

Count me in: The Question of Being and Trans-Entrepreneurs

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship has been imagined through the lens of the gender binary where gender influences entrepreneurial decisions and behaviours. Researching entrepreneurship is overlooked to understand trans-gender as entrepreneurs. Grounded in the Heideggerian lens accompanying lifeworld existential, the meaning of trans-entrepreneur was explored through hermeneutic-phenomenology. Fifteen trans-entrepreneurs were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. Semi-structure interviews were used to get a rich description that reflects on the meaning they associated with their being as an entrepreneur. Results reflect their being as dual-authentic, revisionist and resilient. Revisionism is the unique insight that this study added as a new aspect of entrepreneurial being. The study has a theoretical implication that counts trans individuals as entrepreneurs and views their potential beyond gender biases.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Gender, Transgender, Heidegger, Hermeneutic-phenomenology, Entrepreneurship.

Introduction

The socio-cultural context of a particular society encourages or discourages certain behaviours (Marlow, 2020). Given this, Gender influences the preferences of individuals' behaviour comprising entrepreneurship, for instance, openness to change, risk-taking, autonomy, creativity, and achievement (Sharma and Sahni, 2020). In entrepreneurial research, the notion of gender is restricted to biological sex (Holmquist and Sundin, 2020). However, Feminist theories asserted that femininity and masculinity are social constructs (Ahl & Marlow, 2012) and it influences entrepreneurial decisions (Gimenez and Calabrò, 2018). Likewise, certain cultural values restrict women to initiate a venture (Ali, Ali, & Badghish, 2019). Previously, women were considered as a disadvantaged group, relative to men, because they were deprived of entrepreneurial education and experience (Marlow and Patton, 2005). It indicated that gender influences the way one can access certain resources. Despite the progress research has made, recent studies (Murzacheva, Sahasranamam, & Levie, 2020; Wang, 2019) found discriminatory experiences of women entrepreneurs accompanying the perception that they are somewhat disadvantaged comparatively men entrepreneurs.

Researching entrepreneurship is predominated with the gender binary. Surprisingly limited studies evidenced the prevailing entrepreneurial activities of trans-entrepreneurs (e.g., Suraiya, 2017; Oosterhoff and Hoang, 2018). The potential of non-conforming gender and their growing visibility creates tension in

the socio-economic strata when collides with transphobic discrimination (Marlow and Martinez Dy, 2018). Such tension is significant to entrepreneurship studies if driven by the motivation to pursue entrepreneurship (Marlow and Martinez Dy, 2018). Researching the entrepreneurial behaviour of transgender individuals in different socio-cultural contexts is unexplored (Marlow, Hicks, & Treanor, 2019).

Transgender individuals are more vulnerable to gender-based stigma than women because they live at the margin of society. Their entry to entrepreneurship thereby creating a space for qualitative in-depth interviews to explore experiences of transgender individuals embracing entrepreneurship. Incompatible with the gender binary norms and expectations of being an entrepreneur at once, it is questionable for trans-entrepreneurs that whether they can be as competent as men entrepreneur or what traits do they possess being a non-conforming gender. There is little evidence to explore the influence of stereotyping contradiction and discrimination on the entrepreneurial propensity and subsequent the manifestation of entrepreneurial behaviour of trans-entrepreneurs (Marlow et al., 2019).

The research question which leads this study is how transgender individuals make sense of being an entrepreneur? Grounded in the Heideggerian lens of understanding *being* accompanying lifeworld existential which provides a rich description and interpretation of what it means to live entrepreneurship *being* trans-gender. The lens assisted in a consideration of contextual factors and counted the entrepreneurial potential of a non-conforming gender that need to be considered in researching entrepreneurship. This study contributed to the entrepreneurial literature in extracting the meaning of trans-entrepreneur from the lived experiences of trans-individuals who stepped into entrepreneurship being a non-conforming gender. This exploration will unveil a new aspect of entrepreneurship that develop an understanding of the trans-entrepreneurial traits among which we found revisionism is the new insight that provides a new dimension to researching entrepreneurship on non-binary gender.

In this study, first, we examine the nature of being concerning the lived experiences of transgender individuals reflected on the available literature embedded with some selected key features of *being* extracted from the seminal work of Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1927). We then explicate *being as* an entrepreneur. In this reflection, we questioned what is it like to be a trans- entrepreneur? Through this inquiry, mapped on to what we know about an entrepreneur, the central tenet is the transformation of *being*, and not just the *doing*. *Being* is the result of doing certain performances in a specific context. What if the context is massive discriminatory and stigmatized? What if it pushes you to social exclusion? What if society is filled with gender-based stereotyping? Gender influences the entrepreneurial *being* if a confirming gender (woman) faces discrimination in the entrepreneurial world so how a non-conforming gender can make the visibility of their being-in-the-entrepreneurial-world. It is a question of concern that how can we define their *being* as an entrepreneur? Following hermeneutic-phenomenology, we chalked out three major themes that reflect the meaning of being a trans-entrepreneur.

Theoretical Background

Questioning the existence of transgender entrepreneur: Heideggerian lens

In this study, the question of *being* springs upon the foundation of Heidegger's (1927) understanding of *being*. The phenomenological stance takes the entrepreneur as a phenomenon that is deeply connected to his or her existence as a human being (Fast, 2018). The experience of being a trans-entrepreneur is concerned with how they find themselves thrown in a particular socio-cultural context. Heideggerian lens addresses the question of being concerning what *being* is, adequately drawn upon *Dasein* through deconstructing being-in-the-world (Woodson, 2018). Heidegger (1927) asserted that one should understand the *being* through their activity which he called being-in-the-world interpreted as lifeworld. It is concerned with understanding the relationship between *Dasein* and its world.

Experience of being transgender individuals in Pakistan

The socio-cultural norms are predominated with gender binary however, the term gender is distinct from sex. Gender has a psychological and cultural connotation, whereas biological sex can be viewed anatomically or physiologically (Stroller, 1968). Gender is something one performs (Butler, 1990) with which “one is not born, rather becomes, woman” (De Beauvoir, 1972, p.14). and so is the case with men. Their gender identity is assigned (consistent with their assigned sex at birth) through the process of social and cultural construction. One does not know how to maintain social interaction with others until they do not attribute themselves to a gender. It is “a relational social construct” (Dillabough, 2006, p. 48). It is how people expect to express, behave and perform their role accordingly and based on which their behaviours are accepted or rejected in the social realm (De Beauvoir, 1972; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013).

Transgender individuals show up in the world differently. They reflect the conflation of the gender binary. The notion of their identity is based on the idea of self; they feel that they are trapped in the wrong body (Aurat Foundation, 2016; Areo, 2019; Qayyum, January 20, 2019). Likewise, Ansari, Yasmeen, and Alvi (2017) explored that transgender individuals perceive themselves as women and claim to have more feminine feelings, which compels them to carry themselves in the same manner. They are in a struggling quest to know the identity of their innermost self.

Heidegger selected the term Dasein to investigate *being* based on the nature of its neutrality where the significance in terms of gender and body is overlooked (Adams, 2013). Derrida criticized that neutrality does not imply that Dasein is asexual (Smith-Pickard, 2009). The asexuality of Dasein can overlook the effect of gender on its interaction with others and in the world. Besides the criticism, the neutrality of Dasein has been challenged based on the fact that it is gendered within a patriarchal order (Aho, 2007). Dasein makes sense of things that it has inherited from others in the world and it applies the same in the case of gender identity, where socio-cultural values define the roles. But what if a person’s inner self-recognition does not conform with the social values? It is the question of their *being* whether authentic or inauthentic: authentic mode of existence recognizes oneself and knows that it is transcending towards death, finite whereas the inauthentic mode of existence relying on the social realm (‘they’); submitting oneself to others (Heidegger, 1927). Likewise, Bialystok (2013) stated, “There is a self that exceeds what I’m given by others and what others see of me.” The self recognizes, understands and accepts the incongruence that others do not, which leads a person to become an authentic being. Consequently, their authenticity is vulnerable to social stigma (Fraser, 2009).

Dasein and the world are inseparable; the entities around it make up its whole world and how they perceive, it makes them feel accordingly (Heidegger, 1927). Their thrownness was disclosed to them by getting attuned to the world which Heidegger (1927) called disposedness. It is the familiarization of Dasein with the world. It helps in making sense of what is significant, relevant or irrelevant, preferred or avoided. The non-conforming behaviour of transgender individuals makes it difficult for them to attune to the world (home of their biological family) where they reside. Their lives teem with tragic events from their birth to death. At the time of their birth, they are often disowned by their biological families (in case of intersex). If they are not disowned, in their growing age they face repression from their family due to their deviant behaviour; this leads them to abandon their families. Consequently, at the disclosure of their world, based on their disposedness, they interpret their being-in-the-world with all the possibilities they can comprehend. The most promising possibility, but threatening at the same time, is looking for another living space where they can feel secure and supported. Heidegger (1927) called such comprehension as understanding; one finds several possibilities in a particular situation that can be translated into actions, Dasein interprets oneself, the possibilities and eventually takes responsibility for its existence. Such a quest leads them to join a community of transgender individuals where they, feel secure and comfortable. But they are unaware of the risks associated with that new living place that may drag them into more vulnerable circumstances - e.g., prone to sexual abuse, begging, prostitution and some other abject way of earning (Rao, 2016).

The repressive attitude of society makes transgender individuals vulnerable to psychological problems (Fatima et al., 2017; Slatch, Ahmed, & Mubarak, 2018). They spend worrisome nights thinking about future concerns, as they lack social support and often have a poor financial situation. The deleterious attitude of their biological family and society makes them feel worthless. Such feelings lower their self-esteem and make them increasingly isolated. Moreover, constant rejection and ill-treatment of society make them have suicidal thoughts. People dislike maintaining relations with them and restrict them from participating in any economic, socio-cultural and political activities (Khan et al., 2009).

Heidegger (1927) presented two ways of interacting with others, positive or negative, which he called solicitude. He characterized negative solicitude as a deficient mode when Dasein demonstrates an indifferent attitude towards others. Positive solicitude, however, acknowledges others. Considering the negative solicitude, he stated, "Being for, against, or without one another, passing one another by, not 'mattering' to one another" (Heidegger, 1927, p. 158). Dasein encounters others indifferently, where others do not matter and are neglected. It is like equipment that is always operational but remains unnoticed. Non-conforming gender behaviour leads to physical and psychological reprimands from the family. The repressive attitude of their families and people around them can lower their self-esteem and shaken their confidence. Such a lived experience lowers their self-esteem and ignites in them a quest to know their true self. They fail to get confidence and trust from their families, which makes it hard to feel fulfilled in their lives. Day in and day out, they confront the negative solicitude; people disgrace them, pass by them and neglect them as though they have little significance in the world.

The question of being trans-entrepreneur

Marlow and Patton (2005, p. 731) stated, "the argument should no longer be about if gender is an issue but how it shapes the experiences of entrepreneurship within particular contexts". Zisser et al. (2019) evident the influence of gender on entrepreneurial engagement/behaviour where the context cannot be neglected. To date, women have been used as a proxy gender concerning entrepreneurship which limits the analysis of gender and entrepreneurship that excludes other gendered subjectivities (Marlow et al., 2019).

Taking the stance of gendered subjectivities, it is debatable to view transgender individuals as entrepreneurs. Being an entrepreneur is being authentic in a way to be true to oneself, realizing one's competencies, and actualizing the venture despite knowing the unfavourable circumstances, for instance, economic, socio-cultural and others. Transgender individuals have been getting massive rejection in every walk of life where they face personal, social, economic, cultural and psychological issues which result in a higher state of isolation and social exclusion (Punjab Social Protection Authority, 2018). In this unfortunate situation, it is a question of concern that how they realize their authentic selves in a highly discriminatory socio-cultural context?

The exploration of Dasein for itself by itself is stated as a response to the call of conscience (Heidegger, 1927). This call is not something related to moral conduct rather a clear and focused heeding of one's unique competencies. Thereby, Dasein comprehends itself and act accordingly in the world. For instance, the entrepreneur knows his/her passion based on which they explore their interests, aptitude and abilities. This exploration leads them toward their true call (entrepreneurship) to live their passion, indicates Dasein's authenticity. Heidegger (1927) stated such true calling as the moment of vision when one gets clarity about oneself. He used the term resoluteness to grasp its meaning for Dasein to heed this call of conscience and act accordingly. He stated that resoluteness is "letting oneself be summoned out of one's lostness in the they" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 345) and exploring one's unique and authentic position to approach the world. The way transgender individuals approaching the world is contradictory and against the social-cultural norms of society.

We interpreted transgender individuals as disadvantaged members of society where they live at the margin of society, discriminated and socially excluded. Morgan (2020) stated that discriminatory practices can push disadvantaged individuals toward entrepreneurship if they have any compelling ideas that they are capable of executing. He asserted that the negative attitudes of others might be the reason for their motivation. He counted detrimental beliefs and disrespectful generalizations as negative stereotypes that people make up in terms of traits and social roles of minority groups. However, their non-confirming gender performances could have a negative influence on resource acquisition and stakeholder support (Marlow et al., 2019).

Methodology

To explore the meaning of *being* a trans-entrepreneur, we have used hermeneutic-phenomenology. Heidegger (1927) proposed that *being* can be investigated through phenomenology. He defined phenomenology as “to let shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself.” (p.36). He argued that methodologically, the meaning of a phenomenological description can be extracted from interpretations. The focus is on the human experience and how it is lived? One can explore this experience of being by studying the relationship of humans with their lifeworld.

Van Manen (1990) provided four existential structures of the lifeworld (i.e., corporeality, spatiality, temporality, and relationality) that we used as an interview guide for reflection on the data under analysis. Lifeworld makes up the existence of individuals based on the assumption that the realities of individuals are invariably influenced by the world in which they live (Heidegger, 1927). This exploration helps to reflect the experience of an individual as a being. The central idea is to give voice to the lived experiences of trans-entrepreneurs. An exploration of each lifeworld with supporting quotes from participants provided the essence of their *being-in-the-world*.

From the socio-cultural context of Pakistan, fifteen trans-entrepreneurs were recruited to participate in this study following purposive sampling based on certain inclusion criteria. As they are a few, so snowball sampling assisted this process. We used pseudo names to protect their identities. All the preconceptions were bracketed as a crucial step involved in hermeneutic-phenomenology (Fuster Guillen, 2019) and to maintain the validity of the study (Ahern, 1999). Semi-structured in-depth interviews were taken and transcribed. Four themes have emerged through the detailed analysis of micro and macro-thematic reflection on the meaning of *being* a trans-entrepreneur.

Results

Themes that emerged from the rich descriptions of participants to reflect on the meaning of being trans-entrepreneurs are discussed below along with supporting illustrative quotes of participants.

Dual authenticity

This theme reflected three existential structures of the lifeworld of trans-entrepreneurs i.e., spatiality, corporeality, and relationality. Spatiality referred to a felt space (van Manen, 1990) where Dasein is thrown (Heidegger, 1927) embedded in a socio-cultural context. In life, the fundamental lived space for an individual is home. Likewise, Bollnow (1961) inquired, “Where is my real home?” where he contemplated that home is the spatial centre of an individual’s life. Correspondingly, van Manen (1990) recognized the significance of home as a lived space as a “fundamental sense of our being” (p.102). In Pakistan, it is complex to understand the real home of transgender individuals; the living space where they reside or where they are thrown in the world.

In contrast, relationality explicates the meaning of maintaining relations with others in a corporeal way (e.g., one meets others either by shaking a hand or in the way they present themselves) where corporeality referred to how individuals perceive their bodies. Meeting with others creates a lasting impression of a person and enables them to develop a conversational relationship. Such an impression makes a person either want to pursue or quell the relation with others. Most transgender individuals live with their biological families until they exhibit deviant behaviour. This behaviour leads to physical and psychological reprimands from the family. Their lives with their biological families are threatening, repressive, and make them feel insecure in their homes; therefore, they often abandon their families. The repressive attitude of their families and people around them can lower their self-esteem and shaken their confidence. Such a lived experience lowers their self-esteem and ignites in them a quest to know their true self.

Authenticity referred to knowing oneself through personal experience, beliefs, thoughts and act accordingly with the true self (Harter, 2002, p.382). We found trans-entrepreneurs as authentic beings at two levels so that we called it dual authenticity. First, they identify themselves and accept their identity as a non-conforming gender and behave in the same manner. Second, they explored their competencies which led them to pursue an entrepreneurial venture.

The participants shared their struggles on their journey to discovering their dual authentic being to sense themselves as an entrepreneur. To illustrate, one participant put in, "since my childhood, my trans-identity was known to me; my family used to beat me on my non-conforming gender behaviour, but I knew what I am inside and I opted to act in the similar way" (Soha). Another participant put in, "seeking the meaning of my true self as a trans-person is a tiresome journey for me, indeed, it is an experiential learning to know about the trans-identity by the massive social rejection and the negative attitude of people towards me" (Maha). She further added, "I like myself. I did not allow any stigma to dominate me, I passed by and living the life in a way I feel to like". The participants shared how others misinterpreted their behaviour and they engage in social behaviour that went against their personal beliefs, and thoughts. The participants continually learned and grew from the massive discrimination and social rejection. The rejection gauge them to discover their authentic selves and learned to behave congruently with their authentic selves. To illustrate further, another participant shared, "I was very feminine. In school, kids used to call me hijra, in an insulting way. Reflecting on my childhood, now I realized that I evolved as a woman and it was a transforming journey where I listened to myself only and none others" (Maya).

We found their authentic being at another level as well and it is the exploration of the entrepreneurial being. We explicate their entrepreneurial being as knowing one's competencies align to capture some market need in a view to bringing a social change". To illustrate, one participant shared, "people rejected me to hire for any employment, that pushed me to identify my interests to know what can I do for earning, but to change the repressive attitude of society was more important for me, and I found through entrepreneurship, I can do this" (Sitara). Another participant put it similarly, "people discouraged me when I was starting my venture, it was a daunting step to negate the social pressure and listening to the inner voice only. I knew that this is the only resort that can bring some change and helped me to live the way I am" (Soha).

Almost all participants reflect on exploring their true self based on the social rejection they face on their journeys, however; it seems that they internalized the rejection and focused on their inner-self. The outer world is not supporting them to provide employment opportunities where they are pushed to oneself to see what they can do for themselves, however, the world is not ready to accept them as an entrepreneur, but negating the rejection again; they are up to bring some business offerings that may shift the repressive attitude of society. To illustrate, one participant shared, "The massive stigmatization and negative stereotyping pushed me to work for the rights of the trans community. Despite the social rejection, I initiated a social organization aim to empower trans-community. Stigmatization ignited my competencies to empower trans-community" (Shazia).

Revisionism

This theme represents the temporality structure of the existential of their lifeworld. The time, every person lives in the world; subject to his/her life experiences, based on past reflections, future projection and, how he/she is living in the present? Heidegger (1927) viewed temporality as ecstatic, literally meaning, standing out; the way, Dasein comes back to itself (past), comes toward itself (future) and let itself encounter with the entities in the world (present). Dasein experienced these moments together as a unitary structure and allows it to exist as a temporal being. Most importantly, the present time can change the past; when a person is determinant towards a future and reinterprets himself, who he once was or who he now is (van Manen, 1990).

Data revealed a sense of revisionism among participants. We interpreted this aspect of their being as their determination to change the existing beliefs and stereotyping about non-confirming gender through entrepreneurship by exhibiting a different behaviour that allows them to get social acceptance. To illustrate, one participant shared, "I wanted to change the way people think about us, I examined so closely and realized that it is our (trans-community) past that brought us here with negative stereotyping and social rejection. The negative attitude of people can only be changed when we exhibit ourselves differently. I see this difference in my daily transaction, and I am glad to see how people accepting me as an entrepreneur" (Sakiya). Another participant put it differently, "dealing with people differently made me realize that how easily we can engage in society. It is not only about how people give us social space but how can we take it elegantly" (Shama).

Dasein is a historical being, which is the foundation of temporality. It understands itself historically, and inherit the way one understands entities in the world from one generation to another. The present life of transgender individuals is a reflection of their life, which is inherited and transmitted from their past. Evidence of their strong determination to bring social change emerged from the data. As participants shared that stigmatization could not influence them in the present time because they believe in their entrepreneurial efforts that can bring positive change in future which would abate the effects of the past. However, the process is slow and gradual but ultimately will lead to a positive social change. To illustrate, one participant put in, "in massive stigmatization, it was hard for me to take an entrepreneurial initiative. But I found it is the only way that can shift the negative attitude of society. My behaviour and entrepreneurial performance will determine what I am today not what transgender individuals were in the past based on which we have been stigmatized." Similarly, another participant put in, "I know, how to define myself as a human, and as an entrepreneur. I am a trans-woman, own myself and running a venture with dignity. People who know me, respect me and my work, those who do not know me, take me as a trans-person who considered to be stigmatized" (Jiya).

Resilience

The theme exhibits their being-in-the-world resilience, reflects four existential structures of their lifeworld. Being resilient is to handle and recover oneself from adversities of life. However, we found the resilience of transgender individuals broadly at two levels. First, managing negative stereotyping concerning their non-confirming gender, second, facing massive discrimination in acquiring entrepreneurial resources and initiating a venture. To illustrate, one participant put in, "Numerous times, I wanted to give it up because it was not easy to deal with cisgender about business. Despite the social rejection, I knew that it was the beginning, and if I could get through this rough road, I would start enjoying being entrepreneur and now people are accepting me as a trans-entrepreneur" (Sheza). Another participant put in, "since childhood, we, trans-individuals have been faced countless failures so in business catering with any failure is so easy for me. I believe, becoming a trans-entrepreneur is an evolving process backing with resilience and a consistent effort because the world won't allow you to acquire resources until you break the barriers" (Somiya).

We found that the negative attitude of society inculcated a sense of resilience enabling them to initiate a venture with a life-changing purpose rather than economic need. To illustrate, one participant put in, “one can earn money in many ways but I wanted to earn it respectfully and in a way that society accepts me as a human. It was not easy, I pushed myself so hard to initiate a venture, people mocked me when they hear that a trans-individual starting a business. I knew that I can do this and can change the way people look at us” (Komal). Likewise, another participant shared, “I feel that trans-individuals are emotionally stronger than cisgender because we have been gone through the rejection and failure at different intervals of life so initiating and running a venture is a life-changing experience. It was not easy for me but over time it allows society to accept us as a human, and I enjoy being as a trans-entrepreneur” (Mona).

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to explore the existential understanding of being as a trans-entrepreneur. Adopting hermeneutic-phenomenology, three themes emerged from the rich transcript of fifteen participants: dual-authenticity, revisionism, and resilience. We found these themes as three facets of their being as trans-entrepreneurs. These attributes are substantial to own one’s identity as a transgender individual and contribute a similar significance in becoming an entrepreneur.

Authenticity allows individuals to surpass designated social norms, exhibit true self and chose to oppose being imposed. Goffnett and Pacey (2020) stated Transgender authenticity as “taking authority in expressing gender in a way that feels validating and comfortable”. Results revealed trans individuals as authentic beings at two levels; first recognizing one’s gender identity, owing to it and second, discovering one’s competencies, initiating a venture and breaking the stereotypes of society that trans-individual can bring social change through entrepreneurship. Our result at the first level of trans-authenticity is consistent with the previous studies regarding gender identity (Bialystok, 2013; Depakakibo et al., 2020; Eisenberg, 2020; Taylor, 2015). However, none of the studies has found that voice the authenticity of trans-entrepreneurs.

Revisionism is kind of a different aspect of their being which we related to change the established attitude towards them through entrepreneurship. Several studies evidenced the entrepreneurial effort to reduce stigma with a purpose to bring a social change (Bacq et al., 2018; Bacq et al., 2020; Naimi et al., 2020) whereas Naseer, Kakakhel, and Shah (2019) found this effort among transgender individuals. However, little traces have been found on the trans-entrepreneurial effort to bring social change through entrepreneurship that can reduce stigma.

Previous studies found resilience is one of the crucial components to the business survival (Chadwick & Raver, 2020; Schutte, and Mberi, 2020; Owenbiugie, 2020) and coping failures (Corner, Singh & Pavlovich, 2017; Lafuente et al., 2019; Omoredede, 2019; Franco, Haase, & António, 2020). Concerning trans individuals, resilience is considered as a gauge against stigma mainly in health care studies (Amodeo et al., 2018; Goldenberg, Kahle, & Stephenson, 2020; McCann & Brown, 2017; Puckett et al., 2019; Lacombe-Duncan et al., 2020). We provided the insights of prevailing resilience of trans-individuals at two levels; first handling stigma concerning gender stereotyping and second, initiating and managing the entrepreneurial venture.

Our findings contribute to the entrepreneurial literature in two ways; first, it broadens the view of gender in researching entrepreneurship to give empirical insights about the existential structure of the lifeworld of trans-individuals to interpret their *being* as entrepreneurs. Surprisingly, limited work has been found that covered the entrepreneurial dimension of trans-individuals (e.g., Suraiya, 2017; Oosterhoff and Hoang, 2018). However, researching the entrepreneurial aspects among trans-community has the potential to explore further. Second, this study gives trans-entrepreneurial traits where revisionism is the novel insight. They stepped into entrepreneurship with the purpose to redefine themselves in society. This result has some consistent reflection with previous studies concerning marginalized community (Naimi et al.,

2020; Bacq et al., 2020). The result indicated that their entrepreneurial choice is more inclined towards a social change rather than economic. However, gender is overlooked to understand revisionism in researching entrepreneurship.

Based on the existential understanding, we extracted the meaning of trans-entrepreneurs as authentic selves to their gender identity and entrepreneurial skills backing with resilience where gender stereotyping pushed them to stepped into a venture with a purpose to redefine their social position. But in the pervasive stigmatization, would they be able to bring a social change? Would society allow them to progress as entrepreneurs? or their gender will remain the barrier to grow their business? These questions call for future exploration to understand the societal response towards their entrepreneurial ventures.

The insights of this study have significant theoretical implications. It assists in developing an understanding for the researcher to count trans-individuals in the entrepreneurial domain. Moreover, their sense of revisionism has the potential to create a social impact. Further research may explore the impact of their entrepreneurial activities on society.

Conclusion

Trans-individuals preferred to identify as transgender despite pervasive stigmatization with a determination to change the way society perceives them through entrepreneurship. Gender influences the way individuals behave and make decisions, but the potential should not be gender-biased. It should be counted in the entrepreneurial domain or any other field where their efforts would add a significant contribution not only to the empowerment and growth of their marginalized community but also to the development of the economy.

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