community as stated in the literature review.

5.2 Discussion on Challenges Facing Migrant African Entrepreneurs in Ireland

Several interviewees, both male and female, highlighted discrimination as a significant challenge they face in their professional endeavours. This prejudice ranges from racial biases to gender-based stereotypes, affecting individuals across industries such as technology, events management, consultancy and travel & logistics. Lim (2018) wrote how prejudice towards women is counterproductive as it can worsen the existing measures of injustice they already have to deal with. Now, being an enterprising woman who must also deal with racial bias can be a major hinderance to progress. Bates, Bradford and Seamans (2018) underscores how in America, even though nearly two-thirds of all new businesses established in the country in 2015 were minority-owned and even though migrant population increased by a great deal within the decade, equal access to opportunities between small, minority-owned and white-owned businesses of comparable size and scope has not yet been attained. This could further amplify the cultural disparities that could arise because of attempts to function in a new environment, a thing that some of the participants itemized as navigating systemic hurdles and adaptation to Irish networking for access to opportunities.

Many respondents cited difficulties in accessing funding, be it VC funding, market entry trust issues or lack of financial support for their ventures. As stated in the “Research Findings” chapter, Malki *et al.* (2020) identified five major obstacles to funding: low social integration skills within the host community, poor economic integration, the absence of government support, discrimination in the formal credit market and poor knowledge of the industry. These barriers make it harder for migrant entrepreneurs to obtain financial resources, because it enshrines distrust between them and financial agents, raising the likelihood that grants or loan applications will be declined due to socioeconomic status, gender or ethnicity. The truth of this was also established by a couple of the entrepreneurs where they stated that they were unaware of Government or community initiatives for migrant entrepreneurs and this greatly impeded their progress in how they lacked mentorship and supportive communities, especially in industries like fashion, technology and events management. Meanwhile, some other entrepreneurs benefited from initiatives like the "Food Academy programme", “African Professional Network Ireland” and "Hundredfold Collective" and even delivered lectures. This poor access to information can be excused as the entrepreneur’s sloppiness to dig out information. Fowler (2005) writes on how the prospective client rates the professional on the quality of information, its presentation and the timing of that information. If a client has such expectation of an expert, that means the entrepreneur expected to deliver the expertise cannot be information starved. However, it is imperative to examine the role of deliberate information dissemination for the success of migrant entrepreneurs.

Zhang and Zhang (2016) posit that innovative ideas spread more easily when information is shared, and individuals can innovate more easily when they have access to diverse knowledge from more sources. An absence or scantiness of this can have devastating effects on society. Carlson, Jakli and Linos (2018) researched to find that government institutions in developing nations are

frequently convoluted, disjointed or corrupt which results in improper information management. The implications of this are that low levels of trust can be made worse by inconsistent government messaging which in turn makes people rely more on hearsay and unofficial sources of information. Residents may end up depending more on unofficial actors to make important decisions as a result, straining ties with government authorities. Inconsistent communication can cause people to stop using government services, even in wealthy nations and in cases where comparable information openness policies are absent from international organizations.

5.3 Discussion on the Enablers Migrant African Entrepreneurs in Ireland

The findings gleaned from this research mirrors Malerba and Ferreira's (2020) discovery that the competitive advantage of immigrant entrepreneurs comes from their capacity to first capitalize on local communities, then integrate with the mainstream market of the host country and lastly, expand to other nations, mostly through transnational business deals.

The information derived from these entrepreneurs can be used to argue that certain factors played a crucial role in enabling their achievements. Access to funding, for instance, is a critical hurdle for many new ventures. Participant P4, with an investment from a London-based VC firm, demonstrates the importance of financial backing. Venture capitalists typically invest in companies with strong business models and high growth potential (Lerner and Nanda, 2020). P4's ability to secure such investment suggests a well-defined plan and a promising future for their venture.

Beyond financial resources, a supportive ecosystem can be equally important. Initiatives like P2's internship program which offers training opportunities for public officials and P3's community space which provides a platform for interaction and collaboration showcase the value of such an environment. These community efforts offer valuable resources and connections that can be instrumental in an entrepreneur's journey (McKeever, Jack and Anderson, 2015). That being

established, it is, however, needful to underscore some communities mentioned by African migrant entrepreneurs operating in Ireland during this study. These communities include African community networks like the African Professional Network of Ireland (2024), the Food Academy programme, The Hundredfold Collective and Women in AI Ireland.



Figure 16: Mind Map of Community Networks for African Migrant Entrepreneurs in Ireland

Regarding communities, with well over 3500 members and over 100 job opportunities, the African Professional Network of Ireland (APNI), a non-profit organization that has been in operation for about 8 years, has empowered, connected and promoted collaboration among professionals of African descent in Ireland through partnered delivery of events, workshops, competitions and awards (African Professional Network of Ireland, 2024). Ireland's Local Enterprise Office (2023), in writing about the Food Academy Programme, noted that it has been operating for a decade and from the ideation stage to the retail shelves, it offers training in food safety, sustainability,

marketing, finance and business growth to support small food businesses. The Hundredfold Collective is a global community of black people in Ireland empowering one another to live the lives they want. According to their traceable activity online, they regular host workshops to foster the development of African migrants (The Hundredfold Collective, 2024). The Women in AI (2023) are a global initiative, including programs in Ireland, which promotes gender-inclusive AI with an emphasis on practice, education and community building for women interested in the field.

One primary enabler that is a key to some entrepreneur's success is self-efficacy. Personal determination, peer-to-peer fundraising and leveraging personal networks as stated by the interviewees, play crucial roles in overcoming challenges like discrimination, lack of mentorship and funding difficulties. Building interpersonal relationships and developing professional portfolios are highlighted as essential strategies for success. Several respondents emphasized the importance of adapting to Irish cultural norms and leveraging the enabling Irish environment to thrive in their businesses, whether it is in technology, consultancy or the beauty industry.

Chapter 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The realities faced by African migrants establishing enterprises in Ireland are brought to light through this study. The challenges they had to overcome, the factors that facilitated their growth, existing corporate and Government support structures, research limitations and consideration for future research are presented in line with the research objectives.

6.1 Challenges faced by African Migrant Entrepreneurs

Discrimination turned out to be a major obstacle for several business owners. They faced discrimination when trying to establish networks, get financing and access to supplies. These are core components that Williams and Krasniqi (2018) said are critical to understanding the migrant entrepreneur. Furthermore, some found it challenging to secure funds, especially venture capital, with women entrepreneurs encountering significantly more challenges. Those entering the market newly had additional difficulties since they had to gain the trust of prospective clients and adjust to changing market conditions. A few startup owners found it difficult to navigate cultural differences, especially when it came to business conventions and networking practices. Although O'Connor and Irvine (2020) spoke about the gender pay gap in Ireland for instance, a thing that could also impact on entrepreneurs, some participants were able to consciously access Irish government initiatives, grants, and push through stereotypes to achieve success. Last in this section, some entrepreneurs were hampered by the absence of a peer and mentor community, a deficiency that is traceable to personal flaws in growing relationships that can facilitate success.

6.2 Enablers of African Migrant Entrepreneurs

Among the core components of business success that were mentioned in the course of this study, two stood out – these are communities and funding. Others are previous business experience in

their home country and personal drive for market entry. Eschker, Gold and Lane (2017) did a study to discover that marketing initiatives (which for African migrants in Ireland rely considerably on networks) and prior company ownership experience have a big impact on profitability. This is because seasoned entrepreneurs, having navigated the paths are able to avoid the mistakes of starters and strategically take advantage of business communities.

6.2.1 Effectiveness of Existing Support Structures for African Migrant Entrepreneurs

Networks that were already in place proved to be essential. These include the Hundredfold Collective, Women in AI (WAI), Food Academy Programme and African Professional Network Ireland (APNI) all of which are well-established groups that offered invaluable contacts and essential support. For numerous individuals, personal connections and effective communication abilities were also crucial. The secret to success was to use the relationships already in place, establish rapport and cultivate new ones. Encouragement of entrepreneurs was greatly aided by government programs, training efforts and mentorship possibilities provided by different groups. Remarkably, one participant's African ancestry and cultural awareness were factors that promoted inventiveness and creativity in venturing into the fashion business in Ireland, in that the knowledge of what people need and where to source those things were not a hard nut to crack. Further helpfulness came from using social media and internet resources for online community building and marketing. To sum up, overcoming obstacles and succeeding ultimately requires a strong sense of entrepreneurial spirit, personal ambition, access to funds and an enabling environment.

6.3 Research Limitations

Even though qualitative research has a great element of truth to it (Ormston *et al.*, 2014), it is possible that a twenty-person sample size is not entirely representative of all African immigrant entrepreneurs in Ireland which could result in findings that do not capture the complete African

migrant experience. Furthermore, the study used self-reported data which can be prone to bias. Additionally, the study was conducted as a cross-sectional study which involves the collection of data from a population at a specific point in time. The study could have benefitted from a longitudinal research design which would have aided more in-depth research and provided additional insights as recommended by Bell (2020).

6.3.1 Considerations for Future Academic Research

Seeing that the major limitation for this study is in the brevity of acquired data, adopting a smart online approach such as Han *et al.* (2021) may have yielded a more heterogeneous participant pool. Furthermore, the work of Kuusio *et al.* (2021) showed that a mixed method research approach, where data gathering could involve a combination of interviews, questionnaires and secondary data, may furnish a more all-encompassing comprehension of the encounters of African immigrant entrepreneurs in Ireland. Therefore, future studies may adopt a multi-method approach to data collection and analysis.

6.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations were deduced based on the findings from the interviewees and the recommendations are tailored towards entrepreneurs, policymakers and the Government. These are now outlined below:

6.4.1 For African Migrant Entrepreneurs

1. **Build a Network:** Connect with other African entrepreneurs and professionals in Ireland. Share knowledge, resources and find mentors who can guide you. Look for organizations like the Hundredfold Collective that specifically support African entrepreneurs.

2. Develop a strong business plan: Research the market, identify a gap and create a plan that caters to a broader audience, not just the African community.
3. Start small and scale gradually: Begin with a manageable service offering and build your reputation for quality and reliability. Despite the hurdles, be confident in your abilities and overcome the fear of starting a business.

6.4.2 For Networks and Policymakers

1. Bridge the information gap: Create a central platform with resources on funding, training and support services specifically tailored for African migrant entrepreneurs.
2. Streamlining regulations and providing targeted support for navigating the business establishment process would significantly benefit migrant entrepreneurs.
3. Combating discrimination in the business community remains a critical area requiring continued efforts. Fostering diversity and inclusion initiatives will be essential to create a more welcoming and equitable environment. One approach to this might be to organize events and workshops that showcase the success stories of some African migrant entrepreneurs.

6.4.3 For Government

1. Encouraging alternative funding models and fostering a more inclusive investment environment, particularly for women and those targeting niche markets, is crucial.
2. Developing strong support networks tailored to the needs of African entrepreneurs, along with mentorship programs and peer-to-peer learning opportunities, will further empower this demography.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Participants Consent Form



RESEARCH TITLE: CHALLENGES AND ENABLERS OF AFRICAN MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN IRELAND. BY OLUFEMI PAUL OLUWAMUYIWA.

CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH.

- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within one (1) week after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves attending a Microsoft Teams meeting and answering interview questions prepared by the researcher for the research.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree with my interview being recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research, my identity will remain confidential.
- I understand that de-identified extracts from my interview may be quoted in the researcher's dissertation.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained by the researcher until the transcription of the interview is complete, after which, it will be deleted permanently.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for five (5) years from the date of the exam board confirmation of the researcher's dissertation results.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalization, I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.



12/03/2024

Signature of researcher

Date

Appendix 2: Research Interview Questions



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Challenges and Enablers of African Migrant Entrepreneurship in Ireland

Background and Motivations

- What motivated you to be an entrepreneur? (Laure Humbert and Drew, 2010).
- Did you get to Ireland before choosing entrepreneurship?
- What informed your choice of industry?
- Did you have any entrepreneurial experience in your home country? (Mata and Alves, 2018) If so, how did it influence your approach in Ireland?

Challenges and Obstacles

- What are the biggest challenges you faced as an African entrepreneur (DeBerry-Spence and Elliot 2012) in Ireland?
- Did the culture impede or facilitate your progress? (Dickson, Den Hartog, and Mitchelson 2003)
- How did you navigate access to funding, networking opportunities, and support services? (Lougui and Nyström, 2014)
- Did you encounter any prejudices or discrimination related to your origin or culture? (Gawlewicz, 2016)

Enablers and Support Systems

- Did you utilise any government initiatives specifically designed for migrants?

- What role did the Irish entrepreneurial ecosystem play in your success? (Cho, 2022)
- How has your network of fellow African entrepreneurs influenced your journey? (Griffin-El and Olabisi, 2019)
- What kind of support would you suggest for future African migrant entrepreneurs in Ireland?

Business Impact and Future Outlook

- How has your business contributed to the local economy and Irish society? (Cabras and Mount, 2016)
- Do you see your business empowering other African entrepreneurs? (Makura, 2008)
- What are your brand's long-term goals? (Huang, Khwaja, and Sudhir, 2015)
- What advice would you give to aspiring African entrepreneurs considering starting a venture in Ireland?

Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms

The following definitions were extracted from Oxford Learners Dictionaries, and paraphrased.

Migrant: Someone who travels to a new location for work or a better life.

Entrepreneurship: Taking a risk to start or run a business for profit.

Challenge: A tough problem that tests your skills.

Enabler: Something that helps make something else happen.

Prejudice: Disliking someone unfairly based on things like race or religion.

Discrimination: Treating someone unfairly because of their background.

Culture: The traditions, arts, and social structures of a specific group.

Community: A group of people living in the same place who share things and feel connected.

Africa: The continent second in size to Asia.

Irish: People of the Republic of Ireland, a country in Europe, known for its energetic technological ecosystem.