

Entrepreneurship Development In Cameroon: An Analysis of The Characteristics of Cameroonian Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT: *The main objective of this study is to describe the characteristics of Cameroonian entrepreneurs. Using a descriptive research design, the study collected 150 questionnaires through the purposive and referral (snowball) sampling techniques. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse and present collected data. The result of the study reveals that most Cameroonian entrepreneurs are dominantly Optimistic in nature and have a fighting spirit to see that their ventures survive and grow in the midst of the many challenges that surround them such as disturbance from local council agents and taxation agents, high taxes, inflation, the socio-political crisis, unsafety, power outages, lack of subventions, bad roads. They are also hardworking, generous, trustworthy, gentlemanly, sceptical, ambitious, risk bearers, confident, customer service providers, determined, discrete, dynamic, focused, goal getters, innovative, motivated, profit conscious, realistic, self-confident, strategic, time conscious, visionary. It can also be concluded that the majority of entrepreneurs in Cameroon are below forty-two (42) years, they are mostly male, married, have at least a Bachelor degree, schooled in government schools, are not very bold about their political affiliations and are not very inclined to the practice of their traditions.*

KEY WORDS: entrepreneur, competencies, growth, small businesses, characteristics of entrepreneurs

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, entrepreneurs are the engines driving every country's economic growth forward. Time has proven that entrepreneurs are indispensable in a country's economy. The word entrepreneur is a French word which was first introduced by the French economist Richard Cantillon from the word '*entreprendre*', which is translated to English as '*undertaker*' or '*adventurer*'. The word first appeared in the French dictionary (Richard, *Entrepreneurs and Economist*, 1723). Jean Baptist said a French economist clearly defined an entrepreneur in 1803 as someone who starts up a business or businesses, taking up financial risks with the hope of making profit (Baptise, 1803). An entrepreneur is 'one who always searches for changes, and exploits it as an opportunity (Peter, 2012). Richard Cantillon a famous French economist defined an entrepreneur as a 'non-fix income earner who pays a known cost of production but earns an uncertain income' (Richard, 1992). Moreover, McClelland said entrepreneurs are those who do things in new and better ways and take decisions under uncertainty' (McClelland, 1984). The art of starting or setting up a business, taking up financial risks in the hope of making profit is referred to as entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is the practice of starting new organizations or revitalizing mature organizations into practically new businesses generally in response to identified opportunities (Onuoha, 2007).

Previous studies have found that the key factors of successful entrepreneurs are their personality traits (Govindarajan, 1989; Hansemark, 1998; Mazzarol et al., 2009; Miller and Toulouse, 1986; Panagiotou, 2006). Poon et al. (2023) found an association between personality traits and business performance. Baklanov et al. (2019) opine that skill-sets which is the demand of labour market are valuable initiatives of ethnic entrepreneurship. A positive connection between personal traits and business success was established by Lee and Tsang (2001) while studying Chinese entrepreneurs in Singapore.

Miller and Toulouse (1998) identified that product innovation results from people with more locus of control. They asserted that these people have a broad vision for their future and are engaged in the growth of the firm. Citing the work of Minniti and Lévesque (2005). Dana and Mallet (2014) concluded that entrepreneurs are the micro-economic agents of economic dynamics. Skills, on the other hand, are considered to be the quality of performance and are not solely dependent on the basic inborn abilities of a person but need to be developed via learning, practice, training, and experience.

History of entrepreneurs

Nearly 2000 years ago, entrepreneurship started with trade. Goods were exchanged between human for an overall benefit of tribe. With time, people learned to domesticate plants and animals. Group of people produce food and exchanged it with people who

provide variable goods; new areas of specialization began to emerge as pottery, carpentry, wood making, masonry.

As population increased, people developed the idea that they can earn profit by trading between cities and culture, popular trade at the time were in salt, fruit, rice and pepper making by China.

Larger market places became more popular to cater for the large population. Banking regulations became more advanced for small businesses and entrepreneurs to buy goods from abroad. A shift from small scale to large scale production gave rise to some of the world's great entrepreneur such as J Morgan and John D Rockefeller in the 1880s. Nowadays, entrepreneurship serves as the driving engine of all economies; entrepreneurs are encouraged to innovate and are valued for their contribution in the economy. While some believe that entrepreneurs are born and not made, anyone can learn some of the characteristics that make entrepreneurs what they are. Some of these characteristics are: An entrepreneur is an innovator by Joseph A. Schumpeter, entrepreneurs are achievement motivators by David C. McClelland, an entrepreneur is a capital provider (Albet, 1967). An entrepreneur is the determinant of the nature of a business (Sharma, 1981). An entrepreneur is a profit maker and challenge taker (Evans, 1957).

The above mentioned characteristics of an entrepreneur show that an entrepreneur is a dynamic person who promotes the society and civilization by taking ventures that give enormous variety of goods and services and organizations should bring about changes in the arena of industrial activities. Being a successful entrepreneur depends on both external and internal factors. External factors: socio-demographic, social and population related factors, physiological and cultural factors.

Internal factors include age, gender, experience, resource, educational background, skills and more.

An Entrepreneurial profile

A profile is an outline or a short description of a person, organization or element. Moreover the term entrepreneurship represents various traits, characteristics and qualities of a person for successful entrepreneurship. Cameroon occupies the 142nd position out of 189 countries of the UN classification of the country following their poverty index (Cameroon overview, 2012: development and World Bank). To come out of this situation, the country needs to encourage entrepreneurship. It is in this line that the government has introduced the course Entrepreneurship in all secondary schools and university programs. The government also created the Ministry of Small and Medium Size enterprises, as well as the Bank of Small and Medium size enterprises as the one stop shop for business creation. Many infrastructural projects are eager to be completed or ongoing, for example to improve energy supply. Despite this effort, most Cameroonian entrepreneurs regularly face numerous obstacles by those in charge of facilitating their activities (Negou et al., 2023).

There is constant abuse from council workers, corruption, late payment of contract dues, lack of funding, heavy custom duties. Also, it is very difficult to get a public contract without ‘connection’ or knowing an inside person. These obstacles do prevent more and more Cameroonians from becoming entrepreneurs (Negou et al., 2023). Cameroonian entrepreneurs must then possess extraordinary characteristics to cope with such environment. The sum of these observations has inspired the researchers to thoroughly analyse the characteristics of Cameroon entrepreneurs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part deeply elaborates on the major concept of this study which is the Entrepreneur’s characteristics. In the 20th century, an eminent economist, Schumpeter (1934), focused his research on what drives the entrepreneurs to be innovative and hence creates upheaval and change. From this study, he coined-out the word ‘creative destruction’, which then became one of the foremost attributes of an entrepreneur. Specifically, the ‘task’ of an entrepreneur is to carry out a mission to help destroy the old or/and obsolete industries and in place of it a new one is established. In other words, his mission is considered accomplished if an entrepreneur is able to destroy an established business by creating new and better ways to replace them.

In another account, Hoselitz (1960) perceives an entrepreneur as a person who buys at a price that is certain and sells at a price that is uncertain. On the other hand, Leibenstein (1968) opines that “an entrepreneur is a person who owns all the necessary resources to produce and launch on the market a product which responds to a market deficiency”. Later, Kirzner (1985) considers an entrepreneur as a person who perceives the existence of profit making opportunities and initiates some actions to complete the unsatisfactory current needs. This was followed by Bygrave and Hofer (1991) who defined an entrepreneur as a person who perceives an opportunity and creates an organization to follow it.

According to Panda (2000), an entrepreneur uses the production factors, buys raw materials and sets up the organization, embarks upon managerial processes of innovation, surveillance and coordination of the productive activities, and embarks upon taking the entrepreneurial decision. Lazear (2005) defined an entrepreneur as being the person specialized in taking the decisions over the coordination of limited resources. “Entrepreneurs innovate. Innovation is the specific instrument of entrepreneurship. It is the act that endows resources with a new capacity to create wealth. Innovation indeed creates resource” (Drucker, 2012).

According to Joseph A Schumpeter, “An entrepreneur is basically an innovator and innovator is one who introduces new combinations (Schumpeter, 2011) He further stated that the key individuals in development are the entrepreneurs who are an especially motivated and talented class of people. They foresee the potentially profitable opportunity and try to exploit it.

Having cited the most prominent research works on the study of entrepreneur, we may argue that there is still no consensus in defining the entrepreneur concept, not to mention its measurement. An understanding of the concept of entrepreneur without an insight to the concept of entrepreneurship is just like a lame duck.

Characteristics of Successful Entrepreneurs

The major characteristics of an entrepreneur stated by Joseph Schumpeter (1934) is that an entrepreneur is an innovator who desires to earn profit through innovation, an entrepreneur is neither a technical man nor a capitalist but simply an innovator. Timmon's (1994) analysis of more than 50 studies found a consensus around six general characteristic of an entrepreneur: passion, motivation, vision, leadership, confidence and decision making. I will be elaborating on that of Timmons (1994).

Passion: entrepreneurs tend to be more driven by a passion for their offerings as well as by a desire to make a difference. This passion or drive also helps to sustain entrepreneurs during periods where discouragement might otherwise manifest itself.

Vision: the best entrepreneurs have a vision as to what they want to achieve, how they can accomplish their objectives, and whom they need on their side to reach their goals. Their goal oriented vision acts as a compass that points them in the direction of opportunities that perhaps no one else has found.

Decision making: being able to make decisions quickly is another characteristic of an entrepreneur because it can be the difference between success and failure. Successful entrepreneurs need not only to have good decision making skills, but also must have the capacity to make those decisions quickly in order to avoid missing opportunities.

Confidence: without confidence or self-belief, entrepreneurs cannot possibly succeed. They have to be confident both in themselves and in the product or services they sell. If they believe in themselves they will have the ability to stay in the course regardless of difficulties or discouragement. They equally have the ability to take risks. They believe that they will succeed.

Motivation: entrepreneurs are by nature motivated. After all, they put in long hours to get their ventures off of the ground and invest large sums. Successful entrepreneurs are driven by much more than financial gain. The top reasons why someone decides to become an entrepreneur are because they want to share their knowledge as a subject matter expert, be recognized as a leader in their field, experience personal growth and improve the world.

Personality Traits of Entrepreneurs

There exist personality and social traits. Personality or endogenous traits are those that have greater relevance at the time of creating a new venture and are those people characteristics, which drive and motivate them to perform this task (Popescu et al.,

2016). Conversely, social or exogenous traits refer to the social environment of an individual, to his family, and to how social norms are perceived towards the possibility of developing an entrepreneurial initiative (Mortan et al., 2016).

The first personality/behavioural trait of the entrepreneur is to believe in his capacities (Alam, 2018; Palazzechi et al., 2018); another trait is the previous knowledge of entrepreneurship and market, in this case, entrepreneurship education and previous training in business creation are significant (Kraus et al., 2018) along with thinking that their decisions are what control their lives and that they can influence others through their skills (Idris et al., 2014; Cuesta, 2018). Another personality trait is innovation. Being innovative includes the ability to adapt to a changing reality and is related to the entrepreneurial orientation (Ilynykh, 2015; Weis et al., 2017). Recognizing opportunities that others have not found (Yan X et al., 2018; Ali, 2015) is another trait that makes it easier to discover, evaluate and exploit profitable opportunities in the form of new companies. The entrepreneurial orientation is a broader concept that is formed by several dimensions, including innovation, risk-taking and proactivity (Vantilborgh, 2015). Finally, autonomy is another trait of an entrepreneur (Vuong, 2016).

Socio Demographic characteristics of Entrepreneurs

The result of some studies have proven the impact of socio demographic factors on entrepreneurial intention (Wahidmurni et al., 2020). Special emphases will be given to variables such as gender, place of residence, previous work experiences as well as parents' education and type of employment. In general, men have manifested a more positive attitude toward entrepreneurship and more pronounced entrepreneurial intentions than women (Moa-Libert, 2016). Men are also more likely to be involved in starting a business than women. Minniti and Nardone (2007) have shown that men better perceive the feasibility of entrepreneurial activities.

Studies have shown that entrepreneurial activities also differ according to the environment in which the individual lives: for they are less common in rural areas (Sternberg, 2009) while others actually show that opportunities to take entrepreneurial actions are greater in rural regions (Baum and Schulz, 2013).

The demographic characteristic of people also shape their behaviour towards entrepreneurship. Many studies have highlighted the role of demographic traits such as age, religion, gender, experience, background and education of entrepreneurs toward their entrepreneurial behaviour and firms performers (Welmilla et al., 2011; Ahmed, 2007; Davidsson, 1995). The study focused only on the age and gender. Welmilla et al. (2011) and Minns and Rizov (2005) suggested further research regarding these variables in different contexts.

Traditionally the age has been used as one of the most important variables in contemporary social science research to categorize individuals and explain differences

among them (Aapola, 2002). Age is a time of life and a particular power or qualification arises as the age increases. The skill of people might improve with their age (Welmilla et al., 2011) because they learn to manage time effectively (Korpunen and Napravnikova, 2008). According to many previous studies, the person's age has been considered as the key demographic characteristics in understanding his or her entrepreneurial behaviour and intentions (Reynolds, 1997).

Leadership Skills of an Entrepreneur

In today's business world, leadership has become increasingly important for businesses. They must pay attention to leadership in order to achieve their objectives and ensure their continuity. Leadership is generally defined as the process of influencing employees of an organization in order to achieve organizational goals (Yıldız et al., 2023). On the other hand, leadership is the ability of creating support and confidence needed to achieve organizational goals among the people (Dubrin, 2022). There are many definitions about leadership in the literature. There is a common emphasized point on leadership in these studies. Leadership is the process of influencing group members and guiding them to the right direction. The leader influences members of the group by using his/her leadership characteristics in order to achieve the organizational goals. Steering people to reach a goal requires different persuasion skills. People with these skills and ability to persuade become leaders. Leadership is a social phenomenon and has a purpose. Leadership is a power influencing the others. A group is needed to have a leader. Leaders and groups create a value together and become a trademark (Esmer, 2022; Alaqeel, 2022).

In the last decades, much research has been devoted to the field of leadership, always an important topic to scholars in management and organizational psychology. However, the meaning of 'leadership' and what it stands for are different to different people. Leadership definitions and their focus vary in emphasis, whether on leader abilities, personality traits, influence relationships, cognitive versus emotional orientation, individual versus group orientation, and/or appeal to self-versus collective interests (Den Hartog and Koopman, 2008). Definitions of leadership can be classified by whether they are primarily descriptive or normative in nature, as well as by their relative emphasis on behavioural style (Den Hartog et al., 1997). Some scholars distinguish leadership from management: Kotter (1990) regards leadership as one of several managerial roles as stated by Mintzberg and Katz (1988). Bryman (1992) attempted to consolidate the main ideas of leadership definitions and stated that they all emphasize three main elements: group, influence, and goal. For instance, Katz and Kahn (1978) define leadership as the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization. Rauch and Behling (1984) define leadership as the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal achievement. House and Shamir (1993) defined leadership as the ability of an individual to motivate others to forgo self-interest for a collective vision, and to contribute to the attainment of that vision and to the collective by making significant

personal self-sacrifices over and above the call of duty, willingly (House and Shamir, 1993).

Leadership Styles

Autocratic Leadership Style

In the autocratic leadership style, also called dictatorship, the leaders are the focal point of power and regard their decisions and judgement as supreme (Asianab, 2023; Burke et al., 2006; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). Here, followers perform because of the reward systems or punishment for non-compliance (Burke et al., 2006; Rad and Yarmohammadian, 2006). The disadvantages of the autocratic leadership style appear to outweigh the advantages. For that reason, the autocratic leadership style is not popular among employees (and colleagues) in most organisations. If used in organisations, the leaders may apply it accidentally. The literature identifies the democratic leadership style as the complete opposite of the autocratic leadership style.

Laissez-faire Leadership Style

With regard to the laissez-faire leadership style, the leader does not directly supervise the members, and does not rely on regular communication or feedback. Specifically, it allows the members total autonomy and self-rule to make decisions that relate to the completion of the assignment (Asianab, 2023; Eagly et al., 2003; MacBeath, 2005; Rad and Yarmohammadian, 2006). However, the leader is available to offer guidance at any point should the members request assistance (Eagly et al., 2003).

Transformational Leadership Style

According to Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009), the transformational leadership theory was introduced by Burns in 1978 and has since attracted a great deal of research attention. Transformational leadership comprises four elements, that is, charismatic role modelling, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation'. First, utilizing charisma, leaders instigate high regard, reverence and allegiance, and emphasize having one shared mission. Second, individualized consideration is whereby leaders establish their own relationships with followers, and cater for individual differences, needs, skills and desires. Third, inspirational motivation is whereby the leader clearly communicates the vision for the future, demonstrates how goals can be attained, and instils followers' zeal to achieve goals. Finally, intellectual stimulation is whereby leaders widen and raise the welfare of followers and motivate them to be highly innovative (Hayward et al., 2004; Leach, 2005; Kirkbride, 2006; Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009). The effectiveness of the transformational leadership style may be complemented by the transactional leadership style.

Transactional Leadership Style

It is a style in which the leader ensures conformity or reverence of the staff, using both rewards and punishments, thus followers are motivated through exchange, e.g. a follower may be motivated to complete a task to obtain rewards or preferences

(Hayward et al., 2004; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Yang, 2007; Nielsen et al., 2008). In contrast, transformational leaders focus on relationships to ensure organizational commitment and collectivism (Einarsen et al., 2007; Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009; Bushra et al., 2011). These leaders endeavour to get a sense of the followers' needs and motivate followers towards predetermined goals.

Charismatic Leadership Style

The charismatic leadership style is rooted in a form of boldness, bravery or extreme of personality, more or less of celestial origin (Asianab, 2023; Burke et al., 2006); Avolio et al., 2009). It was one of the leadership styles propounded by Max Weber in 1947. It assumes that charm and grace result in a huge following, self-belief is a fundamental need of leaders and members follow those leaders whom they have a high regard for instead of any external form of power (Chen and Silverthorne, 2005; Lee, 2005; Hannah et al., 2008). The charismatic leadership style is quite common in church organizations.

Democratic Leadership Style

In this style, leadership focuses on change, visionary leadership and enhancing individual and organizational outcomes. Members are given the chance to build up their leadership skills, participate in leadership and contribute to decision-making (Asianab, 2023; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007).

This leadership style is arguably more efficient than autocratic leadership (MacBeath, 2005). Employees feel their opinions, suggestions and ideas are taken into consideration. Although members enjoy a certain level of autonomy, it works effectively in situations where members are highly skilled, passionate and more satisfied about their job as is the situation where the laissez-faire leadership style is utilized.

Empirical Literature

This will concern the personality and behavioural traits of entrepreneurs, and the socio demographic characteristics of entrepreneurs.

Empirical Literature on the Personality characteristics of Entrepreneurs

Diego Aboal and Federico Veneri (2016) analysed how narrow task related personality traits relate to different entrepreneurial behaviour in Latin America. They exploited a large data base that has individual level information for nine Latin American countries and one USA city. The evidence indicated that there are narrow personality traits that are positively associated with entrepreneurial behaviour in Latin America. That this association is weaker for individuals who show weaker entrepreneurial behaviour in Latin America.

Fairlie and William (2012) examined the relationship between personality traits and entrepreneurship. They used novel data from the largest ever randomised control experiment providing entrepreneurship training in the United States. They found

evidence indicating that individuals who are more risk tolerant benefit more from entrepreneurship training than less risk tolerant individuals.

Gupta and Sharon (2013) studied the possible interactions between operations strategy and entrepreneurial traits, performance and job satisfaction. The study used a non-experimental design to test a proposed model based on a review of relevant literature. The study was conducted with 1200 SMEs in the Lynchburg city region using an administered survey instrument. The results of the study indicate that entrepreneurial personality has a statistically significant relationship with Performance and Operations Strategy. The relationship between entrepreneurial personality and job satisfaction was not statistically significant.

Empirical Literature on the Socio demographic characteristics of Entrepreneurs

Ana Jovicic et al. (2020) analysed the entrepreneurial intentions of tourism students, who represent a significant base of future entrepreneurs in the Republic of Serbia. The study examined whether there are differences in students' entrepreneurial intentions depending on socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, place of residence, years of study, previous work experience, parents' education, and type of employment. The survey was conducted in four higher vocational schools in Serbia on a sample of 330 students of Tourism and Hospitality management. The results showed that students have medium intention to start and run their own business and that gender, years of study, and prior work experience play an important role in fostering entrepreneurial intentions.

Abdullah et al. (2022) evaluated the influence of socio-demographic characteristics on entrepreneurial intention. The purpose of the study was to analyse whether the determining factors will affect the entrepreneur's intention to people who want to start up new businesses. The data was analysed using SPSS program using the Pearson Chi square analysis methods. The result showed that socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and educational level have a significant positive relationship and influence on entrepreneurial intentions.

Crump et al. (2015) investigated the socio-demographic differences of black versus white entrepreneurs. The study compares some outcomes and attributes of black and white entrepreneurs and some financial variables that contribute to their success. The research found significant differences in age, years of education, number of hours worked, and socio-economic status among other factors within and across white and black entrepreneur groups. The findings suggest there are legitimate differences between characteristics of black and white entrepreneurs and that further research is needed to understand what factors lead to their success.

Gorona et al. (2017) wrote on the profile of social entrepreneurs in Serbia: Motivation and Socio-demographic characteristics. The paper explored the traits of social entrepreneurship in Serbia by addressing the role of motivation, education, personal experience, gender, and age in developing social enterprises. The data combined

qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The research suggests that social entrepreneurs usually enter this venture without previous experience in founding a social enterprise or managing one. Disparities in motivation to work in a social enterprise are prominently different depending on the respondent's age. Younger respondents are motivated primarily to address a specific social problem, while older ones are motivated mainly to create a personal employment opportunity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a Descriptive research design and adopted a quantitative approach. Two non-probability sampling techniques were used to select the participants for this study namely the Judgmental or purposive and Snowball or referral sampling techniques: the researcher specifically selected participants who would be able to contribute to the research topic and who would be willing to share their experiences, skills, and traits in the world of entrepreneurship. The researchers initially approached potential participants and those who were willing to participate in the study were subsequently interviewed. Those approached referred and helped extend the questionnaires to other entrepreneurs. Using these two techniques, a sample size of 150 participants were selected for the study.

The researchers used questionnaires as the instrument for data collection. A questionnaire is a document containing a couple of questions, designed to elicit response from a researcher's respondent on an issue under study (Kumar, 2008). The questionnaire in this research has three sections: section A, the demographic/socio demographic information of respondents, section B questions related to the Personality characteristics of Entrepreneurs in Cameroon, section C questions related to the challenges entrepreneurs face in Cameroon. The questions are open-ended. The respondents were expected to give brief responses to each of the questions on the Characteristics of Entrepreneurs.

Data analysis is a process of gathering, modelling, and transforming data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decisions making. The researchers used descriptive statistics to analyse data. In this research, the researchers questioned entrepreneurs under target, then described the results. The instruments used to analyse data in this study is descriptive statistics.

Descriptive statistics is the term given to the analysis of data that helps to describe, show or summarise data in a meaningful way (Stony, 2012). They are simply a way to describe data. Descriptive statistics therefore is used in this research to present the data in a more meaningful way, which allows simpler interpretation of the data. The various descriptive tools that are used in this research are frequency distribution tables, and percentages. As well as software tools like Microsoft Excel and Starta.

Presentation of Results

Descriptive Analysis

This section highlights the data collected during the research study on “*Entrepreneurship Development in Cameroon: An Analysis of the Characteristics of Cameroonian Entrepreneurs*”. The findings of the study are presented in tables followed by explanations.

Distribution of Questionnaires

This section explains the distribution of questionnaires.

Table 1: Response rate

Number of Questionnaires	Total Number	Percentage
Questionnaires Given Out	150	100%
Questionnaires Returned	143	95.33%
Questionnaires Not Received	7	4.67%

Source: Computerised in Stata 14 by Author (2023)

Table 1 shows that out of 150 questionnaires sent out, 143 came back, filled. This represents a 95.33% response rate against 4.67% not returned. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) observed that the response rate of a questionnaire is suitable if the observations of the responses are seventy-five percent (75%) or more. On this base, the questionnaires returned are appropriate for analysis.

1.1.1 Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Table 2: Gender distribution

Gender	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Male	104	72.73	72.73
Female	39	27.27	100.00
Total	143	100.00	

Source: Computerised in Stata 14 by Author (2023)

Table 2 shows that 72.73% of respondents are male against 27.27% who are female. This depicts a high dominance of males in entrepreneurship in Cameroon.

Age Distribution

The following table explains the age range of respondents.

Table 3: Age distribution of Respondents

Age Range	Freq.	%
1981-1990	51	35,66%
1991-2000	44	30,77%
1971-1980	15	10,49%
No	12	8,39%
1961-1970	9	6,29%

1940-1950	6	4,20%
1951-1960	6	4,20%
TOTAL	143	100%

Source: Computerised in Stata 14 by Author (2023)

Table 3 indicates that 35.66% of respondents are born between 1981 and 1990, 30.77% are born between 1991 and 2000 and 10.49% between 1971 and 1980. This means that the majority of respondents are young, less than 52 years.

Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

The following table sought to establish the respondents' educational level.

Table 4: Level of education

EduLevel	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
bachelor	57	39.86	39.86
masters	20	13.99	53.85
A level	15	10.49	64.34
PhD	8	5.59	69.93
FSLC	6	4.20	74.13
Bacc	5	3.50	77.62
No answer	4	2.80	80.42
dipet 2	4	2.80	83.22
O level	3	2.10	85.31
dipet 1	3	2.10	87.41
MBA	2	1.40	88.81
university	2	1.40	90.21
B-TECH	1	0.70	90.91
CAP	1	0.70	91.61
CEP	1	0.70	92.31
Diploma	1	0.70	93.01
Doctorate	1	0.70	93.71
HND	1	0.70	94.41
bacc	1	0.70	95.10
bepc	1	0.70	95.80
capiet	1	0.70	96.50
certification	1	0.70	97.20
diploma	1	0.70	97.90
high school	1	0.70	98.60
masters 1	1	0.70	99.30
Primary	1	0.70	100.00
Total	143	100.00	

Source: Computerised in Stata 14 by Author (2023)

Table 4 indicates that 39.86% of respondents are owners of a Bachelor degree, 13.99% of Masters, 10.49% have Advanced level and 5.59% have a PhD. This indicates that more than half percent of entrepreneurs interviewed have at least a Bachelor degree. This may also indicate the tendency for graduates to go for entrepreneurship instead of being employees.

Marital Status of the entrepreneurs

Table 5: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Married	94	65.73	65.73
Single	45	31.47	97.20
No answer	3	2.10	99.30
Polygamous	1	0.70	100.00
Total	143	100.00	

Source: Computerised in Stata 14 by Author (2023)

Table 5 indicates that 65.73% entrepreneurs are married against 31.47% who are single. This proves the high sense of responsibility of entrepreneurs in Cameroon.

Religion of Respondents

Table 6 depicts the religion of respondents.

Table 6: Religion of respondents

Religion	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Christian	130	90.91	90.91
No Answer	5	3.50	94.41
Animist	4	2.80	97.20
Muslim	4	2.80	100.00
Total	143	100.00	

Source: Computerised in Stata 14 by Author (2023)

Table 6 shows that 90.91% of respondents are Christians against 2.80% who are Muslim and 2.80% who are Animists.

1.1.2 Date of creation of the business

Table 7: Date of creation of the business

Age Range	Freq.	%
From 2021	18	12,59%
2011-2020	73	51,05%
2001-2010	25	17,48%
1991-2000	6	4,20%

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK

1981-1990	5	3,50%
1971-1980	3	2,10%
Below 1960	2	1,40%
No answer	11	7,69%
TOTAL	143	100%

Source: Computerised in Stata 14 by Author (2023)

Relation with the tradition

The following table shows the relation of the entrepreneur with tradition.

Table 8: Relation with tradition

Tradition	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
No	89	62.24	62.24
Yes	44	30.77	93.01
No answer	10	6.99	100.00
Total	143	100.00	

Source: Computerised in Stata 14 by Author (2023)

Table 8 shows that 30.77% of entrepreneurs are in permanent relationship with their tradition against 62.24% who do not practice their tradition and 6.99% who did not provide any answers. This indicates that some Cameroonian entrepreneurs love their tradition. But the vast majority of them do not practice it.

Political affiliation

The following table summarises the political affiliation of contacted entrepreneurs.

Table 9: Political affiliation of entrepreneurs

Political affiliation	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
No	59	41.26	41.26
No answer	50	34.97	76.22
Yes	24	16.78	93.01
CPDM	9	6.29	99.30
NVP	1	0.70	100.00
Total	143	100.00	

Source: Computerised in Stata 14 by Author (2023)

From table 9 above, it can be noted that 23.77% (Yes (16.78%) + CPDM (6.29%) + NVP (0.70%)) of respondents have political affiliations against 41.26% who do not have and 34.97% who preferred not to pronounce themselves.

Region of Origin of Respondents**Table 10: Region of Origin of Respondents**

Tribe	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
SW	47	32.87	32.87
W	36	25.17	58.04
NW	33	23.08	81.12
LT	12	8.39	89.51
CE	11	7.69	97.20
No answer	1	0.70	97.90
IGBO	1	0.70	98.60
Yoroba	1	0.70	99.30
Yoruba	1	0.70	100.00
Total	143	100.00	

Source: Computerised in Stata 14 by Author (2023)

From table 10, it can be noted that 32.87% of respondents are from Southwest, 25.17% from West, 23.08 from Northwest, 8.39% from Littoral, 7.69% from the Centre, the rest, 2.1% is constituted of Nigerians. This shows that almost all people from different regions of Cameroon are entrepreneurial.

Types of school attended*Table 11: Types of school attended*

School attended	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Government school	73	51.05	51.05
No answer	52	36.36	87.41
Private	7	4.90	92.31
International	6	4.20	96.50
gov & private	2	1.40	97.90
mission pres	2	1.40	99.30
private nat and int	1	0.70	100.00
Total	143	100.00	

Source: Computerised in Stata 14 by Author (2023)

From table 11, it can be observed that 51.05% of entrepreneurs interviewed attended mostly government schools. This may indicate that contrary to private schools which prepare everything for the students, government schools where more is demanded from students build optimism, risk bearing and hardworking abilities in learners.

Characteristics of Cameroonian Entrepreneurs**Table 12: Characteristics of Cameroonian Entrepreneurs**

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Optimistic	43	30,07%
Fighting spirit	38	26,57%
Hardworking	11	7,69%
Generous	10	6,99%
Trustworthy	9	6,29%
Gentleman	4	2,80%
Sceptical	3	2,10%
Ambitious	2	1,40%
risk bearer	2	1,40%
Stingy	2	1,40%
Active	1	0,70%
Confident	1	0,70%
Comfortable	1	0,70%
customer service	1	0,70%
Determined	1	0,70%
Discreet	1	0,70%
Dynamic	1	0,70%
Focused	1	0,70%
goal getter	1	0,70%
innovative	1	0,70%
Motivated	1	0,70%
profit conscious	1	0,70%
Realistic	1	0,70%
Reserved	1	0,70%
self-confident	1	0,70%
Strategic	1	0,70%
time conscious	1	0,70%
Timid	1	0,70%
Visionist	1	0,70%
TOTAL	143	100,00%

Source: Computerised in Stata 14 by Author (2023)

Table 12 indicates that the major characteristics of Cameroonian entrepreneurs are optimism and fighting spirit with 30.07% and 26,57% respectively. These characteristics are very necessary in this environment where the tendency is for pessimism.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of Findings

The researchers based their summary of findings on the objectives of the study; of which the main objective is to describe the characteristics of entrepreneurs in Cameroon.

The Personality Characteristics of Cameroonian Entrepreneurs

The first specific objective was to identify and describe the characteristics of Cameroonian Entrepreneurs. Results obtained for this study show that, entrepreneurs in Cameroon are dominantly optimistic (30, 07%) in nature with a huge drive to fight (26, 57%). This is so because of the challenging entrepreneurial terrain in Cameroon. For entrepreneurs to be able to last and thrive in their different sectors (agriculture, technology, architecture, fashion, and education) they have go to keep up with and maintain an optimistic and fighting spirit. The other majority of entrepreneurs in Cameroon are hardworking, generous, and trustworthy with results showing 11%, 10%, and 9% respectively. Results show that not many entrepreneurs sampled are dynamic, focused, visionary, goal getters, innovative, motivated and strategic.

The Socio-demographic traits of Cameroonian entrepreneurs

The second specific objective was to identify and describe the socio-demographic traits of entrepreneurs in Cameroon. As regards the gender distribution results showed in Table 2 that 72.73% of respondents are male against 27.27% who are female; this indicates a high dominance of males in entrepreneurship. That is males have a significant majority presence in entrepreneurship over females.

The results for the age distribution of respondents is expressed in table 3 where it is evident that 35.66% of respondents were born between 1981 and 1990; representing the most active age group (31 – 42 years) in entrepreneurship compared to the others. 30.77% are born between 1991-2000; ages range between 23 – 32 years. This indicates that mostly young people have been venturing into entrepreneurship in different sectors of the economy. 10.49% were born between 1971 and 1980. This means most of the respondents are in the active age of 42 and below which should challenge others to get into entrepreneurship.

The results for level of education expressed in table 4 revealed that 39.86% of respondents are holders of a Bachelor degree. This may indicate the reality of insufficient jobs and the need for more and more job hunting degree holders to venture in entrepreneurship and make themselves useful while earning. 13.99% have a Masters degree, 10.49% have the Advance level and 5.59% have a PhD; this may be indicating that entrepreneurship is not usually meant for the uneducated and illiterate only. Educated entrepreneurs will surely bring much more growth and expansion in entrepreneurship in the country.

The results for Marital status expressed in table 5 show that there are more married and responsible entrepreneurs (65.73%) in Cameroon than single entrepreneurs. Indicating that they have a healthy and balanced emotional life and sense of decision making which makes them reliable and easy to be entrusted with subventions and growth opportunities.

Results in Table 6 indicate that 90.91% of respondents are Christians, which may indicate that Christians are exploring the fields of entrepreneurship more and are better at it than individuals of other religions. It may also communicate a challenge for individuals of other religions to build up skills and venture in entrepreneurship. According to results gotten for date of creation of the business, it may be indicating that between the years 2011 and 2020, majority of business ventures were established and since 2021, there has been a drop possibly from discouraging and challenging factors and policies, which is not healthy for the economy of the country.

Results for relation with tradition show that 62.24% of respondents do not have a relationship with the practice of tradition while 30.77% have established a solid relationship with their tradition. This may be indicating that the huge majority of entrepreneurs are detached and ignorant of their original identity and roots and have been seeking to integrate and identify more with foreign patterns of behaviour, dressing, associating, and thinking.

For political affiliation, results show that 41.26% of respondents do not have political affiliations against 23.77% who have one. 34.97% of respondents preferred not to indicate a political stand; which may be interpreted to mean there are things which scare or discourage the majority from venturing or identifying with politics. Policy makers and government agencies may need to take this seriously as the country needs successful entrepreneurs not Cameroonians who will rather be pushed to go establish businesses outside the country.

Regarding the region of origin of respondents, it was discovered that a good number of entrepreneurs can be identified from every region and that even Nigerians and other foreigners are entrepreneurs in Cameroon.

CONCLUSION

From the findings it can be concluded that Cameroonian entrepreneurs are dominantly Optimistic in nature and have a fighting spirit to see that their ventures survive and grow in the midst of the many challenges that surround them such as disturbance from local council agents and taxation agents, high taxes, inflation, the socio-political crisis, unsafety, power outages, lack of subventions, bad roads among others. Cameroonian entrepreneurs are not the type to give up or stay discouraged. Entrepreneurs in Cameroon are also hardworking, generous, trustworthy, gentlemanly, sceptical, ambitious, risk bearers, confident, customer service providers, determined, discrete,

dynamic, focused, goal getters, innovative, motivated, profit conscious, realistic, self-confident, strategic, time conscious, visionary. It can also be concluded that the majority of entrepreneurs in Cameroon are forty-two (42) years old and below, they are mostly male, married, have a bachelor degree, schooled in government schools, are not very bold about their political affiliations and are not very inclined to the practice of their traditions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. since most of the entrepreneurs are young people they should not relent in building capacity and skills through training programs, seminars, networking and interacting with one another. Because it is easier for younger persons to go for capacity building than older persons
2. the government especially through the delegations of small and medium size enterprises should provide interest-free loans, subventions, aids to persons especially young people with explicit business plans. Persons with self-business initiatives and creativity should be invested in.
3. Cameroonian entrepreneurs should identify with and embrace the uniqueness and identity found in their culture and tradition. This may attract investors as they see a people loyal to their roots.
4. entrepreneurs in Cameroon should take out time to go through formal academic and professional training on entrepreneurship and not assume that they can thrive as entrepreneurs because they have a bachelor, masters, or doctorate degree in English Language, History. There is a need for them to undergo business studies.
5. innovation, goal getting and visionary personality characteristics need to be improved upon.

Suggestion for further research

Although this study described the Characteristics of Entrepreneurs in Cameroon, it was limited in that entrepreneurs were looked at in general. Further studies could look into describing the characteristics of entrepreneurs in different sectors and economic activities such as Agriculture, Animal farming, technology, architecture, fashion and clothing, education, sports and other sub sectors. So that we are aware of the characteristics entrepreneurs of particular sectors possess.

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