



Assessing the main challenges faced by Mexican immigrant entrepreneurs when starting a business in Dublin

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Abstract

Migration is a global phenomenon that affects nearly 300 million people worldwide, as they seek to settle in places with better growth opportunities (International Organization for Migration, 2020). There are studies related to migration in Asia (Kloosterman and Rath, 2001). However, there is no literature review focusing on the specific experiences of Mexican entrepreneurs in the Irish context. This study aims to fill this gap by identifying and analyzing the main obstacles these entrepreneurs encounter, using the Isenberg (2010) Entrepreneurial Ecosystem framework.

This research follows the approach of Saunders et al. (2015), using a qualitative method with semi-structured interviews of seven Mexican business owners in Dublin to get a deep understanding of their experiences. The findings show that while Dublin provides a fairly supportive environment for migrant entrepreneurship (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2022), there are still many important challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed. Specifically, migrant business owners often prefer to use their own money instead of seeking bank loans because they find it difficult to access financial services and feel that there is no support or incentives for small companies. Additionally, the study points out the lack of specific support systems for immigrant entrepreneurs, which makes their business ventures even more challenging.

This study also aims to be a foundation for future legal reforms that could help various international migrants start their businesses in Dublin.

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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Degree for which thesis is submitted: *MSc in Entrepreneurship*

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This section is a supplement to the main assignment, to be used if AI was used in any capacity in the creation of your assignment; if you have queries about how to do this, please contact your lecturer. For an example of how to fill these sections out, please click [here](#).

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This research only covers Dublin due its	This research only covers Dublin due to its
diverse population and businesses run by	diverse population and businesses run by
Mexicans located next to it. Various types	Mexicans located next to it. Various types
of businesses were examined hereof	businesses were examined here
including grocery stores, restaurants,	including grocery stores, restaurants, and
student exchange agencies across	student exchange agencies across
multiple genders age groups backgrounds	multiple genders age groups backgrounds

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Additional Evidence:

Methods and Scope

For this research, a theoretical foundation was laid using Isenberg's entrepreneurial ecosystem model. The author chose this model so as to be able to address the various problems that are being faced by entrepreneurs in the contemporary world. In order to accomplish this, various sources such as peer-reviewed journals, books, reports from government and non-government organizations and previous studies on migrant entrepreneurship were used focusing on Mexican migrants and the business environment in Ireland.

The study employed an interpretivist approach with a qualitative, inductive method. Therefore, for this reason the research aimed at understanding in-depth details about personal experiences of Mexican entrepreneurs as well as their perspectives and st approach was guided by Saunders's research onion involving semi-struct some survey respondents and key stakeholders like representatives from groups, community leaders and policymakers. The data analysis followed through which we analysed our findings based on seven (7) interviews tha

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Dissertation structure

Chapter 1: Introduction

Acknowledgments

First of all, I want to say a big thank you to my Mom. Without her support, I wouldn't have been able to come here and study. Her belief in me and encouragement have been very important for me. Mom, I love you a lot and miss you every day. Mom, your sacrifices and dedication have made all the difference in my life, so this success is as much yours as it is mine.

I also want to thank my new family in Ireland, Tara and Aoife. The way you have welcomed me into your lives and have become a big source of motivation for me, and now with a new family member on the way, makes me feel even more inspired to keep working hard and succeed with you all. *I do not know you, but you are in my heart now.*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

Migration and entrepreneurship are often interconnected as migrants tend to be important participants in both the economic and social life of their host societies. As explained by Valdez (2020), Mexican migrant entrepreneurs have made important contributions to the economy through innovation and job creation yet, they grapple with numerous obstacles associated with their undocumented status and the complexities surrounding starting up new businesses in foreign countries, such as The United States.

In recent decades, Mexican migration traditionally aimed at the United States has drastically changed. The reasons behind this change include strict laws regarding immigration in America, financial crises that hit Mexico as well as a search for better chances elsewhere (Canales, 2003). In European countries, Ireland is a particular destination where many other immigrants find new homes because of improving economies and favourable immigration policies (Gilmartin and Migge, 2015). The fact that it is home to millions of people makes Dublin's strong economy and it is a multi-cultural setup an exceptional case study on entrepreneurial behaviours among Mexican immigrants.

Dublin has grown into a strong entrepreneurial city that benefits from economic expansion and tolerance for diversity (Central Statistics Office Ireland, 2022). The business environment in this city includes policies that support start-ups, provide access to funding opportunities, and a dense network of business incubators and accelerators. However, Dublin migrant entrepreneurs still face significant barriers such as cultural differences, legal hurdles, limited local networks, and weak infrastructure, to name but a few (Pinkowski, 2009).

1.2 Gaps in the Literature

Research on migrant entrepreneurship has grown exponentially in recent decades. Nonetheless, there is still much to learn about the challenges facing Mexican migrant entrepreneurs in Dublin. Most existing studies focus on Mexican entrepreneurs in The United States (Salamanca, *et al.*, 2019). This is important because the Mexican socio-economic, cultural, and political contexts that shape their experiences are unique (Belanger, 2024).

One of the greatest knowledge gaps observed concerning this subject is a failure to highlight Mexican migrant entrepreneurs in other countries. Most studies have been conducted on Asian, African, and Eastern European entrepreneurs sidelining Latin American communities (Kloosterman and Rath, 2001). This lack of concentration or focus on Mexicans means that there is no research on the cultural differences that affect their business activity development.

Most research on migrant entrepreneurship is place-generalizable and does not provide specific instances. The most notable research in Dublin was conducted by Pinkowski (2009) showing the most up-to-date research with different nationalities. The study develops the general barriers migrant entrepreneurs face related to language, community acceptance, and regulations, among others. In addition, it makes some interesting comparisons between nationalities. However, little information can be found about what Mexicans went through while conducting business as migrants in Ireland's capital city. The available works mostly ignore the local socio-economic and regulatory environments that bear critically upon success or failure in entrepreneurship (Barrett, *et al.*, 1996).

It has been well-documented that cultural and social capital plays a key role in shaping entrepreneurial outcomes (Berry, 1997). However, few studies have focused on how cultural and social capital are used by Mexican entrepreneurs while operating businesses in Dublin. A lot of research concentrates on language barriers and cohesion in a new society, while not much was done to investigate how the Mexican diaspora uses or fails to use its ethnic resources due to cultural restrictions in countries other than the United States (Chiswick and Miller, 2001; Berry, 1997).

The legal and policy frameworks play a key role in shaping the business landscape for migrants. While much of the research has focused on immigration

policies, migration, and entrepreneurship (Kloosterman, *et al.*, 1999), little detailed analysis has been done so far regarding specific policies concerning Mexicans in Ireland. More needs to be known about visa regulations, business support services, and integration policies and how they impact business activities by Mexicans residing in Dublin (Kloosterman, *et al.*, 1999).

Although more attention has been given to the gendered aspects of migrant entrepreneurship, there is still a lack of knowledge on how gender interacts with ethnicity and migration status among Mexican entrepreneurs in Dublin. It has been revealed that many female migrant entrepreneurs face various challenges compared to their male counterparts, especially about family responsibilities (Ensign and Robinson, 2011). However, the dynamics of this issue concerning female Mexican immigrant entrepreneurs need further investigation since it remains under-researched.

1.3 Academic Justification

The importance of this research lies in Mexican migrants with different socio-cultural and economic backgrounds from those of the other migrant groups. Moreover, since they make up the largest proportion of Latin American migration; hence, their business activities provide vital insights into the global experiences of all Latin American migrants (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). However, previous research in Ireland has focused more on ethnic groups such as Polish or Chinese entrepreneurs ignoring Mexican migrants (Pinkowski, 2009). Particular attention has been done on the research of these migrants, while a better understanding of their entrepreneurship in Dublin is sought through the use of this study (MacÉinrí and White, 2008). Nonetheless, language barriers, cultural integration, and unfamiliarity with new business environments create peculiar challenges for Mexican immigrants which, in turn, also influence their businesses. These challenges determine their business success and thus require special support systems (Rath and Swagerman, 2016). Furthermore, this paper outlines obstacles encountered by Mexican entrepreneurs in Dublin which may be used to inform more inclusive and productive policies. Such a focus would not only contribute to academic knowledge but also improve support systems for various migrant communities found in Ireland.

Dublin presents an interesting place for migrant entrepreneurship due to its growing economy, and multicultural population and thanks to its advantageous business environment and open immigration policy (McGuinness, *et.al*, 2020). Nevertheless, there are numerous constraints before entrepreneurs set up businesses including legal exigencies such as the licensing requirements imposed by local authorities; cultural differences among Irish people themselves; as well limited access to resources like financial capital.

1.4 Research Aims

The main aim of this research is to understand the main challenges faced by Mexican migrant entrepreneurs when starting a business in Dublin. The study wants to find out the different barriers these entrepreneurs face, giving a complete view of the socio-economic, cultural, and regulatory problems that affect their business journey. By focusing on Mexican migrants, this research hopes to add information and open a wider discussion on migrant entrepreneurship considering aspects previously described such as other nationalities, gender, and capabilities. Furthermore, to presents information about the actual contact from migrant entrepreneurs to change the policies and regulations, among others. Finally, is to guide future academic research and business practices.

1.5 Research Questions

The questions are focused on the author's interest in starting a business in Dublin, Ireland, following the interest of the author to know the steps to establish a company in Ireland, financial options, and bureaucracy. Unfortunately, the lack of existing literature about this topic led the author to seek the experiences of other Mexican entrepreneurs, the idea is first to understand the main challenges that other Mexicans have faced.

- 1 What are the main challenges faced by Mexican migrant entrepreneurs when starting a business in Dublin?

- 2 How did Mexican entrepreneurs financially start their businesses?
- 3 Was it hard for Mexican entrepreneurs to establish themselves in the market of Dublin within their culture?

1.6 Methods and Scope

For this research, a theoretical foundation was laid using Isenberg's entrepreneurial ecosystem model. The author chose this model so as to be able to address the various problems that are being faced by entrepreneurs in the contemporary world. To accomplish this, various sources such as peer-reviewed journals, books, reports from government and non-government organizations, and previous studies on migrant entrepreneurship were used focusing on Mexican migrants and the business environment in Ireland.

The study employed an interpretivism approach with a qualitative, inductive method. Therefore, for this reason, the research aimed at understanding in-depth details about the personal experiences of Mexican entrepreneurs as well as their perspectives and strategies. The approach was guided by Saunders's research onion involving semi-structured interviews with some survey respondents and key stakeholders like representatives from business support groups, community leaders, and policymakers. The data analysis followed an inductive process through which we analysed our findings based on seven interviews that were conducted.

This research only covers Dublin due to its diverse population and businesses run by Mexicans located next to it. Various types of businesses were examined here including grocery stores, restaurants, and student exchange agencies across multiple genders age groups backgrounds

1.7 Dissertation structure

Chapter 1: Introduction

The background of this research topic. An explanation of migration, specifically from Mexican people, and the importance of studying their challenges to fill the literature gap with defined research objectives and questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The review of existing research, theories, journals, and books, among others related to entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship, migration and case of studies, the economic growth and innovation in Ireland, the explanation of the framework for this research, and the challenges faced by Mexican entrepreneurs.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter explains the methods and procedures used in this study. It discusses the Qualitative design with the collection method of a semi-structured interview. Defining the participant criteria, and techniques for the data analysis, and establishing the ethical considerations and limitations.

Chapter 4: Research findings and discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the actual findings, organized by the research objectives. Each one discussed with journal articles and noted similarities and differences with them. Practical implications for support organizations and networking.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The discussion of the key findings based on the research. The chapter stresses the need for tailored support services. Some recommendations for future research, include supportive changes and mechanisms.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the existing studies and literature on the main challenges Mexican immigrant entrepreneurs face when starting a business in Dublin.

First, a definition of entrepreneur and entrepreneurship and an explanation of the concepts related to entrepreneurship, a discussion of three Theories of entrepreneurship with some common characteristics of entrepreneurs according to scholars, and finally a discussion of entrepreneurship trends globally.

Second, a definition of migrant and immigrant with a discussion of some immigration trends globally, social and cultural impacts, and finally some case studies of immigrant contributions to various sectors.

Third, identify the factors that contribute to Ireland's economic growth and innovation, the role of innovation, and the challenges that may affect new businesses, particularly those started by migrants.

Fourth, an explanation of Isenberg's entrepreneurial ecosystem model as a theoretical framework to analyze and identify challenges and opportunities of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Dublin.

Fifth, an explanation of the demographic profile, a discussion of regulatory & legal, financial, cultural & social, market, support challenges, and some business attempts of Mexican migrants in Dublin, due to this group represents an unexplored area of study, particularly the diverse motivations, barriers, and challenges.

Finally, the author's conclusion is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the gaps in literature found by these entrepreneurs and remark on the gaps in the current literature.

2.2 Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship

2.2.1 Definition of entrepreneur and entrepreneurship

The term entrepreneur comes from the French word 'entreprendre', which literally translates to "to do something" or "one who undertakes", this can be related to a person who initiates something like a project or business venture. An entrepreneur is someone who seeks opportunities in upcoming challenges and creates new ideas or businesses that others haven't tried previously (Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd, 2021). It is also someone who identifies a gap and provides a product or service that people are willing to pay for (Tracy, 2019). This gap could be filled by leading their own business, expanding the family business, or managing a sector (or all) of another person's business, no matter if it is private or public (Sildeberg, 2016).

Entrepreneurship is more than just starting and running a business. It means looking for new ideas, finding and using opportunities, and creating value from them. Joseph Schumpeter (1934) argues that entrepreneurship is a process of creating new combinations of a solution or idea, which can lead to new products, methods of production, new sources of materials, new markets, or new types of organizations

Generally, business activities involve more a management routine of established standards and procedures of a business than creating fundamentally new ones. Whereby, for Mexican immigrant entrepreneurs is fundamental to identify gaps in the market to succeed and create or adapt an idea or business model to understand the local market.

2.2.2 Types of entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship takes different forms, each one with its unique characteristics and goals. Social entrepreneurship is about using business ideas to solve problems. Unlike a traditional business that focuses on making money, social entrepreneurs aim to solve social issues and create a positive impact on society. An example of this is Muhammad Yunus, the CEO and founder of Grameen Bank who developed microfinance to give small loans to poor people, helping them to improve their lives (Landry, 2024). However, many social enterprises also aim to be financially

sustainable, so they are forced to generate some profit on their social missions. This could change their original purpose.

Tech entrepreneurship focuses on the commercialization of new technologies, resulting into successful businesses. These entrepreneurs focus on creating new technologies, in many fields such as software biotechnology, and electronics. Companies like Apple, Google, and Tesla are great examples of successful tech entrepreneurship and economic growth (Bresnahan & Trajtenberg, 1995). It is important to mention that not all companies succeed, and many startups could go bankrupt or dissolve in the first five years.

Intrapreneurship or corporate entrepreneurship occurs mostly in established companies, or big companies, where employees act like entrepreneurs by developing a new product, service, or processes that improve the company more competitively or efficiently. This form of entrepreneurship helps large organizations to stay innovative and adapt to market changes (Pinchot, 1985). Unfortunately, some bureaucratic processes and resistance to change within the companies would forge barriers to the company.

Each type of entrepreneurship has the potential to grow and develop, explaining with examples gives the pros and cons of the idea of how adaptability and resilience help immigrant entrepreneurs to succeed or fail in different areas.

2.2.3 Theories of entrepreneurship

As previously discussed about the types of entrepreneurship, different theories explain how to become an entrepreneur. One of the most important theories is Schumpeter's theory of Innovation (1934), where the main job of an entrepreneur is to create new ideas and products. This results in using resources in new ways that can change or improve existing markets. Schumpeter also formulated the idea of creative destruction, which explains how old industries and products are constantly being replaced by new ones, and how this process helps the economy to grow and improve over time. Unfortunately, in real-world scenarios, some ambiguous processes, competitive pressures, or even market reforms cannot help entrepreneurs in their innovation, resulting in a lack of institutional support (Piore, 2007).

In contrast to Schumpeter, another scholar Israel Kirzner (1973) views entrepreneurship primarily as a process of discovery. According to Kirzner, entrepreneurs are people who are particularly alert to opportunities others cannot see. This alertness gives them the advantage of identifying and working on market inefficiencies or gaps, leading to developing opportunities and economic welfare. It is arguable that Kirzner's theory does not necessarily innovate in Schumpeter's sense, and that his theory might overlook deeply systemic issues and opportunities for change. It is important to understand the period of time when Kirzner wrote this theory, being more alert to opportunities (Korsgaard, *et al.*, 2016).

In a really good sense, anyone can learn and apply entrepreneurial principles, no matter their country of precedence, age, gender, or cultural background. Entrepreneurship is not restricted to a selected few with specific characteristics, is accessible to anyone willing to learn and apply the right methodologies.

Peter Drucker (1985), believed that entrepreneurship is a discipline that can be learned and practiced, and with the help of a systematic innovation, which is organized and with a purpose, might offer economic and social innovation. The authors argue that promoting a bureaucratic or hard-to-understand structured approach could reduce creativity and unconventional thinking, where this implementation can be challenging, particularly in risky environments.

2.2.4 Characteristics of Entrepreneurs

This part is focused on some associated skills with success and how these characteristics help entrepreneurs solve the challenges of starting and growing a business.

Some entrepreneurs often do activities with uncertain results, willing to take risks. This willingness to take risks is essential for trying new ideas and opportunities that other people might avoid and differentiate as entrepreneurs (Calindo, *et al.*, 2014). With innovation, entrepreneurs can create new ideas and implement them to succeed. On the other hand, creative thinking helps them to find unique solutions and create value that sets them apart from their competitors (Drucker, 1985). To achieve this unique solution, entrepreneurs could fail, and face problems and failures; resilience will bounce them back from difficulties and keep going despite challenges,

making it fundamental for long-term success (Ayala and Manzano, 2014). Successful entrepreneurs have a clear vision of what they want to achieve; helping them with strategic decisions and motivating them to reach their goals (Baum, *et al.*, 1998). Lastly, entrepreneurs will lead people or teams, and they need to inspire and motivate others; good leadership includes good communication, making decisions, and creating a positive work environment (Vecchio, 2003).

2.2.5 Entrepreneurship Trends

Businesses and entrepreneurship have changed significantly in the past decade with the help of technological advancement, migration, and changing economic conditions. Globalization has improved connectivity between countries or regions and their markets, providing entrepreneurs with a variety of opportunities but also increased competition so it is important to understand any cultural context and regulatory environment (Autio, *et al.*, 2014). This connection has been achieved by digital technologies and how they are reshaping commerce to e-commerce with the help of digital platforms and social media, helping new people to start businesses with minimum capital (Nambisan, 2017). Increased connectivity has also triggered the alarms of being more aware of environmental and social issues, as the social entrepreneur, where businesses prioritize social responsibility and environmental sustainability (Parrish, 2010).

2.3 Migrant and Immigrant

2.3.1 Definition of migrant, immigrant, migration, and immigration

Migration has been always a fundamental aspect of the human story for various reasons, such as climate change, economic opportunities, and conflicts. Because of this humanity has been on the need to move from one place to another for thousands of years. The term migrant is used to describe an individual who relocates to a different area within the same country (internal migration) or another country (international migration), either temporarily or permanently, often for

employment, better living conditions, education, or mere escape from less desirable situations; this also includes specific groupings such as labourers, refugees, asylum seekers, and international students (International Organization for Migration, 2019).

An immigrant refers to a person moving into a foreign land that isn't his motherland to settle there. One of the differences between migrants and immigrants is that the latter typically aim at establishing permanent residence in the new land by usually going through lawful processes of acquiring residency or citizenship and may adopt their customs, language, and ways of life. It is through this opportunity that immigrants also acquire certain rights and duties in their new communities like the right to work and access education and healthcare as well as being taxed (Portes and Rumbaut, 2014).

It should be noted that these are two different things – knowledge about migrants and immigrants affects legislation by the government affecting societies. Even “migrant” itself is not definite hence it could lead to misinterpretations or grouping of dissimilar persons together

2.3.2 Immigration Trends

2.3.2.1 *Global immigration trends*

A significant global phenomenon is immigration. The International Organization for Migration (2020) reports that there were approximately 281 million international migrants worldwide, constituting around 3.6% of the global population. Among other factors, economic opportunities and political stability have made high-income countries such as the United States, Germany or Saudi Arabia be primary destinations for migrants.

2.3.2.1 *Irish immigration trends*

Over the last few decades, Ireland has seen a large influx of immigrants. Once a country known for its emigration, during Ireland's Celtic Tiger years (1990s to early 2000s) it became an attractive destination for immigrants. In its report, the Central Statistics Office (CSO), it was reported that approximately 13% of the Irish population were born outside Ireland in the year 2019. Immigration continues to shape Ireland's demographic and economic landscape significantly by making considerable contributions to its labour market as well as cultural diversity

2.3.2.2 Mexican immigration to Ireland

Mexican immigration to Ireland is relatively small compared to other immigrant groups but recent trends suggest otherwise. According to data from Ireland's Department of Justice and Equality (2020), there has been consistent growth in Mexican nationals residing in Ireland who are looking towards education opportunities and jobs within sectors like the hospitality industry, technology, and services offering sector.

2.3.3 Social and cultural impacts

The journey from one place to another is not the hardest part of the immigrant experience, some language barriers, cultural disparities, and social integration challenges are among the most common issues that immigrants often encounter while living in different countries. This integration is important for the welfare of the immigrants as well as the cohesion within the host society (Berry, 1997).

Regarding communication, not every time does the immigrant have the same language as the new country. Therefore, some language barriers may arise, and some language fluency or the possibility of communication in the host country must be a prerequisite for accessing employment opportunities, education, and social services. Many foreigners find it difficult to learn a new language which hampers their assimilation process (Chiswick and Miller, 2001)

2.3.4 Case studies of immigrant contribution to various sectors

It is arguable to say that in a host country, immigration boosts various sectors by bringing in new workforce, experience, and skills. Immigrants usually resort to informal learning approaches as they strive to develop the required competencies, knowledge base, and cultural awareness that will enable them to become successful in the fields they are interested (Annen 2023). They also constitute an important part of the U.S. economy and workforce comprising 14% of its population and 17% of its labor force (Li and Kung 2023). In Canada only, immigrants represented a big share of nursing practicing nurses and healthcare support workers, making up approximately 28% (Harun and Walton-Roberts 2022). Many tech startups located in

Silicon Valley that have been established by immigrants or are filling vital job positions with fresh perspectives on technology or generating new ideas/technologies (Saxenian, 2006).

Concerning Mexican migration, Carabello and Wolfson (2021) utilized data from a large health survey called the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey to establish whether metabolic syndrome that can lead to heart disease and diabetes varies across different racial/ethnic groups. It was found that recent Mexican immigrants have a lower risk of MetS compared to US-born whites. Particularly this is because the majority of those immigrants are young people. Even if they had similar education, income, and food security as white Americans, they would still have a health advantage because of their age. Therefore, Mexican immigrants often fill essential roles in industries such as agriculture, construction, hospitality, and healthcare or where U.S. citizens do not want (Krogstad, *et al.*, 2020).

Rodriguez-Pose and Von Berlepsch (2019) studied the relationship between diversity and economic growth in the United States, focusing on the diversity of the population, particularly from the foreign-born populations, and their positive impacts on the economic growth and how the education level does not influence the economic growth. Prenzel, *et al.*, (2024) developed research between cultural diversity and innovative entrepreneurship across European regions and found that there was no clear differential impact between EU and non-EU on cultural proximity and stated that cultural diversity positively influences innovation on the business models.

2.4 Economic Growth and Innovation in Ireland

2.4.1 Historical context

Ireland's economic growth, often referred to as the "Celtic Tiger" period, began in the mid-1990s and lasted until the late 2000s. During this time, the country saw unprecedented economic expansion driven by foreign direct investment (FDI), a favorable tax regime, and an educated workforce (Kirby, 2004)

According to Barry (2003), the major factors of economic growth include a liberalized economy, education investment, and strategic use of EU funds. Similarly, Boyle (2018) stresses the importance of the technology sector and multinational corporations that contributed greatly to propelling Ireland's Economy. Unfortunately, a deep recession occurred as a result of global financial crisis in 2008 which affected Ireland badly. Nevertheless, according to Whelan (2014), from the mid-2010s, this country managed to get back on its feet with robust recovery mechanisms such as financial reforms and austerity measures. McGuinness, *et al.*, (2020) revealed in recent studies how economic growth returned in Ireland after the recession with an emphasis on FDI mostly from Google, Facebook & Apple tech companies. These firms have largely invested in Ireland due to it is favourable business environment coupled with access into the EU market.

2.4.2 Entrepreneurship in Ireland

Diversity in entrepreneurship often leads to innovation. In their research, Karlsson, *et al.*, (2019) found that the success of a business depends on several factors: where the business is located, networking, knowledge sharing, the role of institutions, and how important the environment, external knowledge, institutions, and business ecosystems are for innovation and their influence.

In Ireland, one in seven people plans to start a business in the next three years with an increase of 9.7% of young people aged from 18 to 24 years old from 2021 in comparison to 2018 (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2022). According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO) (2022) between the period of 2015 and 2020, 106,904 new businesses were established in Ireland, creating 28,151 new jobs in 2020. The key business sectors are Industry, construction, distribution, financial & insurance, and mainly the services sector with 16,721 permanent jobs seconded by the construction sector with 6,211. Unfortunately, these same sectors have the highest number of business closures with 13,237, representing 76.3% of the total deaths by sector. In 2015, 18,100 businesses started, and from those 12,150 were still active in 2020 representing 67.1%, in comparison to 2019 when 14,113 founded businesses and 13,958 were still active in the market in their first year (CSO, 2022).

The motivations to start a business from Irish entrepreneurs are varied. The top three reasons are to build wealth (59%), make a difference in the world (58%), and earn a living because of job scarcity (56%) according to The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2022). The motivation to start a business due to job scarcity has increased from 41% in 2019, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The GEM (2022) has researched that Ireland has a high rate of intrapreneurship, which means employees starting new projects within their companies. About 8.5% of employees started a business meanwhile working in the last three years (GEM, 2022). However, this rate has been declining over the past four years. Ireland also has a high rate of people leaving their businesses, with 6.9% of adults reporting they have recently exited their business (GEM, 2022). The main reason for these exits was the chance to sell the business.

Most early-stage entrepreneurs in Ireland are working in consumer services such as retail, restaurants, and personal services. This sector makes up over half (54%) of early-stage businesses, which is higher than in 2019 (GEM, 2022). Fewer entrepreneurs are focused on business-to-business services (22%) or manufacturing (19%) (GEM, 2022). Compared to other European countries, early-stage entrepreneurs in Ireland are less likely to use digital technologies to sell their products or services.

2.5 Theoretical Framework: Isenberg's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Model

2.5.1 Definition of the entrepreneurial ecosystem

Being an entrepreneur demands different skills, goals, actions, support systems, attitudes, values, and social networks. All these components must work together and create what scholars define as an entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Kuratko (2024) defines an entrepreneurial ecosystem as a community of interconnected people and the socioeconomic context that supports them. This idea compares entrepreneurship to a natural ecosystem, where different groups of people,

suppliers, buyers, companies, institutions, and customers work together on entrepreneurial projects.

Stam and Spigel (2018) develop beyond this and define the players and elements that work together to help and foster entrepreneurs to be successful in a specific area. This is defined in four main components (1) people and things are connected, (2) organized in a specific way, (3) promoting productive entrepreneurship, and (4) in a specific location.

5.2.2 Overview of Isenberg's Model

Isenberg (2010) encompasses the definition of entrepreneurial ecosystem and develops a model that helps us understand the challenges that affect entrepreneurship and lists six domains of entrepreneurial ecosystems: policy, finance, culture, support, human capital, and markets.

Isenberg explains that every entrepreneurial ecosystem is different because it grows in its own way, depending on its unique circumstances. Every ecosystem is connected to a specific area but can vary in size. The ecosystems can be specific to a town, a city, or a country. Even more, some ecosystems can be just found in a specific industry, while others could involve multiple sectors (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, 2018)

2.5.2.1 Policy

The policy domain highlights three main points. The first one is related to how governments should work with private businesses from the beginning and how they must be involved in asking business leaders for advice on how to make an easy way to start a business. With this solution, the private sector can help shape policies and programs that support entrepreneurship. The second point is that governments should set up organizations that help entrepreneurs, such as research centres and international offices and they should also create places where government and business leaders can talk and work together. The last point is regarding the existing laws, rules, and policies that will affect new entrepreneurs and those who have started

businesses before, such as tax rates, education and training laws, research and development, immigration, trade, infrastructure, and government support.

2.5.2.2 Finance

Capital is necessary to start a business and a consistent and steady supply of money allows a business to grow and expand with investment opportunities. This financial support benefits the economy with competition and job opportunities. Governments can help with this by making capital markets more open, simplifying taxes, and ensuring strong financial practices. It is also possible to support new businesses by removing obstacles and creating programs that make it easier to start a company. Unfortunately, it is clear that getting access to finance is a major challenge for startups, and many people rely on bank loans or family savings, which means a minimal amount of capital and makes them heavily dependent on an immediate cash flow from the sales of the business. Both of these financing methods can lead to bankruptcy a recession, bigger competition, or even sanitary emergencies (Department of Jobs, Enterprise, and Innovation, 2014).

2.5.2.2.1 Finance options

Crowdfunding is a more recent way to get funds for a business or project where an entrepreneur could ask many people for small donations or contributions from a broad audience, usually through the Internet. The investors who contribute, often do not each other but are interested in the project. Initially crowdfunding emerged as a platform to help mainly artists, musicians, and other creative people. Nowadays, it can be used to raise money from charities to secure investment capital for startups (Boslaugh, 2022). However, is important to highlight that the marketing campaign to attract new investors could be more expensive than the project itself. Additionally, the success rates of these companies could not reach their goal, information from Kickstarter shows that 367,610 projects could not be financed (Kickstarter, 2023).

Venture capital (VC) is a form of financing a business, where money or funds are given to startups and small businesses. These investments are typically high-risk, but the investors seek long-term growth potential and are very profitable. Nowadays, venture capitalists act more as conservative bankers focusing on minimizing risk and maximizing returns, investing in more profitable or unicorn industries such as IT or computer businesses (Zider, 1998). To be clear, this could be a double-edged sword

for entrepreneurs on the one hand could offer access to big sources of funding and valuable mentorship; on the other hand, it requires a significant loss of equity and control.

Debt financing means borrowing funds from someone else with the obligation to repay them with an extra fee for borrowing it. It is a traditional method for a business to get the needed funding. One key advantage of this type of finance option is the option to pay the interest from the borrowing when it is calculated as corporate income tax, helping the owners to save money on taxes (Halíček and Karfíková, 2022).

Equity finance is defined by the OECD (2009) as "all financial resources that are provided to firms in return for an ownership interest. Equity investors have no guarantee that any specific amount of money will be returned. Rather, their return on investment will be determined by the firm's success. They may sell their shares in the firm if a market exists, or they may get a share of the proceeds if the firm is sold".

Bootstrapping is when the entrepreneur, uses his or her resources, money from initial sales, or savings methods to start a business. It is a way to keep the business under control and not request debt or equity finance. Furthermore, according to Bhidé (1992), bootstrapping encourages financial discipline as well as innovation since entrepreneurs must come up with innovative solutions that would enable them to sustain their firms through limited means. Despite the advantages, bootstrapping can be exhausting and slow down the growth of the business compared to having access to substantial capital. The key to successful bootstrapping lies in managing cash flow effectively and continuously reinvesting profits into the business.

2.5.2.3 Culture

In the cultural domain, the entrepreneur has to face the values and attitudes of the society around him. A positive culture in the society will lead them to try new opportunities and make them comfortable to take risks at starting their business, and if fails occur will be accepted and entrepreneurs will be more likely to keep trying even when things are not at their best. Culture includes some arts, norms, social interactions, laws, or customs of people in a specific nation, region, or society. This same culture can be found in organizations where everyone follows certain behaviours, which is called corporate culture (Aryal, 2021). Furthermore, a strong entrepreneurial culture

helps to build networks where entrepreneurs can support and learn from each other, but over-focusing on big success stories can make feel people smaller from their achievements and educate them to do not only focus on the profit.

Hayton, George, & Zahra (2002) developed research on the relationship between national culture and entrepreneurship. First, national culture has a deep influence in entrepreneurs and shapes their personality, attitude, and behaviour, such as individualism, risk-taking, and being proactive. Second, there are differences in entrepreneurial activity, necessities, and innovation between different countries, and these differences can be explained by the cultural values, resources, and norms in each country. Third, discussed how national culture affects things such as how entrepreneurs make decisions or effectuation, the family involvement in businesses, and immigrants starting businesses. Finally, they agree that is necessary to do more research to fully understand how formal rules and informal cultural factors could enable or limit entrepreneurship.

2.5.2.4 Human Capital

This domain focuses on the acquisition of skilled, educated, and capable people who can start and run a business. Investing in good education and training requires money and time, and it can take years to see the benefits from both and could be some more challenges too or even the skilled people move to other countries for better opportunities representing a big loss of workforce. To have the most human capital, it is important to create good conditions to retain talented people in the country, such as good job opportunities, a high-quality life, and a supportive environment for starting a business. Achieving this requires careful planning and a long-term development plan.

Arshed, Rauf, and Bukhari (2024) focused on the impact of different levels of education on entrepreneurial intentions, evaluating primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels and how the three levels of education provide knowledge, skills, and confidence to the people fostering entrepreneurship. However, education is not the only one that affects positively entrepreneurship, business ownership experience can affect it positively or negatively and it is necessary to balance it (Bao, *et al.*, 2023).

Marvel, Davis, and Sproul (2014) evaluated 109 articles of on theories like work experience, education, and entrepreneurial experience, with an emphasis on firm performance, and suggested exploring different types of knowledge and skills in various economic contexts, incorporating corporate entrepreneurship, and establishing causal relationships through longitudinal studies. Marvel, *et al.*, (2014) stated that “theoretical perspectives from strategic management have dominated much of the conversation in the human capital entrepreneurship literature, consistent with other areas of entrepreneurship research... human capital entrepreneurship research could benefit from integrating cognitive, learning, network tie, and motivational perspectives.”

2.5.2.5 Markets

The importance of markets relies on access to a wider customer base both internationally and within their localities to entrepreneurs (Lehman, *et al.*, 2014). It means paying attention to consumer wants, distribution outlets as well as promotional tactics. However, there are several things to be aware of when operating in this manner. A favourable market environment can promote business expansion and invention that leads to economic growth and job creation (Lehman, *et al.*, 2014) On the other hand, markets that are too competitive might kill start-ups. Regulations should therefore find a way of protecting companies but at the same time not subjecting them to so many controls; such a balance is necessary for promoting commerce. However, much competition can encourage new ideas among players in the market forcing them to improve their products continuously (Lehman, *et al.*, 2014). Nevertheless, intense competition or other barriers can sometimes prevent people from establishing new businesses. Moreover, excessive focus on success stories may undermine small businesses. Finally, market policies must be fair to all entrepreneurs rather than those with high resources or connections.

A marginalized group can be emancipated through entrepreneurship where they can create businesses, products, and processes that may mitigate their structural disadvantages. There are two essential facets of convergence between market forces and emancipatory concerns: ends-compatibility (this is the extent to which market outcomes match those of emancipation) and means-compatibility (these refer to resource constraints faced by marginalized entrepreneurs) (Lewis and Crabbe, 2024).

Returnee migrants have a greater tendency towards self-employment with many starting small firms financed by savings from abroad. The research demonstrates the economic costs and benefits of temporary migration as dangerous entrepreneurial investments that allow people to open up new organizations. A higher repayment probability for migration loans than start-up business loans is accompanied by lower default rates (Bossavie, *et al.*, 2024).

2.5.2.6 Supports

The entrepreneurship support domain is essential for the success of entrepreneurs. Without good infrastructure, financial institutions, legal services, and mentorships, people can hardly establish or develop their companies. Nonetheless, it's necessary to strike a balance, because if the entrepreneurs excessively depend on these system supports, they may not learn how to solve problems alone and this makes them not self-reliant or independent. This in turn restricts their ability to innovate and adapt. Furthermore, such support must be accessed by all entrepreneurs fairly without focusing only in some people only since that would lead to inequitable advantages as well as disparities.

Zhidebekkyzy and Zada (2021) compared state support policies for entrepreneurship across thirty countries with incomes at different levels juxtaposing high, middle, and low-income countries; hence discussed income-dependent differences in state support measures with lessons for developing/underdeveloped countries. Natalia DELIU (2024) noted that while government support is essential in creating a favourable environment for enterprising activities; it should not entirely rely on its shoulders since technology commercialization needs an education system supported by universities and both government and universities could develop Small Business Development Centres and business incubators to provide valuable resources and assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs.

In a study conducted by Adha, *et al.*, (2023), they discussed the role of family support in shaping students' entrepreneurial intentions and argued that family support, together with entrepreneurship education can greatly align students' intentions towards entrepreneurship, pointing out the importance of a supportive family environment in augmenting entrepreneurial aspirations. Tahir, *et al.*, (2023) looked into the connection between perceived support and entrepreneurship

intention amongst young Omanis particularly concerning gender as a moderator and their Findings show that perceived educational and structural support positively influenced entrepreneurship intention while relating support had no significant effect. It was also noted that for males and females more customized measures are needed because gender moderated the relationship between perceived support and entrepreneurship intention.

2.6 Challenges faced by Mexican immigrant entrepreneurs

The population of Mexican migrants in Dublin is relatively small but has shown significant growth in recent years. The number of Mexican nationals residing in Ireland increased from no more than 1,500 in 2011 (Mullally, 2011) to approximately between 1,001 to 10,000 in 2016 (CSO, 2016). This increase can be attributed to various factors, including economic opportunities, educational pursuits, and familial connections.

2.6.1 Regulatory and legal challenges

2.6.1.1 *Visa work permit issues*

One of the major difficulties faced by immigrant entrepreneurs is the legal barriers that can prevent Mexican entrepreneurs in Dublin from establishing and maintaining businesses. In addition, scholars find that the required documentation is hard to come by which may inhibit potential entrepreneurs (Barrett and Vershinina, 2017). Moreover, some visas are characterized by uncertainty and temporary nature making it difficult for long-term business planning and investment (Desiderio, 2014).

2.6.1.2 *Business Registration and Legal Compliance*

The registration process of a business and ensuring compliance with the law afterward are also impediments. Many immigrant entrepreneurs may be unfamiliar with local regulations, implying an inability to understand or meet compliance requirements (Kloosterman, *et al.*, 1999). For Mexican entrepreneurs, sorting the Irish business law without adequate legal support creates delays and possible legal problems (Barrett and Vershinina, 2017). The differences in legal and business practices between Mexico and Ireland makes this situation worse.

2.6.2 Financial Challenges

2.6.2.1 Access to funding and financial services

Access to funding is a major challenge for immigrant entrepreneurs. However, scholars have consistently pointed out that immigrants experience difficulties in accessing loans or any other financial support (Ram, *et al.*, 2017). Factors like perceived instability and lack of credit history in the home country make banks and other financial institutions consider immigrant entrepreneurs as high-risk clients (Mickiewicz, *et al.*, 2017). Consequently, this poses a particularly difficult problem for Mexican entrepreneurs since they may lack the essential financial networks and limited access to traditional lending institutions.

2.6.2.2 Credit and investment Barriers

Private investors and venture capitalists are also less likely to invest in businesses owned by immigrants. According to Carter, *et al.* (2008), many investors believe that immigrants cannot be successful businessmen because they do not understand the local market or language. Another barrier faced by immigrant business owners is the lack of mentoring opportunities or investment choices that could be available to their native-born counterparts (Sequeira, Carr, & Rasheed, 2009).

2.6.3 Cultural and Social Challenges

2.6.3.1 Language Barriers

Language is a significant problem, even though both languages share a common origin in the ancient Indo-European Language family, both have evolved quite differently over the centuries (Dominguez, 2021). The differences in vowel and consonant phonemes, diphthongs, triphthongs, word and sentence stress, and pronunciation difficulties for Spanish speakers learning English, resulting in that Spanish speakers face challenges in pronouncing certain sounds in English that do not exist in their native language (Silva Valencia, 2022). For Dublin's Mexican immigrants, language challenges may limit access to customers, suppliers, or regulatory bodies (Chrysostome and Arcand, 2009). In turn, such obstacles in businesses complicate even harder customer relationships as well as bureaucratic processes (Ram, *et al.*, 2014).

2.6.3.2 Cultural Differences

Different cultures can affect different aspects of business like their management styles to customer desires and expectations. Changing a few sentences to the point where they are no longer relevant does not help what is being said here. In their research Jones, *et al.* (2014) in the UK found that this can lead to various social and economic barriers that curtail market opportunities and make doing business in the country less welcoming to newcomers. Many new migrant entrepreneurs in the area of study, mostly work in markets with low value, similar to older immigrant communities even though they have new and creative ideas, they still face the challenges of getting a loan from regular banks and risk opening in a new market.

2.6.4 Market Challenges

2.6.4.1 Market Access and Competition

Mexican entrepreneurs, among others, trying to sell goods or services in established markets dominated by native enterprises, often with a market domain, will encounter difficulties. Kloosterman and Rath (2001), highlight that many times market access is limited by factors such as a lack of knowledge of local markets or established networks. The opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs are different depending on the country, city, and neighborhood they are in because can vary due the offer and demand of their product. Thus, this affects how they can start and run their business. Besides this, immigrant entrepreneurs face stiff competition from native businesses (Desiderio 2014).

2.6.4.2 Customer Base and Marketing Strategies

Marketing strategies to build customer bases are essential for business success. Due to cultural differences and a lack of market knowledge, immigrant entrepreneurs are often baffled in understanding and accessing their target customers, factors such as age, education, gender, and business plan influence sales growth and profitability for entrepreneurs. (Masurel, *et al.*, 2002). For Mexican entrepreneurs in Ireland, designing marketing strategies that appeal to the local Irish population and the wider immigrant community requires a superb knowledge of different consumer tastes (Carter, *et al.*, 2015).

2.6.5 Support Systems

2.6.5.1 Availability and Effectiveness of Support Networks and Services

Crucial support networks and services are important facilitators for successful immigrant entrepreneurship. They can also enormously impact business output through their presence or absence. The literature underscores access to mentoring, entrepreneurial guidance, and networking opportunities (Desiderio, 2014). However, there is always a disparity between available support and what entrepreneurs need (Ram, *et al.*, 2017). Culturally relevant and accessible support services are difficult to find for Mexican entrepreneurs in Dublin.

2.7 Conclusions

Different obstacles have to be overcome by Mexican entrepreneurs in Dublin such as complex normative environments, financial funding, and cultural, and marketing-related barriers. The literature points out wide perspectives on these problems, but big gaps as well. Upon reviewing the literature, it becomes evident that there are logical consistencies when identifying the multi-faceted challenges facing immigrant entrepreneurs. However, some arguments in the literature lack depth and empirical support. For example, while it is known that there are financial impediments faced by many of them no exploration has been done as to what specific financial products or policies could help improve this situation (Mickiewicz, *et al.*, 2017). At the same time, there is a tendency to discuss cultural and social challenges in general terms without considering the different experiences of various immigrant groups such as Mexicans (Barrett and Vershinina, 2017).

It is needed to do more targeted research to provide a better understanding of Mexican entrepreneurs' unique experiences facing their challenges to carry out effective support mechanisms into place. These gaps represent opportunities for the government, entrepreneurs and researchers alike as they provide insights for academic knowledge for present-day and future, and ways forward as well as fostering an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem some several gaps that remain are

more targeted studies on Mexican entrepreneurs, due (1) most studies generalize immigrant experiences without considering the context of different immigrant groups; (2) there is a lack of studies tracking the signs of progress and challenges of immigrant entrepreneurs over time, such studies could provide deeper insights of the period of time challenges and successes; (3) while the importance of support networks is recognized, there is limited research on the effectiveness of specific support programs and initiatives for immigrant entrepreneurs; (4) the literature often treats challenges as separate entities rather than interconnected issues; (5) how do immigration and business policies in Ireland compare with those in other countries in supporting or hindering Mexican migrant entrepreneurship; (6) there is limited or zero exploration of the specific challenges faced by female Mexican entrepreneurs in Dublin; (7) there are no comparative studies that examine the different immigration businesses across Dublin and specially Mexican entrepreneurs.

Having said that, this research will focus on seven research objectives that will try to discuss the author's main opportunities that needed to be addressed.

Chapter 3: Research and methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter helps to identify and understand the main challenges based on the gaps in the literature review from Mexican migrants with the support of a well-structured research method.

To achieve this, the author chose the research 'Onion' by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2015) to explain the steps in the research process. Interpretivism is the research philosophy chosen to carry out the Semi-structured interviews to gather detailed stories and experiences from the participants instead of just numbers and statistics to understand deeply their feelings, and thoughts, and how do they deal with their challenges.

In order to obtain the most relevant information, a sample of seven entrepreneurs was carefully selected to gather a diverse, capable, and valuable perspective for the findings. It is important to highlight first, that each participant has been informed and approved of their participation to conduct responsible and ethical research; second, this research was strictly done in the city of Dublin, which could be referred to as a small sample size, and therefore cannot be generalized to the whole country.

3.2 The research aims and objectives

Research methods refer to the methodologies used by people to investigate scientific questions in a standardized course of action. These investigations are done by researchers who are specialized in different fields, to find facts validate or improve theories, or create new plans or strategies based on their findings (Keenan, 2022). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to fill a space in the literature gap where relevant or meaningful research has been done on Mexican immigrant entrepreneurs when starting a business in Dublin.

Based on the positive impacts on economic growth due to the diversity of their population and the relation between how the last one also influence positively the innovation on business models (Rodriguez-Pose and Von Berlepsch, 2019; Prenzel, *et al.*, 2024). The following research objectives have been set to fulfil this aim using the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem of Isenberg (2010) – see Table

Table 1. Research Objectives

Research Objective 1	Identify and analyse the main challenges faced by Mexican migrant entrepreneurs
Research Objective 2	Identify and analyse the policy challenges faced by Mexican entrepreneurs
Research Objective 3	Identify and analyse the financial challenges faced by Mexican entrepreneurs
Research Objective 4	Identify and analyse the cultural challenges faced by Mexican entrepreneurs
Research Objective 5	Identify and analyse the market challenges faced by Mexican entrepreneurs
Research Objective 6	Identify and analyse the human capital challenges faced by Mexican entrepreneurs
Research Objective 7	Identify and analyse the support challenges faced by Mexican entrepreneurs

3.3 Research philosophy and design

When carrying out research, a research philosophy supports the methodology and guides on how the study will be designed, executed, and interpreted. For this dissertation, the research philosophy is framed using the Research Onion from Saunders, *et al.* (2015), which provides a broad structure of six layers that help to understand and apply different research philosophies, approaches, strategies, time horizons, techniques, and procedures.

The outermost and most important layer is the research philosophy, where the first step is to identify the different research philosophies, where interpretivism is deemed as the most appropriate for this study. Interpretivism argues that researchers need to study the social phenomena as an all, considering all aspects together; and clarify that there are many different realities, not just only one (Howson, 2021). Saunders, *et al.* (2015) argue that researchers need to recognize that studying people is not the same as any objects, and that in life each human takes one role. On the other hand, "Interpretivism is related to constructivism. It holds that social reality is a subjective construction based on interpretation and interaction" (Quinlan, 2011). This philosophy particularly allows us to interact with the participants, see things from their point of view, and make an interpretation of their experiences within a bigger social and cultural context.

The following table is a brief summary of the comparison of different research philosophies with Interpretivism.

Table 2. Differences between philosophies research strategies

Philosophy	Ontology	Epistemology	Methodology
Interpretivism	Subjective, socially constructed	Interpretations and meanings	Qualitative (interviews, observations)
Positivism	Objective, external reality	Empirical observation and measurement	Quantitative (surveys, experiments)
Pragmatism	Practical, based on what works	Practical application and usefulness	Mixed methods
Realism	Independent reality with structures	Observable and theoretical knowledge	Mixed methods

3.3.1 Positivism, Pragmatism, and Realism approaches.

Positivism argues that is important to study social science by looking specifically at how behaviours and other social phenomena are connected in a cause-and-effect manner, this can be directly observed or measured (Howson, 2021). This natural scientist viewpoint is focused on studying social realities and is aimed at finding general patterns or laws, similar to how scientists on the field discover regularities in nature (Saunders, *et al.*, 2015). This approach might be using surveys or questionnaires as well but focused on testing ideas and predicting actions, missing the personal experiences and some cultural information that leads to affecting the interviewed entrepreneurs.

Pragmatism is a philosophy focused on personal experiences and guide the researcher to use practical methods to achieve their goals effectively suggesting them that instead of relying only on theories or abstract ideas, prioritize actions that work best in situations in real life. Pragmatist philosophers believe that education should focus on continuous growth and practical learning experiences rather than just theoretical knowledge, emphasizing understanding through direct experience and the observation of the phenomenon of the real world rather than relying solely on ideas (Ozmon and Craver, 2008; Moore, 1961; Smith, 2021). Unfortunately, pragmatism prioritizes more practical solutions, which could lead to less emphasis on the entrepreneur's experiences and beliefs. Thus, this philosophy should work better in practice than in a broader theoretical framework.

Realism philosophy comes from the social science belief that social phenomena (institutions, norms, and policies) exist independently and have effects even if we cannot see or understand them completely. It means that there are deep structures and mechanisms in society that cause things to happen, and these exist independently of our thoughts or opinions. It can be explained into two different realism, first as strong realism focuses on the physical and concrete parts of society; second as moderated realism which looks at both physical structures and the ideas, beliefs, and conversations (Buch, 2023). This philosophy is a branch of epistemology and shares similarities with positivism in that it supports a scientific approach to knowledge development, and assumes that reality can be observed, measured, and understood through empirical data (Saunders, *et al.*, 2015). This could lead to a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, while qualitative

methods provide depth, quantitative methods focus on measurements, therefore this could blind the original focus.

3.3.2 Qualitative or quantitative research methods.

There are two main data collection techniques and data analysis procedures: qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative research methods are concerned more with collecting and analysing numerical data helping to identify patterns, test hypotheses, and make predictions with the help of statistics, tables, and graphs (Saunders, et al, 2015). These methods start with a theory or idea that they then test using data (Creswell, 2014). On the other hand, qualitative research methods are focused more on detailed information about people's experiences and opinions with the help of interviews (Saunders, et al, 2015). These methods are especially useful in areas where there is a lack of existing information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods have their strengths and weaknesses. A possible advantage of qualitative methods help the researchers to make adjustments during the research process based on emerging findings, but their results may not be generalizable to a larger population due to the slower process of data collection and analysis (Polit and Beck, 2010; Ritchie, et al., 2013). Meanwhile, quantitative methods are good for testing ideas and finding patterns in large groups, they also help the researcher to reduce the bias through standardized data collection and analysis procedures, making them objective and efficient (Fowler, 2014; Saunders, et al., 2015). However, they are less flexible in adapting to unexpected findings during research and may overlook the complexity of human experiences or fail to capture their context (Robson and McCartan, 2016, Saunders et al. 2015).

The main motivation for this research is to identify and understand how the participants perceive the Dublin entrepreneurial ecosystem. Secondly to understand the feelings of the participants gathering their valuable experiences with their businesses. Thirdly to fill the gap in the literature review about Mexican migrant entrepreneurs in Dublin. Therefore, the author has chosen the qualitative method to go more in-depth than numerical interpretation and offers some insight to support organizations, future entrepreneurs, and people interested in this specific topic about the needs and problems faced by the participants.

3.3.3 Inductive versus deductive research

A decisive part of the Research onion from Saunders, *et al.* (2015) is to understand how researchers develop and test theories. Inductive research starts with particular observations and concepts that help researchers see patterns and build theories about the case population; it is also important to point out that this research does not begin with a predetermined theory but allows the data to shape hypothesis generation as well as theory development. Thomas (2006) argues that inductive research works very well in new or poorly understood areas since it enables flexibility and discovery leading to an in-depth understanding of the contextual matters.

Alternatively, deductive research commences by having a general idea or theory that is further tested using specific data, such a method being normally involved in quantitative studies wherein researchers test hypotheses and validate them through either surveys or experiments. According to Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill (2015), deductive reasoning is systematic and structured hence it is appropriate for testing hypotheses as well as establishing cause-effect relationships among variables. Nevertheless, it may be less flexible than inductive research due to its need for a clear hypothesis at the beginning thus making it harder for unexpected results to be accommodated.

As this study's aims have been presented previously, the author believes that an inductive approach is the most appropriate due to the particular observations of the Dublin entrepreneurial environment and to generate new ideas in the in-depth exploration of the research.

3.4 Data collection method: Semi-structured interviews

"Research involves defining a question or problem; creating a hypothesis, or a proposed explanation; collecting and organizing data using one or more selected research methods; and evaluating the data to draw conclusions" (Keenan, 2022). On the other hand, Saunders, *et al.* (2015) define Qualitative data as information that comes from diverse ways of researching things but not just numerical or quantified. For this reason, qualitative researchers believe that reality is relative to how the study

participants see things, so they must therefore plan their investigations closely with the subjects as they are looking for some trends and ideas through which they will collect their information (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Smith, 2023). The most common features of such studies according to Kennan (2022) are: (1) researchers study the people's interaction and understanding between each other; (2) searching for common patterns or common characteristics among the people of the study; (3) due this kind investigates individual's thoughts and feelings, it may involve personal judgment on part of the researcher; (4) finally, researchers usually have knowledge or relationship with the participants, who take part, in some way.

In order to have a better understanding of the challenges of Mexican entrepreneurs, specific questions were chosen for this research for the purpose of carrying out interviews. Therefore, the use of semi-structured interviews was employed to develop a database that can easily be compared and analysed across all the interviews. This kind of interview; however, resembles an ordinary talk but it is more oriented towards professional matters; having clear objectives and some specific approaches and techniques that are not as fixed as a questionnaire with fixated questions (Kvale, 2007). Considering the previous information, the author opted to conduct semi-structured interviews to allow for further exploration of the matters under investigation depending on how participants responded. This helped to get a wider range of views on the challenges of participants without losing flexibility and depth. The flexibility means that questions were adjusted during the interview to follow interesting points raised by the participants, meanwhile, the depth of each question was crucial to meeting the research goals by gathering information for this research (Ruslin, *et al.*, 2022).

The structure of the Semi-structured interviews was the following

- (1) Introduction of the interviewer about the purpose of the research
- (2) Information gathering from demographics and business information
- (3) Information gathering to aim of research objectives
- (4) Information gathering for further advise

It is important to state that the chosen participants had established and registered businesses in Dublin, and they were informed about the author's need for research. The interview process was roughly a one-hour session.

3.5 Sample selection technique and justification

For this research, the sample selection technique for examining the challenges faced by Mexican migrant entrepreneurs in Dublin is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is also called as judgmental or selective sampling, a non-probability sampling method that involves selecting participants based on their specific knowledge and relevance to this topic (Etikan, *et. al*, 2016). This approach fits into the interpretivism research philosophy which aims to understand the subjective meanings and experiences of participants (Creswell and Poth, 2017).

The choice to employ purposive has different reasons. First, this study primarily seeks to gain a deep understanding of particular experiences and challenges from the Mexican entrepreneurs in Dublin. With this population in mind, other random sampling methods would likely fail to provide a relevant sample size (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015). In order to ensure that relevant respondents are selected for questions relating to their research; those with first-hand knowledge are needed for rich data inputs.

Additionally, purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants who can offer different perspectives within the target group. It is important to understand that different Mexican entrepreneurs were interviewed to have other perspectives and capture an understanding of the various challenges encountered. The selection of these people based on criteria such as personal and demographics, business information, and the challenges faced, policy, finance, culture, market, support, and human capital of the study can encompass a broad range of experiences and challenges (Tongco, 2007).

The participants were identified through already-established businesses in Dublin and social media platforms. Initial contact will be made via emails and personal invitations, detailing the purpose of the study and ensuring voluntary participation. This approach is essential for gaining the trust and willingness of participants to share their personal experiences, which is a key aspect of semi-structured interviews (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015).

Some information about each participant can be seen in the next table.

Table 3. Participants' information

Participant 1 Female Age: 48 Years living in Dublin: 20	Participant 5 Male Age: 32 Years living in Dublin: 9
Participant 2 Male Age: 45 Years living in Dublin: 11	Participant 6 Female Age: 35 Years living in Dublin: 9
Participant 3 Female Age: 38 Years living in Dublin: 7	Participant 7 Female Age: 38 Years living in Dublin: 5
Participant 4 Female Age: 36 Years living in Dublin: 8	

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are important when conducting any research, this prevents the study from breaking any general principle that protects the rights, dignity, and welfare of the people or participants involved.

This part outlines the three major ethical principles which include respect for persons, beneficence, and justice as described in the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research in Belmont Report (1979).

This research was developed respecting all individuals means acknowledging their autonomy and dignity. The author ensured that all participants provided informed consent and fully understood the objectives, procedures as well and any risks or benefits involved. All the permissions were voluntary without any intimidation

leaving participants at liberty to withdraw from participating in it at their wish without any punishment (Laryeafio and Ogbewe, 2023).

It was ensured that any potential risks were minimized and clearly communicated to the participants that the objective was to maximize the benefit of knowledge to society (Hennessy, *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, it was supervised any adverse effects during the interview process to protect participants from physical, physiological, or social harm.

Finally, it was ensured that every participant was not in the category of a vulnerable group, minor, under therapeutic interventions, and the participants were described as the research category A from the Categorization of Ethical Risk document from the *Human Participants Ethical Review Application Form* by the National College of Ireland. The ethical considerations of this research were based on the *Ethical Guidelines and Procedures for Research Involving Human Participants*.

3.7 Data analysis method

Thematic analysis is a method that helps to identify, analyse, and report patterns in qualitative data, providing rich, detailed, and complex accounts of the information presented (Braun and Clark, 2006). This method is inspired by the interpretivism research philosophy mainly because it allows the comprehensive understanding of subjective experiences and the interpretation that people give of their actions and social words (Saunders, *et al.*, 2019).

Furthermore, this analysis was adopted for its flexibility and systematic handling of qualitative data particularly from semi-structured interviews, helping the author to detect patterns and themes in the gathered data, which were the key points when trying to understand the different experiences and perspectives of each participant (Clarke and Braun, 2013).

The procedure to carry out this analysis is: (1) understand the content deeply by reading, listening, or viewing the records of the interviews, (2) identify and mark the most important parts of the data related to the research, (3) make a group of each mark into possible themes, (4) review and refine these themes to make sure they accurately represent the data, (5) give a clear structure of the analysis, (6) finally write

a report that explains these themes supported by quotes from the participants (Braum and Clark, 2006; Saunders, *et al.*, 2015).

Every analysis must be reliable and trustworthy, to achieve this the author kept a detailed record of the interviews via audio file as the Ethical Guidelines and Procedures for Research Involving Human Participants. The research findings and conclusions will be discussed in the next chapter.

3.8 Limitations

This research involved a small number of participants, so it is important to note that this research cannot be generalized. The experiences and opinions may not represent the final argument or position of the group that the participants are supposed to reflect on, this is important because every entrepreneur had different conditions, opportunities, and motivations that lead them to begin their business. Additionally, each participant's unique personal perspective has heavily influenced the overall findings.

It also should be noted that many other entrepreneurs are not registered in Ireland's tax system, even though they use self-employed methods, whereby these individuals were not taken into account in this research.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter gives an overview of the research design that was used to look into the main challenges faced by Mexican immigrant entrepreneurs in Dublin. The study adopts a structured approach based on Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill's (2015) "Research Onion" framework and is supported by an interpretivism philosophy. Interpretivism is selected as it focuses on understanding social phenomena through participants' perspectives, where semi-structured interviews were carried out to gather the data. Furthermore, interpretivism is compared to other ideologies such as positivism, pragmatism, and realism.

The research aims to address the gaps in the literature by giving an insight into Mexican immigrant entrepreneurship in Dublin and the research objectives were stated using the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem model by Isenberg (2010) these include identifying and analysing challenges related to policies, finances, culture, support, human capital, and markets.

The research's ethical consideration was established following the principles of respect, beneficence and beneficence, and justice, ensuring that participants' rights and dignity are protected and where there was no vulnerable group among the participants

Chapter 4: Research findings and discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present and discuss the findings of research through semi-structured interviews conducted in Dublin in July 2024.

Some questions regarding their ages, sexes, years spent living in Dublin, education levels in Mexico, former jobs, and previous entrepreneurial experiences were made as part of the interview. Additionally, other questions were asked about their actual businesses such as the type, how long they have been running it, their motivations behind starting it up, their personal motivations for starting the business, and the number of current employees among others. This information provides details on the business's nature and scale.

The survey indicated that most entrepreneurs are above thirty years old; women constitute the majority. On average, respondents have spent eleven years in this city. Participants had educational backgrounds ranging from high school to a master's degree with only one practicing their profession as studied in Mexico. Half of the participants had some previous experience starting or managing their own business in Mexico which influenced them to establish one in Dublin. In contrast, while the oldest business has existed for a decade, the youngest business has just operated for 7 months. In addition, most of them solely depend on their businesses, and therefore success is crucial to them.

The major part of this chapter sought to acquire information from respondents about the challenges they face; thus, its main research question was "What are the main challenges faced by Mexican immigrant entrepreneurs in Dublin?". The sub-objectives derived from Isenberg's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem model discussed in Chapter Two also served as a guide for data collection hence building on this theory in this chapter.

The findings contribute significantly to the understanding of the problems facing Mexican entrepreneurs in Dublin when starting a business exploring some gaps and helping inform future research and policy responses.

4.2 Qualitative research findings

The question for these research are open-ended to facilitate sufficient information gathering for quantitative data analysis.

The study findings reveal that there is no specific or common challenge faced by the participants in order to succeed and overcome them as expected. These varied responses range between bureaucracy and cultural adaptation. In this regard, dealing with such issues has necessitated support from other private services providers like company registration, taxes, and revenue payments. However, none of them received any assistance either from the government or the Local Enterprise Offices in Dublin. Therefore, the support offered does not fit their actual needs as indicated earlier by Ram, *et al.* (2008).

It is essential to note that every participant managed to start a business using his own savings without any loans or financing of any kind. One of them only has investment partners who helped them launch into what they do now. Bootstrapping has led to financial discipline developing among them in line with Bhidé (1992) during tough times.

In the subsequent paragraphs, the author will discuss and outline the findings related to each research objective highlighting the interviewees' perspectives.

4.2.1 Objective 1: *"Identify and analyse the main challenges faced by Mexican migrant entrepreneurs"*

It should be clarified that the participants' businesses can be divided into two categories: product sales and service sales, with the first with a higher number of entrepreneurs. Despite the type of business, each participant has faced a range of challenges that, are unique to it, but are interrelated and significantly impact their operations. The varied responses and bureaucratic complexity and administrative procedures can be a primary barrier.

In Europe, there is no concept of a microenterprise like we have in Mexico. In Mexico, we have a category called microenterprise, where you can get a tax

number and other requirements to establish your microenterprise. However, in Ireland, all businesses are considered large, and this is the norm. (P3)

Besides this, when the informal market becomes so widespread, no playing field is level due to this brings about more complexity for them where the rules are not adhered to by those involved in such practices since they evade laws and regulations.

Mainly the finance (challenge) and finding a good place for the business. (P6)

Nevertheless, further complications arise from a lack of good quality raw materials or goods imported from Mexico among other problems facing them.

The author believes that the answers of the participants reveal many barriers an entrepreneur can face and how this can significantly affect their aspirations, capacities, and opportunities to establish and carry out a business in Ireland. In the bureaucratic context where an administrative system could be difficult to understand for people who are not engaged with the topic, and this can lead to mistakes and increase risk, cost, and complexity at the beginning of the business (Baker, *et al.*, 2005).

The participants have chosen their strategic location to run their businesses, some of them are visible and accessible meanwhile others could be not so close to the City Center of Dublin. Regardless, this does not impede attracting new customers and ensuring their growth, as Rodriguez-Pose and Von Berlepsch (2019) it is important to have a diverse population and reach new areas and locations to help the economy grow.

The capacity of the informal market to operate without regulations results in an unclear disadvantage to formal employers who have to follow all the regulations and norms, affecting their profit for each sale. According to Sultana, *et al.*, (2022), 'The informal sector bears a potential by opening economic opportunities through employment, social capital, a boost of local economies, supply of low-cost products. However, its negative contribution to technology and productivity, decent work

conditions and rights, employment, maintaining environmental quality, gaining fiscal revenue'.

Overall, the findings of this research are clear, there is a necessity for government intervention and support to help simplify the previous findings to help and boost entrepreneurship among immigrants.

4.2.1.1 Main strategies between Mexican immigrant entrepreneurs

For each challenge, a strategy needs to be carried out to face the challenges. Participants stated that communication as well as interpersonal relationships are the most important. The personal management together with delegation of duties comes in handy for entrepreneurs as it helps them to depend on their staff who will perform the tasks for them making their activities more effective and professional.

Delegating tasks and having experienced people on board (P6).

I learned to understand the needs and fears of partners, address them, and demonstrate that we are reliable and serious (P2).

Lowering prices, buying better quality items, and offering better service. (P1).

However, product sales businesses added that quality and competition also matter where companies focus on cost reduction, improving quality, and delivering a good service that can satisfy the customers. And the best marketing from them is the one that goes mouth by mouth, where the Mexican community works as a network to expand their businesses.

Firstly, the author agrees with the importance of communication and interpersonal relationships help to understand each point of view and work well with others, mainly where there are different cultures. Hofstede (1984) wrote that when entrepreneurs take time to understand and address their investors' or partners' needs and fears, they will build better relationships, where this becomes critical for every business. Every business needs human resources and teamwork to share responsibilities and duties, this is a good sign of business practices and helps entrepreneurs on focus

on their business growth, making them effective leaders (Aggarwal, 2020). Unfortunately, in the informal market, the business needs to try to lower prices to stay competitive and even though there are lots of theories that can explain this phenomenon, informal market, entrepreneurs need to invest more in other areas, like a better-quality service or better locations, something that makes them difference from the competitors to stand out and keep a continuous flow of customers.

The strategy was, but it was mostly word-of-mouth. For example, I started cooking for my friends' birthdays, and then as people started talking and placing orders, those who made requests would tell others (P3).

Where the personal connections help this business to increase their reputation and make an association with other business, being a big role with fewer resources.

4.2.1.2 Innovation in a new market

The participants have shown different ways to deal with the problems of their business in Dublin.

Keep improving, you know? We don't rest on our laurels and (we) always show our specials (or offers) (P2).

Differentiation of our products, handmade products, and making ourselves known specifically for our style of food (northern style) (P6).

Digital marketing and updating business strategies (P1)

Even that every participant have their own type of businesses, the author remarks the use of social media for each of the participants. The use of digital marketing strategies, a new modern business technology, to launch digital advertising or be "closer" to their customers, to answer their questions, to display a new product,

o returns an old one has created value and helped them to be more competitive within the contemporary global market (Zott and Amit, 2009).

The more traditional ways to innovate, in this case with new handmade products, are a good example of constant improvement and diversification too. As discussed in Chapter 2, Schumpeter's theory of Innovation (1934) continuous innovation is an essential and continuous force for competitive advantage is what differentiates successful entrepreneurs from unsuccessful ones. Even Drucker (1985), with his systematic innovation, argued that for every business the owner needs to learn and practice to help his business grow. All this results in that scholars and participants are correlated at some points and work together.

4.2.2 Objective 2 "Identify and analyse the policy challenges faced by Mexican entrepreneurs"

As explained in Chapter 2 The Isenberg Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Model, governments can help businesses by improving tax laws and regulations. However, the data shows that there was no government support given to any participant in this case study. Two contacted local support offices only to find out that interest rates on government loans were high or community work was extensive making it impractical for them. The Participants sought help from private solicitors or accountants in their business management. This is what worried them most:

That free (in legalities) advice could be provided (P5).

Assistance with visa matters for entrepreneurship and regulations (P4).

Those selling products noted that changing policies regarding advisory services, regulation, and future immigrant entrepreneurs' financing options could improve their businesses.

"Low-interest loans from the Government and less red tape for small businessmen would be useful." (P6)

4.2.2.1 Understanding Legal Requirements

Accounting and lawyer professional assistance is important because of legal/tax obligations. Six out of seven participants hired such people, and they had to pay them accordingly. Selling each product has specific requirements including food handling certificates as well as safety inspection, which adds more requirement burdens. Individual experiences of businesses differ in relation to business variety thus affecting perceptions among individuals.

"I didn't face any challenges really because I have my accountant who looks after all the paperwork." (P1)

"Some things need to be done before opening while some can wait until later on. Inspectors will tell you what needs improvement." (P2)

"It's just complicated since one needs a food handling certificate which necessitates taking a course at a fee" (P3).

Literature also suggests getting professional advice because foreign entrepreneurs typically need guidance in understanding domestic laws. This can be easily solved by providing free advice. Costs involved in acquiring such certificates are usually huge hence being an additional burden to the entrepreneurs. Such costs are meant to ensure that consumers are protected and result in a big investment for newcomers (Tirole, 2015).

4.2.2.2 Government Support?

No government programmes or resources were used by participants. Out of the seven, only one agreed to use them at a cost. However, six out of seven declined due to long-term costs being high compared to other options. This may discourage those who have interest in starting new enterprises from seeking government support. There is need therefore to revisit and restructure the cost outlook of government schemes so that they can be made more accessible. The absence of support for particular industries raises questions about how government budgets are allocated.

Consequently, some sectors lack resources indicating a discrepancy among people's access levels.

"No, I was being charged extra." (P3)

"The restaurant industry does not have any kind of governmental supports." (P6)

In contrast, migrants from Mexico might not get help like it was with Irish Government. Heilbrunn and Kushnirovich (2008) found that immigrant entrepreneurs with difficulties often received additional state assistance. This brings into question whether entrepreneurs are aware of the existence of public programs. However, Desidero (2014) mentioned that there are government sources, but their accessibility might be highly costly affecting morale and discouraging disadvantaged entrepreneurs. This requires an examination into cost structures while exploring alternative types of financing. Lastly, the matter of support being restricted to certain industries shows a dearth in resource availability between different groups. However, there is ambiguity as to where these supports would be most targeted towards when responding to them

4.2.2.3 Re-regulation for immigrant entrepreneurs

The findings indicate a number of significant adjustment areas. Free professional assistance is needed by entrepreneurs as they operate in strange environments for businesses, and four out of seven people took this into account. Moreover, there were concerns about visa procedures that could be seen as major blockades. It is not possible to start up a business without proper visas. As such, the government should simplify resources, interest rates, and paperwork.

"There would be great advantage, if one got financial support through which they could come up with a proposal and get help to start a business." (P2)

"Visa and regulation assistances are necessary." (P4)

Kloosterman, *et al.*, (1999) also argued that simplification of processes by introducing flexible policies may ease an unfamiliarity with local regulations burden. It has been shown time after time that excessive bureaucracy and impediments to visas still persist even today hence leading to illicit trade. The absence of any free advice services indicates enormous gaps in support systems. To address this issue entrepreneurs, require necessary tools for success which can be provided only by implementation of free advisory and mentoring programs (Heilbrunn and Kushnirovich 2008).

Enabling resources with an accommodative bureaucracy can transform lives. Against the backdrop of Mexico where microenterprises are supported separately from other types of small businesses it appears that Ireland does not have such category at all thus making unattractive micro-businesses. The inclusion of more groups under this scheme will lead to favourable conditions for micro-entrepreneurs irrespective of their nationality (Barragán, *et al.*, 2023).

4.2.3 Objective 3 *"Identify and analyse the financial challenges faced by Mexican entrepreneurs"*

Starting a business in an overseas country is full of challenges and one of them is financial obstacles. This part of the research specifically focuses on the sources of funding used, obtaining finance has proved difficult, and the most effective financial strategies to keep the business running. The results show that all participants used their personal savings or bootstrap methods to start their businesses. However, this source is limited and may not be enough for growth purposes. In addition, participants were asked about their financial strategies and how they have continued to grow.

4.2.3.1 *Funds for the Business*

Participants were asked about where they obtained funds to begin their enterprises with most claiming they had used personal savings. This suggests that entrepreneurs depend mostly on their own resources when starting up businesses which indicates that there are no other forms of capital being accessed (other than

the government's). Only two participants mentioned combining personal savings with private support, showing the importance of business networks. A bank loan was also provided by one participant who offered a more intricate viewpoint.

The research objectives are qualitative so as such there were no specific questions regarding initial investment amounts, financial statements or loans sought by banks from new businesses.

"No, I didn't find any type of funding. I did it with my savings. I'm here working. I also have investors. Yes, I have friends who decided to help me open this. You know, I have people who invested." (P2)

"Personal savings, bank loans, and investors. Those were the three used, and it took the longest to get investors." (P6)

The results show that personal savings play a major role as main resource for commencing enterprises. This trend agrees with Mickiewicz, *et al.*, (2017) article stating that a lack of credit history makes migrant entrepreneurs high-risk clients for banks hence they use personal savings instead.

Combining personal savings with investments from friends as observed in one response indicates reliance on social networks and community support in financing decisions. Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) argue that immigrants often use social support networks to overcome financial difficulties. Financial resources consequently need to be made accessible through programs and policies.

4.2.3.2 Mexican Financial Strategies

Generally, all participants stressed the importance of reinvesting profits and saving for emergencies as key elements for maintaining financial stability. Reinvestment may be in areas such as marketing to enhance visibility and attract customers, which is crucial for growth of the business. At the same time, saving for emergencies provides a safety net against unexpected issues, helping to manage expenses and income, and maintain healthy finances. Efficient work can reduce operating costs and improve profit margins, contributing to financial stability.

"Control your expenses and income, have good management, always keep your taxes in order, and don't exceed your business expenses. This gives confidence to your clients. A well-managed business is noticeable. Companies that waste are more obvious." (P4)

Reinvesting on marketing noted in the first response aligns with theories that propose continuous investment in marketing can boost business development by increasing its visibility and attracting new customers (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Similarly, according to participants they save for emergency purposes which is an acceptable risk management practice. sound administration prevents dissipations but also reinforces client trust and a company's image (Brigham and Ehrhardt, 2017).

4.2.4 Objective 4 "Identify and analyse the cultural challenges faced by Mexican entrepreneurs"

Language is a clear cultural barrier that participants of this study faced. Interactions with customers, suppliers and partners can be quite challenging in such circumstances. Nonetheless, this section of the research concentrates on how locals view Mexican entrepreneurs, cultural challenges when starting businesses as well as the required cultural modifications.

The participants have generally been proactive and flexible in their approach by learning and adapting to the new market in order to increase their chances of success. This can be divided into two parts: product vendors who must learn about local consumers to adapt their products for sale; and service vendors who must also comprehend and respect cultural differences within the workplace to reduce conflicts.

4.2.4.1 The attitude of Dublin's local community

"I'm really happy when someone eats something I've cooked and says it tastes just like what they get at home." (P2)

"It's quite accepted here because the Irish are very open with migrants." (P5)

Participant 1 recounted how young people threw stones at his business, broke windows, and vandalized it. The result was unexpected damage that led to costs of repair. To avoid more problems, business had to be relocated. In its new place, the entrepreneur is happier than ever before without facing another act of vandalism.

Berry (2005) asserts that integration into local society is important. Even though this vandalism was not a traditional culture it became a cultural clash. By relocating himself or herself therefore, an entrepreneur earned local acceptance while fostering multiculturalism with no discrimination (Ager and Strang 2008).

4.2.4.2 Cultural barriers in Dublin

Despite largely positive perceptions from the community in Dublin, there still remain some cultural barriers. These barriers evoked different emotions from various participants. Some were less concerned about these differences in cultures stating that setting up a company in Dublin was similar to Mexico, but one entrepreneur cited distinct management styles and job expectations between Ireland and Mexico. Additionally, some faced vandalism, as previously discussed. Another entrepreneur experienced a cultural barrier related to market expectations and consumer willingness to try new products in a predominantly Irish area.

"When we started, many people thought it was a bad idea to open a Mexican restaurant in such a local, Irish area." (P2)

"It was tough dealing with Europeans and Latinos, even Mexicans already here. They are used to a different work mentality." (P4)

"In some ways, it's very similar to Mexico." (P5)

Nonetheless, these were hurdles encountered by each succeeding participant which means they are surmountable through proper strategies coupled with persistence. These findings support Hofstede's theory which says that cultural similarities between countries can reduce barriers in international business (Żemojtel-Piotrowska and Pitrowski, 2023).

However, different work styles and management are very specific cultural barriers. In contrast to Aryal's (2021) findings where corporate culture differed from organization to organization. The same community adapts to its region, which can create tensions and challenges. Thus good management of cultural differences is needed for positive outcomes.

Cultural rejection as evidenced by resistance and vandalism encountered by some entrepreneurs could be due to xenophobia or cultural intolerance (Licata & Klein, 2002). The difficulty in introducing new cultural products into markets with strong homogeneous identities is demonstrated by the opposition to foreign businesses like a Mexican restaurant in an area predominantly Irish. Pires (2005) argues that new cultural offerings may meet resistance, but this can be reduced through appropriate adaptation as well as marketing strategies.

4.2.4.3 Cultural Adjustments in Dublin

Having identified these barriers, the next question is how they should be overcome so that business continues running. For service firms though, it was not too difficult to adapt basic operations and management such as changing of working hours and being more flexible.

On the other hand, product vendors have had a considerable amount of adaptation. They have changed their products to match local preferences. The challenge lies in striking the right balance between attracting customers without losing the cultural identity of their products. These adjustments include those ones related to the product itself and internal processes but also external factors such as safety and local perceptions

"I've adjusted my menu a bit to local tastes so that people will try it and then come back for more." (P2)

"The food can't be too spicy. I had to make some changes to suit local tastes, but you can't cater to everyone's individual preferences." (P3)

The literature supports this change and shows that entrepreneurs must balance product authenticity with local expectations in order to succeed in a new market (Cavusgil, 2014). Calantone, et al., (2006) point out that products need to be modified according to the tastes of the local market, which is consistent with product adaptation theory. To lure different customers and ease entrance into the domestic market, Participant 3 adjusted the spiciness levels in their food (Cavusgil, 2014).

Skilled professionals who offer services face significant cultural adaptation challenges when they have to manage work-life balance by adjusting working hours. However, it should be noted that concepts of time vary among different cultures thus influencing how workdays are organized by business persons (Hofstede; Žemojtel-Piotrowska and Pitrowski, 2023).

4.2.5 Objective 5 *"Identify and analyse the market challenges faced by Mexican entrepreneurs"*

The next paragraphs are about what entrepreneurs experience once they deal with cultural barriers, understand local consumer preferences, and differentiate their products or services. This part of the study focusses on the issues of building a customer base, key success factors, and future market opportunities.

Participants said that despite previous challenges, entering the market has not been too hard for them. They have adapted to local needs and are optimistic about future growth due to Dublin's growing and diverse population. Notably, six out of seven participants rely solely on their businesses for income.

4.2.5.1 Customer Base in Dublin

Building a customer base has varied for each participant. Four had previous business experience in Mexico, but only one had already set up their current business, which gave them an edge. Another participant shared early struggles but is now satisfied with steady customer growth. Quality products and excellent service are key to attracting and keeping customers. Using social media and customer recommendations can simplify building a customer base.

"The amount of products you have matters. Customers come for what you offer, and if you run out, they leave." (P1)

"Start by doing things right from the beginning. Make the first customer fall in love with your product and want to come back. We work on this every day." (P2)

"Yes, it was tough, especially the first years. It's hard for everyone in Dublin, but it's also rewarding because you get to interact more with your customers." (P4)

Portes (1998) argues that reputation and past market contacts can help enter and adapt to new markets. This has helped three participants who have businesses in Europe and Latin America. However, adapting to local culture and building networks is still crucial, as discussed in previous objectives.

The importance of product quality and customer experience for four participants supports Porter's theory on sustainable competitive advantage. Offering unique value and maintaining high quality is crucial for customer loyalty and standing out in competitive markets (Porter, 1985). Constant focus on customer satisfaction and service excellence can positively impact a business's reputation and long-term success. The results on key success factors show a common pattern: building strong relationships, managing resources well, and adapting to market needs are critical.

4.2.5.2 Key factors for success in Dublin

However, three out of seven participants highlighted the necessity of transparency, empathy, and kindness in business relationships. Trust is built on these attributes as well as good financial management and consistent product quality. One

participant stress on financial management including efficient use of resources and a realistic pricing policy. Maintaining stable quality was another point raised by one respondent because only this could ensure meeting customer expectations and keeping them coming back (Kuratko, 2024; Leavengood & Anderson, 2009). Moreover, networking is also regarded as an important thing for small businesses that should have a social media presence in order to be visible through which they can tap into various business opportunities and build their brands.

"Be consistent, honest with people, and kind to the public." (P1)

"Be transparent with customers, empathetic, and persistent." (P5)

"Networking and being active on social media are key." (P6)

These results show that transparency, empathy, and kindness in customer relationships can help. These findings imply that businesses grow when there are transparent relationships between customers and employees showing authenticity (Lehman, et al., 2014). As consumers' concerns vary there must be a genuine connection with a customer.

The requirement to network and use social media is demonstrated by the statement made by Participant 6 indicating that visibility or professional connections are very important for success. Networking assists in identifying possible business openings as well as strategic partnerships while social media marketing aids branding and increasing client numbers (Wienclaw, 2021).

4.2.5.3 Market Opportunities in Dublin

Participants have mixed views on business growth. Five out of seven see continuous growth but don't provide specific details. One participant is more reactive, adjusting strategies as needed without formal planning. The last participant is quite pessimistic about the future due to personal changes, showing how personal and external factors can affect market opportunities.

"I don't plan too far ahead. I just go with the flow and plan to grow gradually as circumstances allow." (P1)

"There are many opportunities. It's trendy now. The Irish community is more open, and many Mexicans around are starting to try different cultures." (P2)

"In the last month, many things have happened. Honestly, I think my business won't exist in a year because I'm not in Dublin anymore." (P3)

"Yes, we've covered a lot in Dublin, but there's always more to do." (P4)

The products from Mexico are growing and that reflects how cultural diversity can boost innovation and market acceptance (Carter, *et al.*, 2015). However, participants one and four highlight how personal factors and adaptability impact market perception. Participant 1 shows flexibility in a changing environment, as Holling (1973) suggests. Meanwhile, Participant 3 concerns about short-term business viability due to personal issues show how new opportunities and decisions can affect business stability.

4.2.6 Objective 6: Identify and Analyze the Human Capital Challenges Faced by Mexican Entrepreneurs

The availability of skilled workers can affect how well a business does and how it grows. Dublin is a big economic centre, but competition and rules can make it hard to find the right staff. This part of the study focusses on the issues to finding and keeping staff, and the need for training.

The responses from participants varied, as two are self-employed and had minimal participation. The other five participants had at least one worker assisting with business activities. Training and continuous development, even for themselves and their employees, were seen as vital for achieving success.

4.2.6.1 Skilled Labour in Dublin

Hiring skilled staff is a big issue for the five participants with employees. Participant 2 talked about legal limits on the hours international students can work

and the lack of specific skills among Europeans needed for the business. Participant 4 felt positively about available resources but noted the strong competition from Europeans.

"It's tough because you can only hire a limited number of students, and the rest have to be Europeans. Not all Europeans know how to cook Mexican food. There are many chefs, but not all know Mexican food. Also, Mexican students can only work 30 hours a week." (P2)

"There's a lot of competition because Europeans apply for jobs. Many Mexicans need to stand out to get these positions." (P4)

Thoo and Kaliannan (2013) point out that tough competition in job markets can make it hard to hire international staff. This can increase costs and make workers feel isolated. Restrictions on work hours for students also add to the problem. The literature shows that these legal restrictions and a lack of trained workers are common challenges for immigrant entrepreneurs (OECD, 2018).

Participant 1 chose to keep the business in the family instead of hiring outside staff. This fits with the idea that family businesses often respond to a lack of resources and trust in the local job market (Sharma, *et al.*, 2001).

4.2.6.2 Staff Management and Retention

One big problem is the temporary nature of the workforce. Many immigrants come to Ireland with short-term plans, leading to high staff turnover. Issues with visas and work hours make it hard to build a stable team, which is important for business growth. These turnover impacts daily operations and investment in training, as neither the employer nor the employee will commit if the job is uncertain.

"Most of my staff has been with me for at least two years. Most have worked with me for 5 or 6 years. At first, I had a lot of turnover because I couldn't find reliable people and had to provide all the tools to make their work easier." (P4)

"People who come to Ireland often stay only for a short time and don't settle here long-term." (P5)

Job rotation means moving employees between different jobs in the company to help them learn various skills. This can improve job satisfaction and motivation. But in this case, high turnover makes it hard to keep operations smooth and raises recruitment and training costs, adding extra stress for entrepreneurs, along with cultural barriers.

4.2.6.3 Staff Training and Development

Participants agree that ongoing training and development are key to running a successful business. Even though only five of the seven have employees, all say that without training, they wouldn't have been able to compete. Training each worker is crucial.

"We always train new hires from scratch if they don't know anything." (P2)

"Sharing recipes and getting feedback is very important and interesting." (P3)

"Training is a key part of my team. I always keep them trained; otherwise, they wouldn't stay with me." (P4)

"Training is very important for running the business daily." (P6)

Ongoing training is vital because business environments change. This need for continuous learning matches with studies on business management, showing that investing in skills is important for staying competitive (Easterby-Smith and Lyles, 2011).

For self-employed entrepreneurs, training is also crucial but more personal. They focus on improving their products and services and highlight the importance of personal skills and self-management. This fits with Politis's (2005) research, which says that experience and training are key to developing entrepreneurial skills and spotting business opportunities.

4.2.7 Objective 7: Identify and Analyze the Support Challenges Faced by Mexican Entrepreneurs

The paper's last point, which makes use of Isenberg's theoretical framework, examines the support systems employed by the participants. This objective seeks answers as to whether specific resources or support mechanisms are utilized, their accessibility, and if they work. Participants were also asked whether they sought mentorship from other associations or business networks and if they formed associations or collaborations with other businesses.

Though it is true that themes related to this objective have been addressed in the past, it must be underscored that based on their responses none of the participants used any government support or resources for migrant entrepreneurs.

4.2.7.1 Support and Mentorship for Entrepreneurs

Two participants unlike general support resources looked for mentoring services to start running their businesses. The participant 3 mentioned about some paid classes that were given by private initiatives offering advisory courses, but she found them ineffective. Participant 4 attended a social program for entrepreneurs that offered free classes on social media. Although these classes weren't specifically for entrepreneurs, they had a useful focus for businesses.

There are programmes and resources aimed at supporting new entrepreneurs including workshops, programs, and events (Local Enterprise Office 2024). However, such opportunities are not as effective as they could be since language barriers tend to be very complex. This prevented some participants from benefiting fully from the content they received. Chrysostome and Arcand (2009) identified significant language barriers that hinder complete use of resources offered by local associations and networks. Language barriers can limit access to vital information and support services among immigrants hence affecting their ability to establish or run successful enterprises (Basu, 2011). According to Riddle, *et al.*, (2010), immigrant entrepreneurs may face significant obstacles due to a lack of clear easily accessible information in English thus such problems can be overcome by providing them with Spanish-speaking workshops or translation services (Sequeira, *et al.*, 2009). Offering workshops in Spanish or providing translation services could eliminate an important barrier and

facilitate greater participation of immigrant entrepreneurs (Sequeira, et al., 2009). Support programs are more user-friendly if they match the needs and expectations of users more closely. Therefore, regular assessment of entrepreneurs' needs is a critical tool in making sure that these resources align better with their users' expectations and requirements.

4.2.7.2 Association and Collaboration with Other Businesses

Three participants indicated that they had not formed any associations for this purpose; however, the other four had engaged in various collaborations depending on their business needs. Participants who formed associations highlighted various benefits, showing a positive impact on their businesses. They noted increased trust in their company, positive referrals to their products, and even better pricing. For example, Participant 3 expanded the market presence and generated additional income from her product. On the same question, Participant 2 had boosted his market diversification strategy as he made some collaborations with other restaurants plus a pub offering special events and different products.

Negative responses showed that there could be a scarcity of resources, knowledge, or confidence about possible benefits of collaborations, perhaps due to some limited network of contacts which results in no commercial agreements with other businesses.

"Yes. Yes. Right now we are opening on Tuesdays in... in a restaurant. We have... and we make Mexican food and specials. We take a bit of our menu there and do a special every Tuesday. We also open in a pub nearby, about five minutes away, called... we sell there... We have collaborations with two more restaurants." (P2)

"I would also like to add your products to the menu. And I will be buying from you every month, a little bit, like... and every month or so, but even so she offers them there, and that's how it all spread." (P3)

"Yes, mainly with... it has helped improve our reliability." (P4)

Support networks and strategic collaborations have been emphasized by previous research on immigrant entrepreneurship (e.g., Ram, *et al.*, Jones & Villares-Varela 2017). These can help overcome barriers such as access to financial resources and market integration (Ram, *et al.*, 2017). The results of this study confirm these observations as it found that entrepreneurs who formed strategic collaborations experienced significant improvements in reputation and opening new markets for customers.

Also, inclusion of more points of sale such as restaurants and cafes has been proven effective for expanding the product presence in the market, generating additional incomes, and most importantly diversifying revenue sources. In this case, alliances have a stronger impact on immigration where entrepreneurs fail to penetrate the market considering cultural and linguistic barriers (Kloosterman, 2010). Also, business sustenance and growth depend on entrepreneurs who establish multiple collaborations with an aim of diversifying their products thus acquiring wider markets (Kloosterman, 2010).

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Generally, this research met its overall objectives by understanding the key challenges faced by Mexican entrepreneurs in Dublin while opening businesses. As expected, these challenges varied depending on each participant's point of view. The author has been able to gain different views on the difficulties encountered by participants using Isenberg's (2010) framework. Furthermore, there were other issues that might not have been initially considered and go beyond this research such as violence, aggression, and vandalism.

This research seeks to shed light on a topic that has been inadequately addressed in the current literature. In Chapter Two, it was stated that while there is literature that covers Mexicans in other countries, there is no other document that specifically deals with Mexican entrepreneurs in Dublin. While conducting this study it was realized the absence of any previous studies conducted on specific experiences and problems faced by this group within Dublin city.

The findings from this study indicate that starting a business does not have a single and specific challenge alone. The research showed that problems include finance-related matters, cultural aspects, support system availability, and human capital issues among other market realities including regulations governing operations in Mexico. These factors taken together form a very complex entrepreneurship environment.

However, zero Mexican entrepreneurs have employed any government support or programs for them to develop businesses effectively. None of the respondents have benefited from financial resources offered by the state showing that there is a possible disconnect between these resources and the targeted population. Ram et al. (2017) mention that lack of institutional support may emanate from language barriers, lack of information, or complexity of administrative procedures.

Therefore, there is need to revise and incorporate the microenterprise category in Ireland under the current Companies Act 2014 (Department of Enterprise, Trade

and Employment, 2014), so as to explore its relevance to the local economy. At present, all are referred to simply as small entities with turnover limits not exceeding €8.8 million; balance sheet caps at €4.4 million; and average staff numbers do not go beyond 50 employees each respectively. For example, two different entrepreneurs in this research were self-employed but paid taxes like a company with up to fifty staff while others had unequally distributed tax burdens because they had one or more partners in their business ventures. The inclusion of a microenterprise category would help reduce these inequalities and create a fairer playing field for small-scale entrepreneurs

The entrepreneurs have also displayed a great capacity to fit in and adapt despite the challenges that they face. In response to this, they have been proactive in doing business and flexible in the nature of their product or service offering as well as adjusting themselves to a new environment by learning its language and adapting it towards meeting local consumers' expectations. This quality has seen not only their success but also boosted its economy (Berry, 2005). Acclimatizing oneself into different cultural and market settings is an important skill which these entrepreneurs possess, helping them overcome many obstacles and succeed in a foreign country.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendations for future research

However, some areas in which further research can be conducted are identified by this study though it has only covered a small part of the research field that is much needed. In order to give a solid foundation for more research, the following key areas for future studies are discussed further.

To start with, one must critically assess Irish government programs and support systems for entrepreneurs. This should concentrate on how services offered under these programs come across to people from different nations who have migrated. The investigation should also focus on possibilities of making these programs even more effective in order to meet sectoral needs. Besides, it could be informative to assess if information about such programs is available in different languages or not.

Secondly, examine various sources of funding that are available to immigrant entrepreneurs and their influence on business set up and growth. Assess the extent of which local financial institutions and microfinance programmes have been effective in helping these entrepreneurs. Additionally, it would be useful exploring if there are any other factors affecting access to finance among immigrant entrepreneurs and how they use alternative sources (venture capital corporate finance, crowdfunding) for capital raising.

Furthermore, an important area of study could involve contrasting different groups of immigrants so as to analyze the similarities and differences in barriers/challenges faced by them with regards to doing business. This would help in having a deeper understanding of entrepreneurs' situation in Ireland as well as finding out similar patterns or unique issues. This study might be divided into two sub-samples: one group may include immigrants who abide by current regulations and enjoy being EU citizens (e.g., those from Spain, Romania, Lithuania or Poland); another group may comprise immigrant entrepreneurs who do not possess such advantages like people from Asia India or Latin America. Exploratory analysis might show differences between these categories as well as provide baseline data for possible changes.

Performing long-term studies similar to Desiderio & Salt (2010) that will monitor the way immigrant entrepreneurs develop over time. It will help to keep up with changing challenges as well as successes of those immigrants in their business, starting from the moment of its formation and up until the fullest growth and development. The patterns and key factors for long-term success or failure can be identified by such studies. Additionally, studying adaptation and resilience strategies that change with experience and new challenges faced by entrepreneurs is important. This includes the establishment of support networks both within a local community and among fellow immigrants.

Moreover, the assimilation process of various migrant groups into Irish society would have an effect on the immigrant entrepreneurs. Also, check whether the local community makes it easier or harder for immigrants to start their businesses together with any other restrictions or policies in place. Also, consider social integration policy implications on business success and how these can be improved upon. For example, this could involve mentoring programs, networking opportunities, and community events designed to support both indigenous and immigrant entrepreneurs.

Finally, gender study: observation indicated that most Mexican entrepreneurs in Dublin are women (Author's name). Because of this, there are questions as to why women might be more motivated than men to start their own businesses or become independent economically. These points can lead us to a major study exploring why these women are motivated which I believe calls for further research.

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