

The emigrant entrepreneur: a theoretical framework and empirical approximation

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Abstract The present paper examines the concept of emigrant entrepreneur in relation to level of training and language skills. The study focuses on the relationship of both variables with business activity, motivation and the process followed by entrepreneur. The results show a trend in the relationship between the variable language skills and the type of activity developed. The variable “level of training” is revealed as the most influential factor affecting the business sector of activity, the level of turnover and the attitude towards entrepreneurship.

Keywords Entrepreneurship · Emigrant · Language · Formation

Introduction

The intensity of migratory flows in recent years has meant that the immigration process in Spain has been described as extraordinary (Pumares et al. 2006). Among the figures appearing in a wide range of studies on immigration, especially worthy of note is the increase in the number of foreigners registered in Spain between 2000 and 2005, which saw a remarkable increase from almost a million to over 3.7 million (Pumares et al. 2006), thereby representing roughly 10% of the total population (INE 2008).

Equally, the incorporation of foreign workers into the labour market either as employees or the presence of this—ethnically differentiated—group as businesspeople (or entrepreneurs) has become increasingly evident. If we reference figures from the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MTAS 2008) which publishes information on foreign workers affiliated to the national Social Security

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system, it can be seen that, in June 2008, the number of non-Spanish self-employed represented 15.3% of the total number of self-employed people registered with the Social Security.

The implications of this fact are transcendental, as the immigrant population, with its business initiatives, is providing a significant contribution to the growth of the GNP, responding to some of the imbalances in the job market and contributing to the increase in competitiveness, particularly in certain areas of activity.

Business creation, within this framework, is reflected in the academic field by the development of diverse approaches to the emigrant entrepreneur which we will go on to examine in the theoretical section of the article. The study is completed with an empirical study of the influences of *knowledge of the language and levels of education and training* on the *characteristics that define business activity*, the *motives for creating a firm*, and the *characteristics of the firm creation process*. This study only considers two of the approaches mentioned in the theoretical framework and examines the bivariant relations between the explanatory variables and the explained variables, describing particular situations of the actions on the part of emigrant entrepreneurs where the bivariant relations are significant.

Theoretical framework

Here we present a brief review of some of the most important approaches to entrepreneurship; approaches that are based on personal and social characteristics; cultural, contextual and integral approaches; and others that focus their study on the levels of education and training of the emigrant entrepreneur and/or knowledge of the language and the repercussions of these questions on entrepreneurial activity.

Approaches focused on personal and social characteristics

When studying the behaviour adopted by individuals in business, certain necessary qualities have been highlighted in these individuals in order for their activity to be a success; an approach that comes under the name of the *Personal Attributes Theory*. There are enough studies in the field of psychology along these lines to provide evidence of the influence of an individual's personality in his/her behaviour, and as psychological traits are considered to be constant over time, they can lead to the choice of a variety of conducts according to personality (Bend and Funder 1978; Epstein and O'Brian 1985; Ding et al. 2009; Ekinçi and Dawes 2009) Among the main contributions to this approach is that of McClelland (1961) who discussed the *need for achievement* and suggests that individuals tend to carry out their functions correctly as a means of attaining personal achievement; the *desire for independence*, which can be interpreted as the desire to work for oneself as a way of putting into practice one's own ideas or avoiding be subjected to a hierarchical authority (Collins and Moore 1964); *internal control* or the individual's perception that their destiny depends on their own actions and not on factors outside their control, thus enabling them, to a certain extent, to expose themselves to the risks and uncertainties of the business world; or *self-efficiency* derived from the theory of social

learning (Robinson et al. 1991), which suggests that people show more interest in their tasks, more willingness to invest their time and effort and greater persistency in pursuing their objectives.

Within this approach, other more recent contributions also relate *self-efficiency* and the *need for achievement* with the *tendency to assume risks* (Cáceres 2002; Podnar and Golob 2010), although the results are rather inconclusive when this question is applied to the population as a whole. It is generally accepted, though, that there is a certain predisposition to taking on risks among entrepreneurs, as they must take decisions in uncertain situations (Brockhaus 1980). *Creativity* or *an innovative nature* have also been linked with the business role (Timmons 1978; Drucker 1985), with new firm creation (Cáceres 2002), with decision-making in the market and problem-solving (Stewart et al. 1999) and dynamic behaviour that leads to success (Jensen et al. 2010). Lastly, a *proactive personality*—voluntary action in carrying out initiatives and persevering in those actions—have also been related to the development of business activity (Crant 1996).

However, this individualist approach to the business phenomenon has been criticized for its lack of predictive power and its scant contribution to the understanding of the process of the creation or dynamization of business (Aldrich 1990).

Such criticism led to the development of approaches based on the *Theory of social learning*, according to which, particular aspects of the social environment of the individual can condition certain personal characteristics such as attitudes, skills, motivations or intentions through cognitive processes and socialization. From this point of view, the *Role Model Theory*, the *Models of Intentionality* and the *Business Education Models* assume that *particular characteristics of entrepreneurs and their associated behaviours are acquired throughout their lives via a cognitive process or via socialization* (Boyd and Vozikis 1994). The *Role Model Theory* is based on the idea of *observational learning* (Bandura 1982) according to which, through observation, one can learn to imitate models of behaviour that are designed and developed by those people we feel we can most identify with in society (Casrud and Johnson 1990). This approach assumes a strong relation between the presence of close-to-hand business models and new firm creation (Brockhaus and Horwitz 1986; Scoot and Twomey 1988), which would explain the fact that a large number of research studies have established a positive relation between the tendency towards business activity and belonging to families in which at least one of the members is a business owner (Matthews and Moser 1995); or, according to Veciana (1999), it explains why, in industrial regions, where there is a deep-rooted business culture, more firms are created than in regions where such a culture does not exist. However, this approach does not provide any information with regard to how the individual's cognitive process develops in relation to their behaviour in business terms (Katz 1992). With a view to combating some of the criticisms aimed at this approach, *Models of Intentionality* consider that *cognitive processes are the result, not only of social learning, but also of questions that are inherent in the individual's behaviour* (Bird 1988; Davidsson 1991; Herron and Robinson 1993), thus the attitudes, beliefs, expectations, motivation and intentions of potential entrepreneurs take on particular importance, as it is through these variables that environmental elements will affect behaviour.

The cultural, contextual and integral approach

Throughout the 1970s, the increase in business activity carried out by groups of immigrants both in Europe and the US brought about a number of studies related to *firms started by immigrant entrepreneurs* (or *ethnically differentiated firms*) and the particularities of this type of businessperson, from a wide variety of perspectives. The main approaches adopted in this field can be grouped into three categories: studies that adopt a cultural approach, those that are carried out under a contextual approach and those framed within an integral approach.

The cultural approach

Part of the literature that analyzes the reality of the *ethnically differentiated entrepreneur* (EDE) is based upon the premise that the particularities of the entrepreneur reside in ethnic resources, resources that are linked to a group and which imply the predisposition of certain elements and ways and means of mobilizing them (Waldinger et al. 1990; Lee et al. 2009). It is the access to this type of resources that allows the EDE to initiate, finance and develop their businesses (Waldinger et al. 1990; Werbner 1990; Song 1997; Light and Gold 2000; Engelen 2001). Such resources materialize in tangible aspects (financing) or intangible ones (information, orientation, advice) (Light 1972, 1979; Light and Gold 2000,) and their origin lies in the relations of trust and friendship the entrepreneur maintains with others from the same ethnic background through family relations or, more generically, through social networks (Light and Rosenstein 1995).

Within the category of ethnical resources are included socio-cultural elements that the entrepreneur uses for the creation and development of the firm from which he/she benefits either passively or actively (Ram and Smallbone 2001; Dalhammar and Brown 2005). It is the mobilization of these ethnical resources that provides the justification for identifying the entrepreneur with the concept EDE or *ethnic entrepreneur*, as stated by Waldinger et al. (1990) or Ma Mung (1992).

Once the firm has been created, it is the dependence upon this type of resources that determines, to a large extent, limitations to growth and, at the same time, access to available opportunities in the host country (Hechavarria and Reynolds 2009). Thus, in some cases, the use of these resources can constitute a source of competitive advantage in such a way that ethnicity in itself can become an enormously important resource (Ram and Smallbone 2001). The elements that make up this type of resource correspond to the collective that share the same nationality of origin, religious beliefs, language, values and attitudes towards certain alternatives or ways of life (in particular towards new firm creation and education) and, in general, correspond to all the factors that contribute to determining the culture of a differentiated social grouping (Bonacich 1973; Ward 1983; Waldinger et al. 1990; Werbner 1990).

Research developed within the framework of the *cultural approach* can be classified into two large groups. The first includes studies focused on the *type of resource used by entrepreneurs of a particular ethnic background* (Lovell-Troy

1980; Kim and Hurh 1985; Waldinger 1986; Light and Bonacich 1988; Min 1996), while the second group is composed of studies that highlight the *differences in the use of said resources*, among ethnic entrepreneurs of varying origins (comparing, for example, Chinese and Pakistanis, Koreans and Indians, etc.). These differences lead researchers to question the possibility of referring to the EDE or *ethnic entrepreneur* as a homogeneous group that differs from the home-grown variety (Wang 1996; Mulholland 1997; Markovits 2000; Ram and Smallbone 2001).

The contextual or structuralist approach

Studies that justify the boom in business initiatives created by ethnic entrepreneurs as a direct consequence of contextual factors pertaining to the host society are integrated within the so-called contextual or structuralist approach (Cole 1959; Ram and Jones 1998; Brunet and Alarcón 2005). Plenty of research has appeared that focuses on the basic notion of *structure of opportunities*, which is represented by the difficulties or facilities that exist in the host country for firm creation on the part of EDEs. In many studies, these firms are the main focus of the theory, in such a way that their most significant characteristics, such as type of activity, size or sales strategy, take on a prevalent role in the research (Ram et al. 2000; Leung 2002; Lin 2002).

Studies that come under the umbrella of this approach can be grouped into two categories or lines of research. In the first of these, there are studies that highlight the *favourable aspects of the socio-economic context of the host society* in terms of developing business activity (Mulligan and Reeves 1983; Gouch 1984; Timmermans 1986). Taking advantage of a business opportunity becomes the main motive that justifies firm creation on the part of the immigrant population. Together with economic benefit and improvement in quality of life, the EDE opts for this alternative as a means of maintaining a certain independence and of achieving greater integration in society (Marger 1989). Firms created for these kinds of reasons make up what have been called in recent studies on entrepreneurial activity “opportunity firms” (De la Vega 2006).

Among other factors that act as stimuli for the development of business activity are those of demand intensity, government norms or market conditions¹ (Mulligan and Reeves 1983; Gouch 1984; Timmermans 1986). Within the topic of market conditions, the study of competition and barriers to access receive special attention on the part of researchers. According to Waldinger et al. (1990), the competitive advantage of the *ethnic firm* can, on occasions, be derived from the ethnic nature of the product or service offered. However, in other cases, these firms fill the gap left by other home-grown companies that have decided to change sector or market (particularly in small businesses) and thus the type of goods or services on offer would not contain characteristics of ethnically differentiated products.

¹ Such factors can, in fact, act as inhibitors to business activity. However, in most studies they have been used to support the argument that the conditions they entail can favour business creation among immigrant groups.

Conversely, in the second line of research, the greater tendency to create new businesses among immigrants is explained by the *obstacles faced by this collective in the job market of the host country* (Light 1979; Light and Gold 2000). With regard to studies that make up this second line of research, i.e. those that see the creation of ethnic firms as a reaction on the part of the immigrant population to the disadvantages of accessing the job market, there are various negative factors to point out, such as poverty, unemployment, job discrimination, language barriers or poorly paid jobs, which all go to explain the increasing number of ethnic firms in certain geographical areas. Being able to make a living constitutes, in these cases, the main reason for firm creation.

These situations frequently crop up among immigrants with a low level of education and scarce job experience, which leads to the so-called *block mobility theory* or the *disadvantage theory* (Light 1979). In the first of these, firm creation constitutes a strategy for facing up to this block and the lack of mobility in the job market. In the second, the role of business activity is to provide a means of dealing with the variety of difficulties that the immigrant population needs to overcome in a particular society (job discrimination due to nationality, language barriers, difficulties in getting their qualifications recognized, etc.) (Light 1979; Light and Gold 2000). A third theory can be added to those cited above; that of the *theory of social change*, which highlights the influence of the degree of social and geographical mobility in the creation of ethnic firms (Dijst and Van Kampen 1991).

Also within this approach, but extremely close to the *integral approach* which we will now go on to examine, Razin and Light (1998) have underlined the effect of the interaction between location and firm creation, *providing evidence of the spatial variations in business creation among specific groups of immigrants*. They thus underline the importance of context, whilst equally highlighting the influence of the traits of a particular ethnic background in business activity.

The integral approach

The *integral approach* or integral model represents the third analysis perspective on the ethnic entrepreneur. This approach arises from the integration of the cultural and contextual-structural approaches, explaining the creation of ethnic firms through the interaction between *ethnic resources* of the immigrant population and the *structure of opportunities* of the adopted society (Kloosterman et al. 1999; Taylor 2001; Barrett et al. 2002).

The theory of interaction introduced in the 1990s by Waldinger et al. (1990), which highlights the role of economic structure above that of social relations, is one of the fundamental ideas of this perspective. The underlying model for this theory distinguishes three types of factors: group characteristics, structures of opportunities and ethnic strategies.

Group characteristics include the capabilities of a group to mobilize resources, as well as the characteristic traits of the group. *Structures of opportunities* include both the market conditions for the existence of ethnic or non-ethnic products and access to the conditions or facilities for starting up a new ethnic firm. And *ethnic strategies* refer to the way in which ethnic resources are used within the framework of particular opportunity structures, resulting in specific models for firm survival (long

working hours, formation of alliances with other ethnic groups or informal mechanisms used for financing the firm's investments).

Completing the integral proposal by Waldinger et al. (1990), alternative interpretations also arise that highlight the importance of institutional and regulatory aspects over economic ones (Thach and Kidwell 2009). Kloosterman et al. (1999) introduce the idea of *mixed embeddedness* with which they explain the interaction of internal factors (ethnic resources and particularly cultural ones) and external factors (structure of opportunities and, above all, the institutional framework). Kloosterman (2000) also distinguishes between two models of embeddedness: in the first, firm creation would be the reflection of the strategy followed by immigrants for obtaining higher income and upward social mobility; in the second case, called the *Rhineland model*, contextualized in central Europe, the difficulties for entry into a job market characterized by the coexistence of high wages and job stability are reflected, together with high rates of unemployment, which lead less qualified immigrants towards business activity.

Education/training of the ethnic entrepreneur and new firm creation

Several studies that analyze the influence of education state that high levels of specialized training and a university education have a positive influence on a firm's performance (Robinson and Sexton 1994; Storey 1994; Yusuf 1995; Brown and Eisenhardt 1995; Guzmán and Santos 2001 and Kalnins 2007; Basu 1998; Basu and Goswami 1999; Casson 1991; Jones et al. 1992; Sánchez 2010; Liñán et al. 2010), although others (Stuart and Abetti 1990; Lee and Tsang 2001) indicate that such a relation may not be significant, or that the outcome may vary according to the variables used for measuring improvement in business performance (Dyke et al. 1992; Jo and Lee 1996). The positive influence of education and training on performance (Deakins et al. 2005) is down to an increase in know-how, efficiency, imagination and the ability to invent and innovate, flexibility and the capacity to adapt, along with at least some accumulation of knowledge of the environment. For Casson (1991), training and education develop both the ability to analyze and the communicational and computational skills of the entrepreneur (Casson 1991).

The ethnic entrepreneur's knowledge of language and business activity

Another factor that needs to be studied is the degree of knowledge of language. The language of the host country has been examined by some authors to ascertain whether or not knowledge influences the decision to create a new firm on the part of the EDE. When studying entrepreneurs in Australia, Evans (1989) suggests that knowledge of the principal host nation language has a positive influence. Ram and Smallbone (2003) come to the same conclusion for the UK, although in the study by Mora and Dávila (2005) for the US, no similar relation could be found.

Lerner and Hendeles (1996), Mata and Pendakur (1999), Hammarstedt (2001), Varlander and Julien (2010) and Altinay and Altinay (2008) suggest that the language level conditions the entrepreneurial aspirations of immigrants, given that

they imply a barrier to accessing the business world. In fact, immigrant groups suffer higher rates of unemployment compared to the indigenous population because of their poor knowledge of the host country's language, [Light 1984]. Indeed, the literature suggests that there is a positive link between knowledge of the host country language and success in the job market (Dustmann and Fabbri 2003). According to these reports, the ability to communicate with others is an important factor, which in turn has a significant impact on social and economic integration and productivity. From the self-employment point of view, it is also necessary to attract customers by communicating with them and it is also beneficial to access necessary resources such as business advice, and start-up bank loans.

We now go on to present an empirical study of the last two approaches: the importance of education/training of the EDE in firm creation and the importance of knowledge of the language.

Methodology

Sample

The target population consists of ethnic entrepreneurs who have created their own businesses in the Region of Valencia (Spain). Using random sampling, a sample of 6,996 business owners from different immigrant associations was chosen, whom we contacted in a variety of ways (telephone, postal mail, electronic mail and/or fax). In all cases, the aim of the research was presented and explained and inquiries were made on the country of origin of the main business owner, a criterion that was adopted to identify ethnic firms.

Out of the 6,996 possible business owners contacted, 326 agreed to participate in the study and 11 surveys were rejected as they were incomplete. Thus the final sample size was 315 respondents; a ratio that is superior to the “typical 10–12% for postal research” (Hambrick et al. 1993: 407). The individual response ratio was consistent with previous studies on entrepreneurs (Alpar and Spitzer 1989; Steensma et al. 2000). The response size guarantees a sample error of 5.5% with a confidence level of 95%, for a question with two possible answers in the worst scenario possible ($p=q=50\%$). Within the sample, in terms of nationality, Rumanians are prominent (30%) as are Colombians (28%), together with Moroccans (19%) and Bulgarians (8%). The average age of the entrepreneurs was 39.9 years old (with a standard deviation of 8.9 years) ranging from the youngest at 18 years old to the oldest at 58. Eight out of every 10 business owners were men and more than half of these (57%) were married when the firm was created. The most prevalent sector is services (89%), construction (23%), textile trade (18%) and home help (16%), with a turnover of less than 10,000 € per year in 46% of the cases and between 10,000 and 30,000 € in 50% of cases, with only 4% exceeding this figure.

The tool used for gathering the relevant information for this study was a survey sent to the business owner or founder of the firm. Twenty five entrepreneurs were selected for a pilot study and the data obtained therein were excluded from the analysis. Fieldwork took place from September 2007 to April 2008.

The questionnaire contains various sets of questions whose corresponding items are shown in Tables 1 and 2. In Table 1, the items refer to *knowledge of the language* and to *level of training*, whilst in Table 2, the items refer to the *characteristics that define the firm (or its activity)*, the *reasons for creating the firm*, and the *characteristics of the firm creation process*.

The variables in Table 1, representing the characteristics of ethnically differentiated entrepreneurs, play the role of explanatory variables in this research, whilst the variables in Table 2 correspond to the effects that the characteristics of the immigrant entrepreneur have on their business activity. The bivariant relations that we will analyze between the two types of variables, when significant, will indicate whether it is appropriate or not to take a deeper look at the relation between the explanatory variable and the explained variable.

Study and results

The quantitative information obtained through the surveys carried out on entrepreneurs was used to determine whether *knowledge of the language and/or training influence business activity, the reason for creating a firm and the process followed for firm creation*. The Pearson chi-squared test (Amón 1986; Fisher and van Belle 1993; Fleiss et al. 2003) was used as a test of association or dependence between two categorical variables, as long as the frequency in the contingency table included more than five cases. Otherwise, and only in the case of dichotomous questions, the exact Fisher test (1954) was employed. The significant character of the analysis is classified into two levels: moderate statistical relations ($*p < 0.05$) and close statistical relations ($**p < 0.01$).

Degree of knowledge of the language and characteristics of the business activity

The variable *knowledge of the language* reflects the level of knowledge of the language of the host country by assessing their knowledge before residing in Spain or before creating the firm, and also takes into account evolution in language skills. In this respect, one third of the sample already had a perfect command of the Spanish language before coming to Spain and starting up a business, another third improved their level of Spanish before creating the firm, while the remaining third maintained a medium-low level of Spanish.

Table 1 The constructs *knowledge of the language* and *education/training*

Knowledge of the language	Level of education/training
L1. Knowledge of the language before living in Spain	E1. Level of education
L2. Knowledge of the language before creating the firm	E2. Training in management taken in Spain
L3. Evolution in knowledge of the language	E3. Previous training in the sector obtained before arriving in Spain
	E4. Training in the sector taken in Spain
	E5. The need exists for greater business training

Table 2 Business activity, motives to create a new business, firm creation

Characteristics that define the firm's activity	Motives for creating the firm (or entrepreneurial activity)	Characteristics of the firm creation process
• Industrial sector V1	• Main reason for creating the firm V11	• Managerial activity or aspect of management devoted most time to when creating the firm V20
• Type of business activity V2	• Previous attitude towards activity undertaken V12	• Financial sources for creating the firm V21
• Legal status V3	• Business antecedents in the family V13	• Start-up capital V22
• Turnover V4	• Success in other family businesses V14	• Knowledge of state aid V23
• Employees under contract V5	• Location of main activity V15	• Information from the family used in the firm creation process V24
• Employees who are family members V6	• Reason for location of the firm V16	
• Family information for management V7	• Intention to open another concern V17	
• Vision of the business future V8	• Intention to return to country of origin V18	
• Competitive strategy V9	• Future of the firm if he/she returns home V19	
• % sales to compatriots V10		

The influence of the degree of knowledge of the language (Table 1) on the variables that make up the business activity (Table 2) are shown in Table 3. The results indicate a significant relation between the majority of these types of variables.

Knowledge of Spanish presents significant relations with the sector the business belongs to (V1), with the type of business activity (V2), with the legal status of the firm (V3), with the number of employees under contract, although the level of significance is weak here (V5), with the existence of family members who are employees (V6), with firm strategy (V9) and with the percentage of sales made to compatriots (V10). With regard to the activity, more than 60% of those working in the agricultural sector did not have a good knowledge of the Spanish language either before coming to Spain or before creating the firm. This percentage falls by up to

Table 3 Degree of knowledge of the language and the business activity

	Characteristics of the business activity									
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8	V9	V10
L1	0.000**	0.154	0.002**	0.800	0.036	0.000**	0.217	0.833	0.000**	0.372
L2	0.001**	0.007**	0.000**	0.512	0.029*	0.000**	0.741	0.548	0.000**	0.000**
L3	0.000**	0.005**	0.000**	0.624	0.021*	0.000**	0.410	0.449	0.001**	0.000**

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

38% among entrepreneurs from the service sector (V1). In terms of the relation between knowledge of the language and type of business, the percentage of those with a lack of knowledge or low level of Spanish is higher among entrepreneurs in the construction industry or in activities related to home help (45% and 46%, respectively) than among those involved in commerce (27%) or catering (42%), with a better evolution of knowledge of the language in those activities that come into face to face contact with the customer (V2).

The results also indicate a positive and significant relation between knowledge of the language and hiring employees (V5), although curiously, the greater the knowledge of Spanish, the higher the number of family members employed (V6). Another of the aspects significantly affected by knowledge of the language is that of firm strategy. Among entrepreneurs that put greater emphasis on differentiation and customer service are those that have a higher level of Spanish at the moment the firm is founded; whilst those that prefer to follow a low price strategy normally correspond to entrepreneurs with a lower level of Spanish (V9) (this last group exceeds the average by 9%).

With regard to sales by entrepreneurs to customers of the same ethnic background, the results obtained are paradoxical. Among entrepreneurs that concentrate more than 50% of sales within their own ethnic grouping, 42% have a medium level of Spanish, while out of those that sell less than 25% or between 25% and 50% of their product/service to their compatriots, only 27% and 20% respectively have a medium level of Spanish and their skills evolve positively in terms of knowledge of the language (V10).

Degree of knowledge of the language and main motivation for creating the firm

The relations between knowledge of the language and the motivation for creating a firm are shown in Table 4. Knowledge of Spanish shows significant relations with the main motive behind firm creation (V11), with previous attitudes to the activity undertaken (V12), with business antecedents in the family (V13), with success in other family businesses (V14), with the location of the main activity (V15), with the reason for the firm's location (V16), with the intention to start up another firm, although significativity here is only related to knowledge of Spanish before arriving in Spain (V17), with the intention to return to the country of origin (V18), and with the future of the firm (or what the firm will do) if the entrepreneur returns to their country (V19). With regard to knowledge of the language in relation to the main

Table 4 Degree of knowledge of the language and business motivation

	Main motivation for creating the firm								
	V11	V12	V13	V14	V15	V16	V17	V18	V19
L1	0.033*	0.000**	0.001**	0.115	0.000**	0.000**	0.043*	0.006**	0.198
L2	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.121	0.064	0.000**
L3	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.119	0.036*	0.000**

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

reason for new firm creation, a much greater knowledge of Spanish was possessed by those entrepreneurs whose main motivation was obtaining independence than in the case of those whose principal objective was to make more money. Among those that expressed the desire to be independent, 42% had a good knowledge of Spanish and 36% had a medium level and were in the process of improving their language skills; whilst among those that expressed the desire to earn more money, only 30% and 13% had a good knowledge and medium knowledge respectively.

With regard to the attitude towards entrepreneurship before creating the firm (V12), the relation with a knowledge of Spanish is the opposite. The lesser the language skills in terms of mastering the Spanish language, the greater the energy with which respondents showed an entrepreneurial attitude. Equally, there is a positive relation between the knowledge of Spanish and business antecedents in the family (13), and between the knowledge of Spanish and business success amongst the family (14). From among those that had family whose businesses were succeeding, 62% had a medium level of Spanish and continued to improve their language skills, and 24% already had knowledge of Spanish before starting up the activity; whilst among families whose businesses were failing or which only served as a means of survival, only 28% or 29% respectively had a medium level of Spanish or continued to improve their level, or only 11% and 12% respectively knew Spanish before starting the activity. Finally, from among the results that we consider most relevant, besides being significant, we would highlight the fact that entrepreneurs that would continue with the firm if they returned to their home countries had a greater tendency to improve their Spanish in order to create the firm (19).

Degree of knowledge of the language and the process followed for firm creation

Table 5 shows only two relations to be significant: the relations between knowledge of Spanish and the managerial activities to which they devote more attention (V20), and the relations between mastering the language and knowledge of aid from the state (V23). With regard to the amount of attention paid to different managerial activities, (V20), 45% of those that lay greater emphasis on the search for financial resources had a good knowledge of Spanish before starting up the business, and 54% of those that made market analysis a priority had a medium level of Spanish and continued to improve their knowledge of the language. In terms of knowledge of the help available from the state (V23), among the group that were aware of its existence, 60% had a medium or good knowledge of the language; while among those that were not aware of this kind of aid, 55% had a medium or good knowledge of the language. Therefore, the interpretation with regard to V23 is that a greater knowledge of the language has a moderate effect on a greater knowledge of aid from the state.

Education/training of the entrepreneur and business activity

Table 6 shows the statistical relations between the level of education or training and business activity, showing the level of studies of the entrepreneur (E1, Table 1) to be one of the most influential factors. Entrepreneurs (including those that were self-

Table 5 Relations established between the degree of knowledge of the language and the business process

	Firm creation process				
	V20	V21	V22	V23	V24
L1	0.001**	0.930	0.162	0.000**	0.289
L2	0.000**	0.054	0.071	0.000**	0.538
L3	0.000**	0.053	0.055	0.000**	0.217

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

employed) involved in providing services related to construction and, particularly, home help services (to the elderly, minors etc.) (V2) are those that possess a lower level of studies (49% only to primary level and 52% with no schooling at all, respectively). However, half of the entrepreneurs in the clothing business (50%) at least had secondary schooling, which is a proportion that represents 8% more than the average.

The level of studies of the entrepreneur (E1), as shown in the table, also has a significant relation with turnover (V4). From among those with the highest turnover in 2007 (between 10,000€ and 60,000€), the proportion of entrepreneurs with secondary education is 16% higher than those with a turnover of below 10,000€. Another of the aspects related to the level of studies (E1) is the percentage of sales to customers of the same ethnicity (V10). 56% of the entrepreneurs with secondary education or higher sold more than 50% to people from the same ethnic background.

Education/training of the ethnic entrepreneur and the motivation for new firm creation

The statistical relations between the attitude towards education and the main motive for starting up a firm, with the corresponding p-values from the tests are shown in Table 7.

The level of education and training obtained prior to arriving in Spain (E3) is positively and significantly related to previous attitude towards the business activity (V12). The proportion of entrepreneurs that were educated in their own countries is greater among those whose attitude towards entrepreneurship is favourable,

Table 6 Relations established between the level of education/training and the business activity

	Business activity									
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8	V9	V10
E1	0.031*	0.000**	0.136	0.000**	0.657	0.000**	0.910	0.368	0.103	0.000**
E2	0.043*	0.595	0.018*	0.526	0.331	0.297	0.388	0.300	0.037*	0.000**
E3	0.063	0.288	0.181	0.003**	0.214	0.001**	0.178	0.300	0.012*	0.027*
E4	0.000**	0.150	0.082	0.020*	0.006**	0.480	0.860	0.047*	0.155	0.758
E5	0.000**	0.160	0.113	0.901	0.888	0.006**	0.442	0.229	0.078	0.191

Table 7 Relations between the level of education/training and the motivation for new firm creation

	Main motivation for creating the firm								
	V11	V12	V13	V14	V15	V16	V17	V18	V19
E1	0.398	0.120	0.352	0.045*	0.025*	0.397	0.372	0.542	0.002**
E2	0.000**	0.628	0.027*	0.076	0.640	0.188	0.446	0.128	0.014*
E3	0.052	0.018*	0.007**	0.497	0.096	0.073	0.225	0.040*	0.002**
E4	0.013*	0.000**	0.559	0.739	0.318	0.282	0.141	0.773	0.019*
E5	0.002**	0.000**	0.060	0.117	0.290	0.026*	0.958	0.576	0.000**

Moreover, entrepreneurs that were trained before arriving in Spain (E3) have a greater commitment to their firm (V19), as shown by the sample where 56% of entrepreneurs trained in their own countries (17% more frequently than the average) had the intention of continuing with the business if they returned to their country of origin. In the same vein, education and previous training in the sector taken in the country of origin (E3), is significantly related to business antecedents in the family (V13). There is a greater proportion of entrepreneurs that have been previously trained in their countries and in the sector among those that have business antecedents in the family (11% more than the average).

Education/training of the ethnic entrepreneur and the firm creation process

In light of the relations shown in Table 8, it can be concluded that levels of education/training are not a particularly influential factor in the process of firm creation. A strong statistical relation only exists between training in the sector obtained in Spain (E4) and the start-up capital used to create the firm (V22). Those entrepreneurs that were trained in Spain before creating the firm were those that began with higher start-up capital, perhaps because this training provided them with more assurance when investing or made them more aware of such a need. Among the entrepreneurs whose investment exceeded 6,000€, 48% received training in Spain; whilst among those that invested less than 3,000€ or less than 6,000€, the entrepreneurs trained in that sector, and trained in Spain, were 32% and 36% respectively. Finally, education and training also show a significant relation with identifying possible aid from the state. Greater

Table 8 Relations established between the level of education/training and the firm creation process

	Process of firm creation				
	V20	V21	V22	V23	V24
E1	0.038*	0.420	0.452	0.104	0.452
E2	0.019*	0.492	0.257	0.032*	0.775
E3	0.070	0.858	0.086	0.825	0.019*
E4	0.521	0.351	0.003**	0.036*	0.869
E5	0.110	0.105	0.551	0.977	0.023*

knowledge of this help existed among the entrepreneurs trained in Spain before founding the firm (12% more than the average).

Discussion of the results and conclusions

Apart from the theoretical framework in which we review some of the main approaches to the study of entrepreneurship, this research examines the relations between *knowledge of the language* and the *education/training of the entrepreneur* and the variables we have grouped together under the names *business activity*, *motivation for creating the firm* and *firm creation process*. As in many of the studies that have turned their attention to this topic, it is difficult to generalize the results of each of the sets of relations examined. We go on to discuss some of the more relevant significant relations.

The existence of a significant relation between knowledge of the language before beginning the activity (or before creating the firm, L2) and the activity later developed (V2) is important, as is the existence of a greater evolution of knowledge of the language (L3) in those activities that involve face to face contact with the customer (V2). In a wide sense, this explains the relation between *training in the host country language* and *entrepreneurship*.

The existence of a significant relation between knowledge of the language and the competitive strategy adopted by the entrepreneur is also important. There tends to be more of a focus on customer care when there is a sound knowledge of the language, and more towards lower pricing when knowledge of Spanish is poor. Additionally, there is a strongly significant relation between knowledge of the language and the existence of business antecedents in the family (V13) and with business success (V14). As could be expected, members of families that had already owned successful businesses (V14) improved their knowledge of the language before initiating new activities. With regard to the *firm creation process*, the results show how a better command of the language allows for an increased awareness of help available from the state for new firm creation and a more effective search for financial resources (V21).

In reference to the *level of education/training of the entrepreneur*, this turned out to be an influential factor in business activity, affecting the sector of activity the firm is geared towards (V2) and the amount of turnover (V4) in relation to the *level of studies* (E1) of the EDE; as well as affecting the number of employees (V5) and the attitudes towards business activity (V12) in terms of *training on the sector obtained in Spain* (E4). It is essential to highlight, with regard to the level of training and education that we discovered a significant relation between the levels of *education/training of the entrepreneur* and his/her *family antecedents* (E1); and is significantly related to previous success in family businesses (V14); and that training in management obtained in Spain (E2) or before arriving in Spain, is significantly related to business antecedents in the family (V13). This fact, through the contrast of levels of education and training, is connected to the theories of the cultural, contextual and integral approach, described in the theoretical framework of the article.

With regard to the process of firm creation, this is an area where levels of education/training appear to have less of an effect. Education/training only has a strongly significant relation with the endowment of start-up capital for creating the

firm (V22), possibly because greater knowledge of management skills provides more assurance when it comes to investing or makes them more aware of the need to invest.

This article is of a profoundly preliminary and exploratory nature, determining which of the bivariate relations examined are significant and what interpretations can be derived from this research. Ensuing studies should take a deeper look at this analytical perspective, considering different groups of factors or other constructs that help to add greater detail and precision to understanding the factors that determine a particular activity, and the motives and processes in the creation of a new firm on the part of the ethnic entrepreneur, repeating the analysis in other areas or bearing in mind other factors not contemplated here, including the influence of particular aspects of the environment (Portes and Rumbaut 1990; Van de Ven 1993; Gnyawali and Fogel 1994), personal characteristics of the entrepreneur, forms of cooperation (Portes and Bach 1985) or the influence of political power, among others.

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