Entrepreneurial support: a theoretical framework and case study of Tunisia

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial support, its determinants, its articulation, and its actors are always analyzed from both processual and emergent perspectives. Because a certain level of coherence must be maintained, public structures that are perceived as not opting for a process/emergence mix in their support systems are not hostile to using it when the context permits it and when the person receiving support accepts to be at the center of the design of his or her support. Literature reveals that a compromise between these two approaches has neither been established nor, as far as we are aware, exhaustively investigated. This research sought to highlight the processual nature of both the form and substance of entrepreneurial support. To achieve this, we administered a qualitative survey to 21 Tunisian business proprietors. The results indicate that in the Tunisian context, accompaniment is structurally processual and superimposed on an entrepreneurial process that both the accompaniers and the accompanied co-pilot in order to maintain coherence and complementarity during the training of the accompanied in the trade of entrepreneur. In addition, coaching is fundamentally and intrinsically emergent because it is geared toward endogenous action, co-constructed, and contextualized due to the prominence of personalized learning needs and the coachee's situational framework in relation to the enterprise he or she must establish.

INTRODUCTION

Several authors, such as Hernandez (1999), Fayolle (2004), Qureshi and Mian (2018), Qazi et al. (2020), and Pouka and Nomo (2022), have deduced from an analysis of the conceptual specificities of entrepreneurship paradigms that these paradigms view the creation of enterprise from a processual perspective.

We must also note that coaching is frequently associated with the entrepreneurial path of the aspiring entrepreneur and tends to take a process-oriented approach; it is predefined, planned, and rationalized. Contrary to Bruyat (1993), “the interventions and services of the caregivers are certainly part of a processual framework but also fundamentally emergent.” This duality should respond, with coherence and pragmatism, to each expectation and need of the supported person, according to his aspirations, the skills and resources he seeks to acquire, and the opportunities presented by the environment, and this, according to the needs of each phase of his entrepreneurial journey (Na-Allah and al., 2022; Yi, 2021; Degeorge, 2017).

This strategy unquestionably induces support based on a series of time-ordered stages (Ahmed and Saurav Mondal, 2022; Kim, 2018; Peyroux et al., 2019). Nevertheless, it also alludes to the adaptation of services to the multiple needs of the future entrepreneur, his unique profile, and the evolution of his environmental context (Rhattat, 2020). According to Tessier-Dargent (2015) and Onar et al. (2019), this means that coaching alludes to situational variables. (Kokou-Dokou, 2016) notes that it also refers to specific variables that would influence it. Leyronas and Loup (2020) have abandoned the trait approach in favor of a processual approach. He believes that researchers must respond to Fayolle’s (2004) “how” query.

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In this vein, numerous authors have responded to the praxeological approach by concentrating their research on entrepreneurial action (Messeghem and Sammut, 2007; Bourguiba, 2007; Schmitt, 2016; Chabaud et al., 2017; Toutain et al., 2020; Coughlin et al., 2022; Tremblay et al., 2022). According to these authors, the primary actor in the entrepreneurial process is the person who carries the business endeavor. Even when receiving assistance from highly-skilled instructors during the performance of his activity, he remains highly skilled (Cearra et al., 2021; Toutain et al., 2020).

Using the same logic and within the framework of a perspective characterized as "reverse processual co-construction", the entrepreneurial approach cannot be aligned with support. The opposite would allow for greater relevance and coherence in each ad hoc assistance or service claimed by the accompanied and co-developed with their accompanying individuals (Wang et al., 2019). Consequently, a highly participatory and contingent approach challenges any type of determinism viewed from a normative standpoint. It involves meticulously rethinking the practices of accompaniment in order to avoid the risk of distorting them by attempting to model them and apply any recipe (Topimin et al., 2018; Harrar, 2021; and Bibeau, 2022). This approach categorically rejects the notion of imposing a restrictive and disruptive rhythm and program of interventions on caregivers, even if processual ordering remains on the agenda (Benraiss, 2022). According to Obrecht (2009), this approach is conducive to the adaptation of the services of the support structures to the creator's action and situational context.

Using a combined methodology, we will attempt to determine the extent of the structurally processual and inherently emergent aspects of coaching for aspiring entrepreneurs. In order to accomplish this, we intend to conduct an initial theoretical analysis of the processual and emergent dimensions of support. In a second step, we will analyze, based on the findings of qualitative empirical research, the configuration, components, and piloting of the support for young Tunisian artists.

**Literature Review**

**The dimensions of entrepreneurial support**

Throughout this section, we will study, from a theoretical point of view, the interactions between the processual and emergent dimensions of entrepreneurial support for project leaders.

**The non-linearity of the entrepreneurial process**

For (Hernandez, 1999) and (Sabhan and al., 2016), the entrepreneur is the true initiator of the entrepreneurial process. Not being able to be assimilated to a "causal chain", this process refers, according to (Lorino, 1995): "to a flow of information and exchanges bringing the couple individual/project to know various evolutionary configurations, and this, since the start of the process until the effective launching of the activity". Cunningham and (Lischeron, 1991; Shaw, 2015 and Harrar, 2021) propose a conception of the entrepreneurial act that draws its originality from the fact that it does not simply make the hypotheses and principles of the various schools of thought cohabit and overlap.

From this conception, we can retain that entrepreneurship is a recursive and adaptive system of evaluating oneself and one's implicit interests, anticipating the future, and reconsidering one's choices according to the contexts (Fayolle, 2004; Bramwell and al., 2019; Kim and lee, 2017). (Tounés, 2007, Lompo and Sawadogo, 2021), for their part, specify that the process of creating a business is a continuum integrating four components: propensity, intention, decision and action. (Tchouassi, 2005 and Fiorentino, 2018) add the entrepreneurial awakening at the beginning of the process to this sequential decomposition that seems to be standardized and Cartesian. However, and according to (Tornikoski, 1999): "It reveals a factual and contingent assistance in the content (psychological, managerial or technical) so as to respond to both specific and evolving characteristics of the individual and environmental context and, on the other hand, systemic in order to establish the conditions of a global coherence between 'sub-processes'.

It should be remembered that the essential aim of coaching is to help the person being coached to more easily find the means to move forward effectively and quickly throughout the process, and that the entrepreneur, according to this approach, will remain at the center of the process (Bramwell and al., 2019; Cearra and al., 2021). In the same vein, (Tounés, 2007) argues that entrepreneurial propensity refers to a sensitivity to entrepreneurship that emanates both from past individual experiences and from one's own social environment.

Regarding the entrepreneurial intention, it follows the gradually developed state of mind and directs the attention of the individual to lead him to the moment when the context will lend itself to action (Bird, 1989; Stefanska and al., 2015; Hadzic and Pavlovic, 2017).

Let us recall that the decision to create a company is only taken when the intention to undertake is reinforced, for example, by the presence of support structures guaranteeing a framework capable of directing the gestation of the project through structured assistance on the individual/project couple. On the other hand, for (Bird, 1989; Verstraete and Saporta, 2006; Fort and al., 2016), the "idea" is the real trigger of the entrepreneurial process. For these authors, the entrepreneurial idea is synonymous with the revelation of a business opportunity discovered (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Huatto and al., 2018; Hameed and al., 2021) or constructed (Fayolle, 2004 and Kimathi, 2017) which will meet in a more or less near future a socio-economic reality, thanks to the value released by the offer (business model).
On the other hand, other interpretations of the entrepreneurial process are proposed by sociological theories that, like the structuration theory (Giddens, 1984; Osorio and al., 2017; Pouka and Nomo, 2022), equate it with an "emergence process" (Bouchikhi, 1993; Cevik Onar and al., 2017; Bramwell and al., 2019; Qureshi and Mian, 2018), as both classical and contemporary conceptions establish the connection of this process with the cultural context (Gillett, 2003; Sarkar and al., 2019; Tibaingana and al., 2022; Bakkali and al., 2016), the learning provided during coaching (Minguet, 1993; Dokou, 2018) and the specific characteristics of the entrepreneur and his environment (Schmitt and al., 2016; Kuyken and al., 2022).

The dialogue between the individual and the creation of value (Bruyat, 1993; Kim, 2019) is part of a dynamic of change and calls for support that is not only educational, but also personalized and emancipating, capable of converting the future entrepreneur into a creative and versatile leader capable of dealing with any scenario that may arise.

**The dimensions of entrepreneurial support**

For (Reynolds and al., 2004) and (Peyroux and al., 2019), the establishment of a socio-politico-economic context whose objectives focus on sustainable development is a founding element of an entrepreneurial culture, entrepreneurs, jobs and wealth.

Through educating youth and working people about the personal and societal benefits of pursuing an entrepreneurial career, this culture stimulates entrepreneurship (Nomo and al., 2020).

(Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980 and Saleh, 2020) argue that the development of a dynamic entrepreneurial context makes it possible to disprove the occupational choice theory or choice intention. In this theory, we can retain that calculating individual, who refuse to take risks at the base, generally opt for a salaried career as it offers job security and would presage a certain future.

However, with the establishment of organizations that can motivate, guide, advise and facilitate both the constitution of a network of clients and professional partners and access to informational and financial resources (Grandy and Culham, 2022). In other words, the individual may be tempted to embark on an entrepreneurial career.

In any case, the practices and benefits of these organizations send positive signals to employees and civil servants for entrepreneurial retraining, and especially to the unemployed to start their own businesses (Dupuis, 2021; Nuringsih and al., 2019).

This should be possible if these organizations contribute concretely and directly to the success of the entrepreneurial journey of a large number of inexperienced people (Qureshi and Mian, 2018; Messeghem and al., 2020). Let us note, moreover, that a kind of "systemic confidence" and "entrepreneurial security" emerges on its own and spreads naturally, without the support organizations engaging in communication campaigns to encourage business creation.

According to (Cloet and Vernazobres, 2012; Saleh, 2020; Lompo and Sawadogo, 2021; Fortunato and Clevenger, 2022; Fort and al., 2016), the mere presence of a central element of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, namely competent and reputedly effective support structures, as well as the emotional and affective commitment to an imminent entrepreneurial project, induce individuals to give up looking for a job or maintaining their salaried status to embark on an entrepreneurial adventure.

In this regard, it should be noted that as soon as a business idea, however embryonic, emerges, there will be a strong demand for public support in order to make it a reality and develop it as quickly as possible. In this regard, (Dorion, 2002 and Rhattat, 2020) refer to several actors whom they call "entrepreneurship stakeholders", whose role is to give shape to the business project, to frame the actions and to support the future entrepreneurs throughout their journey: "starting a business is a collective process that begins in the environment and is supported by the confidence shared in proximity networks stimulated by regional actors" (Julien, 2003).

(Rhattat, 2020) considers that community and professional organizations, incubators and chambers of commerce form what we call "regional actors. (Houy, 2020), for his part, specifies that the support and backing of these actors is decisive, especially during the maturation phase, as it allows for the objective coherence between the creator and his project, which until then, is only emergent and, consequently, partially structured and insufficiently anchored in the field.

To avoid exacerbating the gap between the skills of the person being supported and those required by his or her activity, support structures intervene when an inconsistency is identified (Lompo and Sawadogo, 2021; Bakkali and al., 2016). When, for one reason or another, these structures do not intervene in a conclusive manner, due, for example, to a predominance of technical support for the project over that of the creator himself, the risk of reaching a point of no return is obvious (Kuyken and al., 2022). In this sense, (Nakara and Fayolle, 2012) argue that by refocusing on the entrepreneur at the right time, the coach can prevent such an outcome and the coaching would then play its role as a stabilizing cog in the entrepreneurial process.

Avoiding the discrepancy between the profile of the project leader, the requirements of his or her activity and the assistance offered by the support staff means positioning the support in a logic of reciprocal consultation, co-reflection and coaction, despite the lack of experience of the person being supported (Ahmed and Saurav Mondal, 2022; Shaw, 2015; Hadzic and Pavlovic, 2017; Topimin and al., 2018). This duality, which favors iterative and sustainable interactions and avoids those that are rather punctual and ephemeral, allows mentees to better get to know each other and better understand the workings of entrepreneurship (Huatao and al., 2018).
The sustained intensity, multiplication and durability of the exchanges allow the coachee to become a true entrepreneur by rubbing shoulders with people in the field (Bornard and al., 2019). (Cuzin and Fayolle, 2004) maintain that coaching allows the potential entrepreneur to acquire technical and professional skills that will be of great help to him or her during the exercise of their future activity. It is to the development of analytical, managerial and human skills that only experience allows to assimilate and integrate. Supporting that coaching should help the entrepreneur to mature his or her project by offering a “guide for reflection and action” (Bibeau and al., 2022). (Sammut, 2003) warns of the dangers of any stereotyped operating mode, which could, according to (Paul, 2004), constrain the action of the coachee and even make it out of sync in the event of a change in the entrepreneurial context or the digitalization of the sector.

For (Dokou and al., 2004), this guide, referred to by (Sammut, 2003), serves to orient the future entrepreneur and introduce him or her to risk and uncertainty management. For (Beauvais, 2004; Lompo and Sawadogo, 2021), coaching “is invented by doing”. According to this author: “each support worker will work to ensure that the person being supported will eventually manage to fill in the gaps that will emerge over time, at his or her own pace and in his or her own way, by walking with him or her. In this sense, and according to (Schmitt and al., 2016; Leyronas and Loup, 2020), the support of companions can only be “facilitators” and not “repairers”. These guides, made up of coaches and psychologists in particular, favor psychological assistance, which has the advantage of encouraging the creator to bring out and evaluate, through introspection, the capacities and knowledge that he or she lacks, as postulated by the BEM theory of self-perception (1967). Furthermore, these coaches will help the potential entrepreneur to move from a problem-solving perspective to one of problematization and meaning-making, facilitated by a greater and more stable self-confidence (Bramwell and al., 2019; Tremblay and al., 2022; Cevik Onar and al., 2017). Indeed, the individual no longer expects generic solutions to emerging and novel problems that mark his or her journey; he or she will seek to understand and develop his or her own solutions (Audet and Couteret, 2005; Qureshi and Mian, 2018; Toutain and al., 2020; Fortunato and Clevenger, 2022). Consequently, his entrepreneurial action reflects more of an “expression of self” (Verzat and al., 2010; Onar and al., 2019; Bergman and Mcmullen, 2022) and contributes to the construction of his entrepreneurial identity (Kokou-Dokou, 2016; Taktak-Kallel, 2018). Thus, the future entrepreneur will be able to understand what he wants to build and can thus gradually see the coherence of the elements that constitute his entrepreneurial situation blossom.

Once the company is created, the coach intervenes and acts in a purely prospective framework. His role will then be to prevent the entrepreneur from getting bogged down in the day-to-day management of his activity (personnel, solving current problems) which prevents him from detecting a new promising business opportunity or identifying a major threat (Yi, 2021; Huatao and al., 2018). His role will therefore be to encourage the entrepreneur to update his own knowledge of his sector and to watch out for any warning signs that may reveal changes in the competitive environment. He cannot play the role of a simple systematic transmitter of information. This avoids the risk of unconsciously generating passivity and a wait-and-see attitude in the person being supported, who may become accustomed to the assistance of a third party in spite of himself, by "taking a liking to" and ensuring the perpetuation of the assistance, which further feeds his dependence (Qazi and al., 2020; Derera, 2021).

Thus, to prevent such a drift, (Grazzini and al., 2009; Qazi and al., 2020) propose, instead of a prospective coaching, an empowering action able to increase the strategic acuity of the coachee, whose sense of self-efficacy, decision-making autonomy and entrepreneurial audacity will be consolidated.

Thus, we infer that the post-creation phase will be fully in line with a constructivist (Sarasvathy, 2008; Taktak-Kallel, 2018), orientative (Paul, 2004) socio-cognitive and collective (Tremblay and Carrier, 2006; Brechet and Schieb-Bienfait, 2011; Munoz and al., 2020), rather than objectivist (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000), subjectivist or purely processual (Chabaud and Messeghem, 2010; Messeghem and al., 2020).

Financing of the activity remains, of course, of paramount importance. However, networking is also a key issue, if not the most important. In fact, those accompanied perceive the constitution of a network of professional partners and clients as being a factor of entrepreneurial success (Deshamps and al., 2010; Bergman and Mcmullen, 2022). The process of developing such a network generally obliges the future entrepreneur to resort to local public support structures because of their geographical proximity (Dokou and al., 2000; Mustafa and Treanor, 2022).

At the very beginning, rubbing shoulders with public stakeholders, which consist of business incubators, incubators, business centers or consulting firms, is seen as a way to facilitate the rapid formation of such a network. It will then become a lever for learning and acquiring new representations (Topimin and al., 2018).

It should be noted that very often, the fact of finding oneself in the business world awakens the entrepreneurial curiosity of the person being supported and stimulates his or her desire to emancipate him or herself, to rely on personal performance and to no longer be assisted.

Let us add that the choice of mentors is by no means fixed or predetermined, and the fact of integrating experienced entrepreneurs through mentoring or tutoring allows the process to gain in relevance and helps the coachee to find his or her path and self-development (Bramwell and al., 2019; Soro, 2018; Kuyken and al., 2022). Indeed, (Tessier-Dargent, 2015) consider that these entrepreneurs convey more realism to the coaching especially as they are experienced. (Sammut, 2003) states that calling on such stakeholders makes coaching a process of project legitimation. This legitimation is apprehended through the appreciation of the
coherence of the triptych entrepreneur/ environment/ project and not through the validation of the project by entrepreneurs who have been fully successful (Taktak-Kallel, 2018).

(Brechet and Schieb-Bienfait, 2011; Qazi and al., 2020; Tibaingana and al., 2022), for their part, maintain that this legitimization is manifested through a pronounced interest in the promoter and his project, in the functional sense, to orient his "projective action".

Nevertheless, the close and distant social environment as well as the professional environment are closely linked (Nuringsih and al., 2019; Benraiss, 2022; Sahban and al., 2016). Family members, who constitute the close social environment, are instinctively sought by the future entrepreneur, since they can psychologically reassure him or her in case of entrepreneurial inexperience (Cevik Onar and al., 2017; Palyakin and al., 2019; Qureshi and Mian, 2018). As for friends, who are themselves entrepreneurs and constitute the distant social environment, are able to more objectively guide the accompanied in his approach by providing the necessary information according to their respective fields of expertise (Tremblay and Carrier, 2006; Njwa and Gandja, 2019; Derera, 2021).

Let's also remember that the professional network helps to concretize the initial project by proposing a more accomplished version of the initial opportunity or by reformulating it entirely, in case of a perceived gap in relation to the current situation.

In the more advanced phases of the entrepreneurial journey, the iterative exchanges with the network will be dedicated to its extension to increase the chances of materializing the hopes founded in the agreed opportunity (Kuyken and al., 2022).

**Research and Methodology**

Through this approach, we seek to analyze the configuration of entrepreneurial support in light of a processual perspective and another emergent one. To do this, we have chosen a qualitative study by conducting a case study similar to the life story method (Smith, 1994).

In line with our theoretical developments, we have opted for the case study of Tunisian entrepreneurs who have benefited throughout their entrepreneurial process from the support of public organizations.

The choice of this field is based on multiple academic and empirical justifications. Academically, many researchers have studied the course of entrepreneurial support in the Tunisian context (Mansouri and Belkacem, 2010; Baccari, 2006; Ben Taher Gheryani and Boujelbène, 2015; Taktak-Kallel, 2018). Indeed, several studies have argued that in order to meet the emerging, situational and evolving needs of project holders throughout their process, business creation support structures are segmented by area of expertise while being individualized and personalized (Ben Taher Gheryani and Boujelbène, 2015).

Empirically, the creation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem spread over the whole Tunisian territory, made up of several professional, voluntary and social actors, is likely to encourage entrepreneurship and to substantially influence the increase in the number of enterprises created in Tunisia (Baccari, 2006).

Following the example of (Yin, 2018) and in order to consolidate the external validity of our study, we chose our interviewees on the basis of several common criteria such as the novice aspect of the entrepreneurial journey; the launch of a business ex-nihilo; the accompaniment by authorized public structures but also on the basis of specific criteria such as the personal experience, the entrepreneurial objective, the triggering factor, the motivations and the expected expectations of the accompaniment device are the elements that influence the nature and the physiognomy of the aid provided.

There are two main reasons for our use of distinctive criteria. First, our desire is to link coaching to a personal and contextual framework. Second, because entrepreneurs are more capable of reconstructing their own experiences chronologically during non-directive interviews, since they are well placed to account for the unfolding and intrinsic content of coaching (RAE and CARSWELL, 2000; Cevik Onar and al., 2017). In fact, according to (Pailot, 2003), life stories facilitate both the structuring of temporal data and the revelation of perceived conceptions of coaching, which in turn allow for a better understanding of the entrepreneurial history of each individual and the coach-mentee relationship.

However, and despite these advantages, there is still a risk of bias regarding the individual representation of the interviewee, according to his or her own cultural and psychic schemas (Nakara and Fayolle, 2012; Cearra and al., 2021; Huatao and al., 2018). (Atkinson, 2002) suggests that to remedy this, care should be taken to specify unambiguously to each respondent the types of information sought and to ensure that what is collected is as complete and true to reality as possible. They must be closely linked to the research question, which deals with the dual processual and emergent perspective of support.

Thanks to the assistance of public organizations supporting business creation such as the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment, the Agency for the Promotion of Industry and Innovation (APII), the Sfax Business Center and the Sfax Technopolis, we were able to constitute our sample which is composed of 8 women and 13 men.

We can consider that this is a sufficiently representative sample since it encompasses a variety of sectors whose growth is currently very strong in Tunisia. These are manufacturing industries, crafts, services and information technology.

Like (Pailot, 2003), we collected our data through narrative interviews. In this sense, (Eisenhardt, 1989), cited by (Tortellier, 2005), emphasizes: "qualitative methods are conducive to the description and understanding of the dynamics of a phenomenon, an object or
a situation in order to formulate new theories”. Let us recall that throughout this process, we have pursued a double dynamic: one processual and the other emergent. Our narrative interviews enabled us to place this exploratory study in a purely interpretativist current, which is in line with our approach. Indeed, beyond the latitude that it grants to the respondents to obtain relevant, reliable and exhaustive data, these interviews are based on the articulation, the dimensions and the composition of the entrepreneurial support.

We conducted interviews lasting an average of one hour during which the stories were entirely recorded and then transcribed by us. Then, we proceeded to a manual thematic coding. Indeed, the fact that we did not use a software program for the content analysis is explained by the relatively modest volume of data collected and by our desire to appropriate them in an exhaustive way through repeated readings of the transcribed accounts.

We also collected secondary data through the websites of the most popular support organizations in Tunisia, in order to triangulate the primary data. The interest of this type of approach is to minimize the risks of bias emanating from the interpretation of primary data (Smith and al., 1992).

Findings and Discussions

Findings

Our results reveal a certain coincidence of the services offered with the stages of the entrepreneurial process programmed by the coaches. For Tunisian entrepreneurs, they refer to the successful experiences of entrepreneurs belonging to their close social network who benefited from the coaching. Our results also reveal that there are powerful triggers for both the entrepreneurial process and coaching, which is more of an emerging cultural choice (pull logic) than an unavoidable current practice (push logic). Thus, we strongly believe in the capacity of support structures to be receptive to the emerging and situational needs of project leaders.

It is important to note that our interviewees refuse to adhere to the postulate that coaches are perceived by creators as models to be imitated and do not rely on a reference support program, even if it has previously proven itself; they opt instead for an informal, flexible and contingent support process in which the coachee is highly valued.

According to the entrepreneurs we interviewed, this did not prevent them from staying the course in order to ensure a complementary coherence not with the processual approach of business creation but with the respective services of the coaches. Still according to them, no accompanier tried to impose a predetermined modus operandi to set up a business as soon as possible so that the accompanied person could make the most of his business opportunity.

Each mentor must ensure that the person being mentored is fully involved in his or her entrepreneurial process, even if his or her project is not consistent with his or her professional experience or if, apart from the internships he or she has completed, he or she has no experience in the business field. This applies to many young people who have recently graduated.

In fact, two entrepreneurs in our sample consider that any idea of considering the protégé as an apprentice under the pretext of inexperience should be categorically rejected. This could make them fear that they are not up to the task and leave them systematically waiting for instructions when making decisions. For these interviewees, any early initiation into the entrepreneurial profession is promising and is a factor in increasing their sense of legitimacy and personal effectiveness as a leader.

Mentally, they are able to play the role of an entrepreneur and are capable of dealing with emerging constraints that may hinder the launch of their activities, such as, for example, the lack of skilled labor for one of our interviewed entrepreneurs; or the size of the local market for a second entrepreneur or unforeseen technical problems for another entrepreneur.

The experiences lived by the coachees are likely to amplify their self-knowledge and their will to create and manage a business. These feelings of self-determination can act as an emotional regulator during periods of doubt and uncertainty by promoting self-control. These periods are certainly stressful. Indeed, the life of an entrepreneur is inevitably full of pitfalls. However, they are perceived by our respondents as constituting learning opportunities for other interviewees, conducive to familiarizing a novice manager with a tumultuous daily life. For another respondent, the emerging obstacles can be understood and converted by these same novice entrepreneurs into elements of extension of their entrepreneurial background.

In any case, these elements contribute to the genesis of a subjective resilience of their perceived capacity and help them to bounce back more easily from the failures they have had to overcome in the course of their activities.

Upstream, support organizations help develop an entrepreneurial culture in Tunisia by multiplying successful support experiences and by stimulating still dubious candidates to choose entrepreneurship as a career. Indeed, the role of the Business Creation Support Centre (BCSC) remains largely informative for most of our sample.

For our respondents, it is the realization of their dissatisfaction with their personal and/or professional situation that encourages them to become independent entrepreneurs rather than pursue or start a career as an employee or civil servant. It should be noted, however, that the trigger can be found, as in the case of some of our respondents, in their socio-professional network.

When they are caught up in their own momentum, they take control of their destiny by taking the reins of the coaching process, which, according to one of our interviewees, does not displeasure the APII coaches. Indeed, the selection process applied by this
structure is part of an empowering approach that refers to the search for a mental disposition of the candidates to create a company and to actively engage in the composition of their accompaniment, even when they are more pushed than motivated to embark on an entrepreneurial adventure. In all cases, we generally reject the idea of formalizing the coaching process by selecting candidates according to a pre-established standard profile, if it is not psychological or behavioral. There is no question of exclusion, but rather of increasing the chances of success for each entrepreneurial path. The contribution of the person being supported by granting him/her a significant margin of maneuver is decisive, given the complexity of each path inherent to the specificity of the entrepreneur/environment/project triptych.

It allows the support staff to diagnose the needs of the supported persons by refining their interventions and by taking the necessary actions to optimize the efficiency of their co-piloting.

For one of our interviewees, “The initial difficulties in individually weaving a sufficiently large network of partners and clients or in arousing even the interest of financial organizations in the project are, for their part, as many opportunities to question oneself and to review one's priorities. In this way, making a total commitment allows one to improve and opens the way to the acquisition of technical skills and the development of human and relational skills. Moreover, the awareness of one's shortcomings increases the willingness and ability of the person being supported to learn, even if it means forgetting certain practices and reconsidering representations that are deeply rooted in the individual. This is particularly important when it comes to learning and when the learners are experienced professionals who are steeped in the socio-cultural context of the sector of activity, which is very often insufficiently considered by new entrepreneurs.

Thus, when the Business Creation Support Centre (BCSC) provides former entrepreneurs, experienced managers, experts and advisors with a proven track record who adopt the co-constructive posture of coaches who integrate the personal context of the person being coached when considering the nature of the assistance they should provide, this is done from an inspirational perspective, so much so that their goal is to help the project owner design the entrepreneurial scenario he or she believes to be feasible. However, this scenario should not be static, since any project is subject to evolution. It is therefore not a matter of coaches adopting a contemplative attitude and dictating the actions to be taken based on their own experiences. They need to create a dynamic to help the person being supported discover his or her own model of action by supporting him or her in the acquisition of a reflective representation. This suggests that the support structures must refute the prescriptive posture of the externalist approach, thus forcing the creation of the enterprise. These structures must guide and frame the actions of the future entrepreneur to avoid exacerbating the thorny problems he or she encounters along the way (Peyroux and al., 2019; Dupuis, 2021; Park and al., 2015). They must ensure that they learn the entrepreneurial profession on their own through concrete experiences, in accordance with the internalize approach.

The words of our interviewees, concerning the financing of the project requested when "the maturation of the project is reached", prove in a different form but like the above-mentioned structures a processual support from the fund of promotion and industrial decentralization (FOPRODI), the bank of financing of small and medium-sized enterprises (BFPMEl and the Tunisian bank of solidarity (BTS) in favor of the new entrepreneurs. To illustrate our remarks, we note that in the framework of one of the programs of FOPRODI that in addition to funding, experts in marketing, communication, innovation and strategy are engaged to help the new entrepreneur to collect the information necessary for the diagnosis of the market and competition to design its business model and acquire the managerial and strategic skills that will be necessary during the exercise of its function as a leader.

The same financial institutions that are primarily responsible for providing funds to future entrepreneurs go beyond this function to develop skills that are relevant to the requirements of their business.

In addition, the formalities required for the legal constitution of companies are now centralized in a single window, which significantly reduces the administrative processing time of the files. This is also beneficial from a psychological point of view, since, according to one of our interviewees: “it reduces the stress and hesitations of project leaders, by sparing them incessant trips to many administrations, where bureaucracy sometimes prevails over the quality of service. When the realization of the project and the completion of the entrepreneurial process are imminent, the future entrepreneurs see with a good eye the presence of such a service within the APII. This is one of the few steps in the entrepreneurial process that does not require the technical participation of the person being assisted, but rather the presentation of the documents necessary for the creation of the company.

Let us add that the one-stop shop has been awarded, since May 2000, several ISO certifications; which constitutes a pledge of quality and professionalism that can reinforce the confidence of the new entrepreneurs of our sample.

**Discussions**

Our empirical investigation has led to the results that entrepreneurial coaching comprises a set of seemingly sequential steps. However, these steps originate and are operationalized within an emergent rather than a rationalized context, which involves several actors interacting directly or indirectly. We group, like (Fayolle, 1994; Toutain and al., 2020; Wang and al., 2019), the elements that impact the configuration and composition of accompaniment into three axes that are part of a processual logic and another emergent one. These are:

i. Elements that amplify the propensity to start a business and the entrepreneurial potential.

ii. Triggers for the entrepreneurial act.
Elements that accelerate the entrepreneurial process and maintain its quality.

Each element plays, at a given moment of the accompaniment, a well determined role and determines the entrepreneurs belonging to our sample.

It should be noted that no awareness campaign on business creation, and even less on entrepreneurial training, has been really orchestrated, except for a few sporadic interventions aimed at the media for information purposes only. Unemployed people or employees who are hesitant to start an entrepreneurial career are left out. It should be noted that the factors that can amplify the propensity and intention of the latter to embark on an entrepreneurial approach are socio-individual: the state of the individual situation, reconsideration of personal priorities and dissatisfaction with the current job.

Moreover, the lack of information from the public support organizations seems surprising, even if it is, from our point of view, deliberate and even calculated.

(Hernandez, 1999; Sahban and al., 2016; Cevik Onar and al., 2017; Houy and Bazenet; 2020 and Bergman and McMullen; 2022), like behaviorist researchers, argue that an increasing number of support structures retain only those entrepreneurial candidates who are psychologically endowed with an "operant behavior"; in other words, when they are able to act themselves sustainably, and not those whose behavior responds to a stimulating factor. This device takes up the Aristotelian distinction between doing and acting, and is used by the Business Creation Support Centre (BCSC), which aims to focus on creators who are willing to invest themselves without restriction both in the entrepreneurial process and in the design of their support. For (Nakara and Fayolle, 2012; Qureshi and Mian; 2018), the coach is far from seeking to discriminate or dissuade certain project leaders, he seeks, according to (Baccari; 2006), and (Taktak-Kalle, 2018), within the framework of a pragmatic rather than ideological perspective, to increase the chances of the success of the entrepreneurial journey of the coaches by revealing their entrepreneurial potential and their mental capacity to maintain a high level of commitment under all circumstances.

Furthermore, among the triggers, we note the preparation of a business plan, entrepreneurial training, and the formation of an initial network of collaborators. (Perry and al., 2012; Quiz and al., 2020; Qureshi and Mian, 2018; Quiz and AL, 2020); argue that coaches who have detected a high level of commitment from mentees rely on their ability to take charge of translating their business opportunity into a project, when their potential is identified. This translates into the design of a business plan that can be accepted by financial organizations such as venture capital companies like FOPRODL, BFPME and BTS. These organizations have a related purpose in addition to financing. They consist in bringing the supported person, with the help of the empowerment technique, to develop his entrepreneurial autonomy. We argue, like (Dokou and al., 2000; SORO; 2018) that more than a third of our sample have an individual constitution made up of strong links with geographically close business partners.

For (PAUL, 2009; Rhattat, 2020; Tibaingana and al., 2022; Hadzie and Pavlovic, 2017), these elements make the accompanied person occupy the position of subject-actor and not that of taken in charge. In this sense, he/she does not have to be simply receptive to the instructions and directives formalized by the experts (Audet and Coutert, 2005; Kimathi, 2017; Tremblay and al., 2022; Penov and Georgiev, 2021).

For (Schmitt and al., 2016): "as the future entrepreneur advances along an unmarked path, he or she constructs meaning by projecting himself or herself into the future and by becoming immersed in the changes in the environment in which he or she will be called upon to evolve and make decisions". Thus, we can deduce that coaching is interactive on the person of the coaches, his business opportunity and his environment and more focused on the entrepreneurial process than on the company (Tornikoski, 1999; Hameed and al., 2021). Putting the supported person in a situation through experimentation (Tessier-Dargent, 2015; Peyroux and al., 2019; Fiorentino, 2018; Ahmed and Saurav Mondal, 2022; Stefan and al., 2015; Kimathi, 2017) or through action observation (Schmitt and al., 2016; Ahmed and Saurav Mondal, 2022), when learning his or her entrepreneurial craft reflect a utilitarian interaction between the coachee and the coach.

In any case, the tailoring of coaching through role-playing gives free rein to the creativity of the person being coached (Hameed and al., 2021; Peyroux and al., 2019). It stimulates the development of his or her entrepreneurial personality and compensates, to some extent, for his or her inexperience in business.

When financial organizations take over from training structures, the support becomes more technical. Thus, before issuing an opinion on the requests for financing that reach it, the BTS puts any accompanied person in touch with its network of technical partners such as experts in finance, advisers in marketing, communication and commercial negotiation or even with leaders of the Confederation of Citizen Enterprises of Tunisia (CONECT) in order to enable him to develop financial, managerial and commercial knowledge and skills.

It should be noted that the adoption by a good number of financial institutions of such an eclectic range of services represents, from our point of view, a response to a growing interest on the part of the coachees to reinforce the visibility and competitiveness of their future enterprises before the start of the activity. The involvement and enthusiasm of the people we work with when they apply for financing are particularly high, given the importance of this decisive step in the entrepreneurial process. The addition of these services to the traditional financial services of banks is marked by opportunism.
The one-stop shop is the final player in the support process. Its interventions are in continuity with the logic of emergence borrowed by the previous aids. As part of the “single point of contact” policy followed since February 2006, the grouping together in the same space of various administrations responsible for ensuring the legal creation of any new enterprise within 24 hours of the filing of the application, allows, like the financial structures mentioned above, to project oneself in an accelerated way towards the exploitation phase (Dokou and al., 2000; Yi, 2021; Ahmed and Saurav Mondal, 2022; Kim and lee, 2017). This is materialized by the extension of the network of local partners to new national collaborators and clients, and foreigners when the accompanied companies operate in the handicraft and IT sectors; this allows them to apprehend the future more serenely (Topimin and al., 2018; Saleh, 2020).

**Conclusions**

In this study, we sought to contribute to the expansion of knowledge on the topic of accompaniment, which is an evident research axis in the field of entrepreneurship. We attempted to provide elements of a solution to the issue of the configuration and composition of the accompaniment when the accompanying person is new to entrepreneurship. Due to the alignment of practices and services with an entrepreneurial approach, the configuration of accompaniment in the Tunisian context remains, of course, processual. Nonetheless, it is co-piloted in order to consolidate the conditions of a double coherence between them and towards the requirements of the accompanied. Its content is emergent due to its endogenous, co-constructed, and situational aspects as the coachee becomes increasingly involved in his or her own coaching.

The most important contribution of our research is the proposal of a nuanced and integrative approach to entrepreneurial support. This strategy was articulated around the cohabitation of a support, both processual and at the level of the form, by focusing on the creator's person rather than his strategy.

We have maintained that these dimensions are not incompatible. Thus, the processual dimension enables caregivers to plan their interventions while preventing them from dragging on for too long so as not to foster a sense of dependence on them. It also ensures that they are coordinated so as not to become intertwined and confound the supported individual regarding the legitimacy and utility of each. Emergent dimensions favor service enrichment, innovation, and personalization. In fact, by encouraging self-coaching, the aspiring entrepreneur transitions from coachee to creative collaborator. In a spirit of mutual reinforcement, the coachee must concentrate on his or her project, path, and person by investigating latent needs and entrepreneurial and environmental context through action. Without the assistance of a third party, he or she becomes aware of what could help him or her effectively move forward. This refers to the practices that can provide him with training and make his entrepreneurial approach successful. Thus, in an act of accompaniment, it is not necessary to choose between assistance centered on the rapid establishment of a business through simplification and a comprehensive and eclectic training of the person being accompanied through the imposition of a restrictive entrepreneurial apprenticeship.

Nonetheless, despite the benefits of this approach, it should be emphasized that it is susceptible to biases, both perceptual and methodological, which can impact our findings. In fact, the use of purely perceptual metrics can result in the inadvertent distortion of reality.

The methodological bias stems from the fact that the speeches were not interpreted by a diverse group of researchers. Additionally, a limitation arises. It refers to the emphasis on the processual analysis of the support based solely on the entrepreneurial process.

Keep in mind that our sample consisted of only 21 entrepreneurs. Consequently, our interpretations are, to say the least, limited. In order to rectify this situation, it will be necessary to increase the sample size in future studies, which will enhance the level of representativeness of the population of entrepreneurs, including both novices and young entrepreneurs, as well as those with more experience.

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**References**


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