



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

REPORT - 2

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Introduction

An investigation on the personality and behaviour of a successful entrepreneur is needed to understand the story behind their success and what distinguishes them from others (Kaushik and Bhatnagar, 2009). The entrepreneur selected for this investigation is Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook Inc. His journey to success and the models of entrepreneurial behaviour observed in his case study have been reviewed in reference to relevant theories and literature. The purpose of this report is to review the evidences of the models of entrepreneurial behaviour in the given context.

Mark Zuckerberg's journey to become a successful entrepreneur

Mark Zuckerberg's success with his social media project did not come out of the blue and neither was his creation imitated from the technologies used in other tech companies. Born in 1984, he was from a well-educated family, and he had a **passion** for computer engineering since he was a high schooler (Walter, 2020). Taking notice of his interest in computer programming, his parents had got him a programming tutor when he was only in the high school, and enrolled him into a prep school in New Hampshire. Graduating from the prep. school, Mark then got enrolled at Harvard University (Andersén, 2010). Also, he continued practicing computing programming skills, and soon he became the go-to computer programmer in the university campus. In his early stage in the campus, he also developed two computer programs- FaceMash and CourseMatch, but due to some legal issues, the FaceMash project was shut down by the university authority (Wormser, 2017). However, this laid the foundation for Facebook. His **dedication** in creating a social networking platform was significant and in 2004, he had built "The Facebook" in his dorm room, which was the very early prototype of the Facebook project. After building the project successfully and **foreseeing** its potentials, Mark decided to drop out of the college and engage full time on the project. His **confidence** on his project was huge, and thus, he didn't hesitate **taking the risks**/losses of dropping out of Harvard. In 2005, Facebook was launched for school going students to serve as a social networking platform for them. And since then the platform

started to take over the digital space and revolutionize the concept of social media that people know now (Andersén, 2010). According to the company's financial records, last year, the company's revenue was reported at \$21.08 billion. Mark Zuckerberg himself has a net worth of \$78 billion. Also, to be noted, unlike many other entrepreneurs who lose control of their company as it grows to a large venture, this didn't have in the case of Mark, and with his **successful leadership skill**, he still leads the company and holds 60% of the voting rights in the company (Elkins, 2020).

Mark's behavioural and personality traits evident from his case study

Based on the evidences from his journey to success, several behavioural traits can be noted. Persistence, self-motivation, passion, confidence, risk taking and dedication (Elkins, 2020). He was a persistent individual who continued working on a project that faced significant barriers in the early stages (Hisrich, Peters and Shepherd, 2019). This is something that separates an entrepreneur from a regular individual. Without persistence, one cannot become a successful entrepreneur. His confident and risk-taking personality is evident from his decisions throughout his career (Kaushik and Bhatnagar, 2009). His decision to drop out from Harvard, his decision to forego Yahoo and Microsoft's job offers, his decisions to continue working on the Facebook project despite the university shutting it down in its early stage- all prove his confidence and risk-taking mentality in business. One could argue that his self-motivation played a huge role in his journey (Johnson, 2020). Which is true because without self-motivation, an entrepreneur cannot pursue a vision that may likely have no outcomes. Studies suggest that by the time Mark was working on his project, there were many tech start-ups frequently popping up and ultimately getting to no direction at all, because the market wasn't still that advance. The sheer will from self-motivation led him, and many other entrepreneurs to success at that time (Kirkley, 2016).

Facebook as an entrepreneurial project can be referred to as a scalable entrepreneurial venture. Scalable entrepreneurial ventures are those that are driven by the vision to change the world and accepts all the risks to make the vision come true (Hisrich, Peters and Shepherd, 2019.). Mark was also driven by a vision and him dropping out of Harvard is a great example of his risk-taking mentality. Unlike Apple, Google, or Microsoft, Facebook was launched a lot later. There was significant competition from MySpace already, and yet, Mark took the risks because he was confident on his innovation (Johnson, 2020). In Miles and Snow's (1996) typology of

entrepreneur, Mark can be defined as an innovator entrepreneur. Also, Filion's (1998) typology of entrepreneur would define Mark as a visionary entrepreneur. Mark's vision was to redefine social networking and create a common platform which everyone can use for social communication. Economic profits were not the only primary goals for Mark, but rather he was envisioned on creating a universal website which would mark his contribution (Kaushik and Bhatnagar, 2009). Thus, he showed the traits of a visionary entrepreneur. Also, as an innovator, he wrote the codes for the website himself and was actively engaged in the development of Facebook, rather than replicating any existing ones (Kaushik and Bhatnagar, 2009).

According to Mark himself, passion was a great element to his success. His passion in computer programming was what led to the development of Facebook in 2005. This passion driven attitude would be evident in the case of other successful tech start-up entrepreneurs like Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, or Elon Mask (Kirkley, 2016). Passion is also a common success driver among most athletes. Mark's passion was not just to create a social networking platform, but to make it a remarkable development in the tech sector. It is to be noted that in the early days of Facebook, larger companies like Yahoo, Microsoft and many others (Menke, 2018). For anyone else, it would have been a lucrative offer to start a successful and stable career rather than pursuing a goal that may or may not come to fruition. Yet, his passion driven mentality, kept him on his path to build the most successful social media platform to date (Walter, 2020).

Purpose was another key to Mark's success. Purpose in this context refers to staying true to the reason that they started the business with. The purpose behind the development of "TheFacebook" and FaceMash was pretty much the same (Walter, 2020). Those projects were initiated to build a successful social networking platform. Even to this day, Mark holds the same objective, which is "to make the world more open and connected" (Walter, 2020).

Mark, from the very beginning, was a people focused entrepreneur. From the very start, Mark's approach to the organisation was to hire a small group of highly talented and highly efficient workforce. According to Mark Zuckerberg himself, "One of the things that we've focused on is keeping the company as small as possible... How do you do that? You make sure that every person you add to your company is really great. (Menke, 2018)" This has been a key ingredient to Facebook's success. One of the core competencies of the company comes from its highly talented workforce who keeps up the innovation process at Facebook alive. A rigorous screening

and recruitment process make it possible for the company to get the best talents in its staff team (Walter, 2020).

Approach to product is another distinct trait of Mark Zuckerberg. His philosophy behind the product is that Facebook is never a finished product. This idea towards the product extends Facebook's industry lifecycle. Another philosophy of Mark is to "move fast and break things". This approach to product and product development ensures a rapid growth of the business. According to Wormser (2017), a successful entrepreneur should establish and welcome a culture of innovation. Entrepreneurs are distinct from managers in this aspect because a business manager or a business owner would prefer keeping the current formula or systems to continue because the innovative changes might risk the performance (Zacharakis, Corbett and Bygrave, 2019.). But an entrepreneur accepts the risks and continues innovation to pursue new opportunities.

And finally, positive attitude towards partnership or extraversion was also evident as a significant entrepreneurial behaviour of Mark Zuckerberg. At Facebook, Zuckerberg lays out the foundation of the idea, while Sheryl Sandberg, the COO of the company, executes the idea (Andersén, 2010). According to Mark, "Sheryl has been my partner in running Facebook and has been central to our growth and success over the years." This also demonstrates his participative approach to leadership, which is often associated with successful entrepreneurs (Barringer and Ireland, 2019.).

Mark's leadership style also tells a lot about his entrepreneurial behaviour. According to Elkins (2020), Mark's leadership features the criteria of transformational leadership. He is at the same time encouraging and aggressive. His push towards innovation is similar to Steve Jobs. He also acts as a team player rather than a leader who keeps himself distant from the team activities (Casson, 2010). He works with people to get the jobs done. According to Inc.com (2020), Mark's transformational leadership played an effective role behind the success of Facebook because it is a project that could not have been pulled off if Mark himself didn't actively engage in the development process and encouraged his team towards his vision.

Reviewing the aspects of Mark's entrepreneurial behaviour, the implications of opportunity-based entrepreneurship is evident. Peter Drucker definition of opportunity-based theory of entrepreneurship refers that "entrepreneurs excel at seeing and taking advantage of possibilities

created by social, technological and cultural changes” (Endres and Woods, 2018). When the digital space started to go through many major changes that would define it to what it is nowadays, Mark saw the opportunity to enter the information and communication technology sector with his own passion, expertise, knowledge and vision (Kaushik and Bhatnagar, 2009). Thus, Facebook was made possible and the success of Facebook was ensured through opportunity-based entrepreneurship (Hisrich, Peters and Shepherd, 2019.). His attitude towards opportunities, risks, innovation, people, and the industry made led to the success of his venture.

Academy of Management Review (21, 135–172) informs that the level of entrepreneurial orientation can be understood by examining how an entrepreneur’s behaviour stacks up relative to the five dimensions: (1) autonomy, (2) competitive aggressiveness, (3) innovativeness, (4) proactiveness, (5) and risk taking. Mark’s tendencies to work on his project autonomously, ignoring the job offers from some of the larger tech giants at the time, shows the autonomy aspect of his entrepreneurial behaviour. His aggressive approach to challenge the current concepts and develop even better upgrades or features for Facebook, shows his competitive aggressiveness side of personality. His innovativeness is evident from the success and popularity of Facebook today, and his ability to breakthrough the concept of social networking. Mark’s proactiveness is evident from his prediction of the future needs in the social media industry (Hisrich, Peters and Shepherd, 2019.). And finally, his risk-taking attitude in life is also evident from the journey of Facebook, and its becoming today.

Conclusion

The report evaluated the traits of a successful entrepreneur, Mark Zuckerberg, and has offered an analysis on his success using models of entrepreneurial behaviour and/or entrepreneurial orientation. It is evident from his case study that he demonstrates the criteria of an innovator and a visionary entrepreneur. His behaviour can also be defined by the opportunity-based theory of entrepreneurship. It is evident from the study that Mark’s personality traits played a major role in his successful career and the creation of Facebook.

Comparing my entrepreneurial style with the chosen entrepreneur

In order to develop myself as a potential entrepreneur, I need to be aware of the different skills and personalities that successful entrepreneurs demonstrate. Comparing my own entrepreneurial style with that of a successful entrepreneur could be helpful for understanding where I stand, and

what directions I should pursue. In the previous section, I have discussed about Mark Zuckerberg, who is amongst the most successful entrepreneurs to date. Having my style compared to his style of entrepreneurship could help me understand whether I can embark on the journey to create a scalable start up or should I focus on creating a regular entrepreneurial venture that is more suitable to my behavioural traits.

In the previous discussion, I have discussed how Mark Zuckerberg's entrepreneurial behaviour can be explained in context of opportunity-based entrepreneurship, and in the context of Miles and Snow's (1996) and Filion's (1998) typology of entrepreneurship, he demonstrates the behaviours of an innovator and a visionary. The key behavioural traits evident from his case study include, but not limited to, are aggressive and encouraging leadership style, purpose-driven and people focused approach to business, strong passion, partnership mentality, persistence, self-motivation, confidence, risk taking and dedication (Kirkley, 2016).

In order to assess my entrepreneurial personality, I have conducted a self-analysis to identify my strengths and weaknesses. I have found that I am low on transformational leadership skill, partnership mentality, confidence and risk taking. However, I have also assessed that I have adequate persistence, self-motivation and purpose orientation.

Strengths Adequate persistence, self-motivation and purpose orientation.	Weaknesses Transformational leadership skill, partnership mentality, confidence and risk taking. I am not a visionary. Lack of passion. Lack of innovativeness.
Opportunities Scopes for skill development activities. Good communication and interpersonal skills can be a good start to build my networking skills and leadership skills.	Threats Lack of confidence and risk-taking mentality would be a severe challenge to my entrepreneurial skill development.

My approach to entrepreneurship is less risk taking and more about getting things done. I pursue opportunities but I don't want to go beyond my capacities in pursuing them. Thus, relating my case to the resource-based theory of entrepreneurship, I would rather be comfortable in small

business ventures because that would be less risky for me, and I can pursue efficient scopes of business within my limited capacities.

Based on Filion's typology of entrepreneurship, I can consider myself as an operator rather than innovator, because I don't have much idea to make a disruptive innovation (Casson, 2010). On the other hand, Mark Zuckerberg was specialized in computer programming and he was driven towards a vision, which made the creation of Facebook possible. This is a certain trait that is absent among regular entrepreneurs. Studies suggest that the key difference between a regular entrepreneur and a scalable start-up or social enterprise entrepreneur is the ability to execute a unique vision and the ability to disrupt the existing systems. Behavioral theories of entrepreneurship suggest that such personality traits cannot be easily developed (Endres and Woods, 2018). These are often innate among individuals.

Areas of entrepreneurial personality that I do particularly well would help me pursue career in small business entrepreneurial venture. But the distinguishing factors that make Mark Zuckerberg a successful entrepreneur with his scalable start-up, are largely absent in me. Therefore, I cannot see myself as an entrepreneur starting a scalable start-up venture like Mark Zuckerberg or others like him.

Thus, I conclude this report stating that there are vast behavioural differences between Mark Zuckerberg's entrepreneurial style and my entrepreneurial style. This is also obvious that I would not be pursuing the same scale of opportunities as he did, and I would not be planning to create the same venture as he did. My approach to entrepreneurship would be to establish a successful SME in either retail or in textile industry.

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