

The “Normal” or Planned Entrepreneur: Challenges, Resilience, and Innovation in Local Economic Development

Empreendedor “Normal” ou Planejado: Desafios, Resiliência e Inovação no Desenvolvimento Econômico Local
El Emprendedor “Normal” o Planificado: Desafíos, Resiliencia e Innovación en el Desarrollo Económico Local

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Abstract:

This study examines the role of the “normal” or planned entrepreneur in local economic development, focusing on the challenges they face, their resilience strategies, and their use of innovation. This profile is justified by its ability to generate a positive economic impact despite structural limitations such as lack of resources, training, and access to credit. The main objective was to analyze how these entrepreneurs overcome crises and sustain their businesses through strategic planning, adaptive leadership, and innovative solutions. A qualitative methodology was adopted, based on a literature review and a semi-structured interview with a small business owner. The results show that resilience, support networks, and the use of digital technologies are crucial for the sustainability of small businesses. It is concluded that, although still a minority, planned entrepreneurship represents an efficient and necessary model for strengthening local economies.

Keywords: *Planned entrepreneurship; Resilience; Innovation; Small business; Local development.*

Resumo:

Este trabalho investiga o papel do empreendedor “normal” ou planejado no desenvolvimento econômico local, com foco em seus desafios, estratégias de resiliência e uso da inovação. A escolha desse perfil justifica-se por sua capacidade de gerar impacto econômico positivo mesmo diante de limitações estruturais, como a falta de recursos, capacitação e acesso ao crédito. O objetivo principal foi analisar como esses empreendedores enfrentam crises e mantêm seus negócios por meio de planejamento estratégico, liderança adaptativa e soluções inovadoras. A metodologia adotada foi qualitativa, fundamentada em revisão bibliográfica e

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entrevista semi-estruturada com um pequeno empreendedor. Os resultados indicam que a resiliência, o apoio em redes sociais e o uso de tecnologias digitais são fatores cruciais para a sustentabilidade dos pequenos negócios. Conclui-se que o empreendedorismo planejado, embora ainda minoritário, representa um modelo eficiente e necessário para o fortalecimento das economias locais.

Palavras-chave: Empreendedorismo planejado; Resiliência; Inovação; Pequenos negócios; Desenvolvimento local.

Resumen:

Este estudio analiza el papel del emprendedor “normal” o planificado en el desarrollo económico local, enfocándose en los desafíos que enfrenta, sus estrategias de resiliencia y el uso de la innovación. Se justifica el enfoque en este perfil por su capacidad para generar impacto económico positivo a pesar de limitaciones estructurales como la falta de recursos, capacitación y acceso al crédito. El objetivo principal fue analizar cómo estos emprendedores superan las crisis y mantienen sus negocios mediante la planificación estratégica, el liderazgo adaptativo y soluciones innovadoras. Se utilizó una metodología cualitativa, basada en revisión bibliográfica y una entrevista semiestructurada con un pequeño empresario. Los resultados revelan que la resiliencia, el apoyo de redes sociales y el uso de tecnologías digitales son factores clave para la sostenibilidad de los pequeños negocios. Se concluye que el emprendimiento planificado, aunque todavía minoritario, representa un modelo eficiente y necesario para fortalecer las economías locales.

Palabras clave: Emprendimiento planificado; Resiliencia; Innovación; Pequeños negocios; Desarrollo local.

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship drives economic and social development. Many entrepreneurs persist through intense challenges, even without high visibility. Among these, the so-called "normal" or planned entrepreneur stands out. Unlike those acting on impulse or circumstance, this type is guided by goals, strategies, and planning. Although common in theory, this profile is still a minority among small business owners in Brazil.

The choice to study this type of entrepreneur is justified by their relevance to the local economy. They maintain active businesses even when facing resource scarcity, economic crises, and bureaucratic obstacles. These entrepreneurs generate jobs, promote innovation, and contribute directly to community economic sustainability. Resilience and innovation are two central pillars in this process. Learning from mistakes, persisting despite difficulties, and adopting technology as an ally are recurring strategies among these entrepreneurs.

Given this scenario, the research question is: How do small business owners with a 'normal' or planned profile apply strategic planning, innovation, and family support to overcome crises and sustain their businesses?

The overall objective of this work is to analyze the role of the "normal" entrepreneur in local economic development. This includes examining the challenges faced and the resilience and innovation strategies used. Specific objectives are: i) Understanding the history and economic impacts of planned entrepreneurs in the local market; ii) Investigating common leadership styles among this group and their effects on business performance; iii) Identifying how small businesses incorporate innovation daily and what opportunities and challenges arise.

The methodology adopted was qualitative. It was based on a literature review of specialized works and academic articles in digital databases and in the institution's library. To complement the theoretical analysis, a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was conducted with a small business owner. This aimed to understand, from a practical perspective, the factors that favor resilience and innovation in real-world contexts.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Throughout history, entrepreneurship has been a pillar of economic and social development. Since antiquity, merchants and traders took risks and invested in new businesses, even without the modern term "entrepreneur." In the Middle Ages, the rise of cities and increased trade led to the formation of corporations that organized and strengthened commercial activity, despite a predominantly agrarian economy.

During the Renaissance, the entrepreneurial spirit grew as the arts, science, and commerce flourished. New merchants emerged, driven by individual initiatives. These efforts propelled the era's economic development. However, with the 18th-century Industrial Revolution, entrepreneurship gained a new dimension. Industrialization requires large investments in factories and new technologies.

This shift gave rise to innovative entrepreneurs and artisans who operated more structurally and had a greater economic impact.

The modern concept of entrepreneurship has developed over centuries. Various authors have studied it. Dornelas (2018) says an entrepreneur is someone who takes risks and seeks opportunities, as seen historically among merchants, farmers, artisans, and other individual owners. Oliveira (2019) notes that the term entrepreneurship became prominent in the 17th century with the rise of industrialization, especially during the First Industrial Revolution in Great Britain.

In the 20th century, entrepreneurship expanded, becoming increasingly related to innovation, technology, and the creation of new markets. With the arrival of the internet and digital technologies, digital entrepreneurship emerged, especially in the early 21st century, with startups standing out by introducing disruptive, highly scalable business models and contributing significantly to economic growth.

More recently, entrepreneurship has become associated with attributes such as resilience, creativity, innovation, and strategic planning, being considered accessible to any individual who wishes to transform ideas into market solutions. In this context, the profile of the "normal" or planned entrepreneur is the focus of this work. This type of entrepreneur operates based on solid planning, defined goals, and a strategic vision, even in the face of adversity, contributing significantly to the local economy and job creation.

In accordance with Dornelas (2018), global entrepreneurship strengthened especially from the 1990s onwards, driven by business incubation programs and government incentives for innovation. These initiatives consolidated entrepreneurship as a public policy and instrument for local development.

2.1 Impact of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is vital to the local economy, driving jobs, services, and innovation. Even during crises, well-prepared entrepreneurs stay resilient, finding creative ways to keep their businesses running.

Chiavenato (2005) states that good entrepreneurs identify opportunities even in adverse contexts, ensuring their ventures remain sustainable and successful. Thus, entrepreneurship based on structured practices better withstands economic instability and supports community development.

After the 20th century, entrepreneurs began to stand out from capital providers (capitalists) for their ability to mobilize resources, innovate, and drive market change (Oliveira, 2019). Planned entrepreneurship is essential for building more sustainable and resilient economies.

2.2 “Normal” or planned entrepreneur

The planned entrepreneur runs a business with strategic planning, long-term vision, and clear goals, always working to minimize risk and make informed decisions. Unlike those who start businesses impulsively, out of necessity, or by inheritance, this entrepreneur works in a structured, analytical, and conscious way, maintains control, and responds rationally to market uncertainties.

Considered by several scholars as the most complete profile among entrepreneurs (Dornelas, 2015; Santos & Garcia, 2018), the planned entrepreneur excels at combining rationality, innovation, and adaptive leadership to build sustainable businesses. This approach supports the venture's continuity and underscores its function as a local economic agent by generating jobs, boosting the regional economy, and introducing innovative solutions, even in crisis contexts.

Dornelas (2007, apud Abrão Junior et al., 2025) lists eight types of entrepreneurs: born, learning-by-doing, serial, corporate, social, necessity, heirs, and "normal" or planned. Each has unique traits, but the planned entrepreneur acts with planning, goals, and a future vision.

Beyond this typology, entrepreneurship, whether in individual or corporate form, is closely linked to innovation. For self-employed entrepreneurs, innovation is a way to transform reality and achieve their goals, while in the organizational environment, innovation is the driving force for engagement, internal recognition, and professional growth. Hence, innovation is established as a central element in studies of entrepreneurial behavior, serving both as a cause and a consequence of entrepreneurial actions.

As stated by Santos and Garcia (2018), the eighth type of entrepreneur is the so-called "normal" or planned entrepreneur, characterized by a strategic approach, a focus on minimizing risk, goal setting, and a clear vision of the future. This profile stands out for careful planning and for considering each step of the business responsibly.

As claimed by the authors, several theories point to planning as one of the most relevant practices for business success, since it increases the chances of good results and leads more entrepreneurs to adopt this approach. Although considered the most complete among entrepreneurial profiles, representing the ideal expected in this field, the "normal" entrepreneur remains a minority in the statistics, suggesting that many entrepreneurs do not follow this structured model.

The entrepreneur, considered "planned" or "normal," understands that achieving success in their journey requires meticulous planning to reduce risks to the business's future. This entrepreneurial profile possesses a strategic vision, defines clear objectives, and focuses on the future, organizing each step and decision in a structured way. According to Dornelas (2015), this would be the most complete type of entrepreneur.

Praxedes (2016) reinforces this characterization, stating that the "normal" entrepreneur is concerned with minimizing risk and acts cautiously at each stage of the business, always prioritizing decisions that ensure greater security and stability. In this way, they demonstrate a strong goal orientation, focusing on well-defined results. Consequently, among the various types of entrepreneurs, this type stands out for its combination of planning, strategic vision, and commitment to the venture's success.

In this context, it is important to highlight that the profile of a well-planned

entrepreneur is closely linked to how they exercise leadership within the business. Strategic action and attention to detail require this entrepreneur to adopt leadership styles that align with the company, team, and market demands. For this reason, knowing the types of leadership most adopted by this profile is essential to understanding their capacity for adaptation and efficient management.

As noted by Rodrigues (2009), there is currently a diversity of leadership styles in use, including autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, charismatic, situational, and participative models. Each style has advantages and limitations, being more or less effective depending on the organizational context. The choice of leadership style depends on the team's maturity, the nature of the tasks, and the business's strategic objectives.

The "typical" entrepreneur, when managing their business in a traditional way, tends to exercise leadership that combines elements of these different styles. By operating since planning and focusing on results, they may alternate between more directive stances, such as the autocratic leader, in crisis situations or critical decisions, and more collaborative approaches, such as the democratic or participative leader, in contexts that require team involvement. They may also adopt a transformational style, inspiring change, promoting innovation, and motivating employees via a clear vision of the future. The laissez-faire style, although less common in this profile, can emerge when there is great trust in the team and a high degree of operational autonomy.

This leadership flexibility, coupled with the ability to plan and innovate, reinforces the strategic role of the "normal" entrepreneur as an agent of local economic development. By balancing efficient management, long-term vision, and informed decision-making, they contribute not only to the success of their own business but also to job creation and the strengthening of regional economies.

2.3 Resilience: Conceptual Approaches in Entrepreneurship

Resilience is the capacity to adapt and transform in the face of new challenges, and it is essential for innovation. This concept involves the ability to absorb adverse impacts, understand current realities, and simultaneously plan and execute adaptive actions necessary for long-term survival (Korber & McNaughton, 2017).

Traditionally, resilience is applied across disciplines such as engineering, ecology, psychology, sociology, disaster management, and business administration, and is explored with nuances in each field (Linnenluecke, 2017). Literature seeks to clarify the relationships among resilience, adaptability, and vulnerability, although ambiguities persist regarding their precise definitions and interrelationships (Bullough, et al., 2014).

In the context of entrepreneurship, resilience is characterized by qualities such as preparedness, tenacity, and persistence—elements that differentiate the success of resilient entrepreneurs from that of others (Ayala & Manzano, 2014). Furthermore, resilience is seen as fundamental to fostering companies' capacity to adapt and innovate, a prerequisite for long-term sustainability (Biggs et al.,

2012). This adaptive capacity is frequently linked to the individual resilience of entrepreneurs, who can face and overcome significant adversity, leading to a more agile and effective recovery (Bullough, Renko & Myatt, 2014).

Recent academic discussions have also addressed resilience as a complex and non-linear phenomenon, dependent on a confluence of varied and unpredictable factors (Condorelli, Guimarães, and Azevedo, 2010). It arises from the interaction between the individual and their environment and is influenced by personal experiences and significant emotional support, both of which contribute to the development of resilient capacity throughout life (Settembre). Blundo et al., 2021).

3. METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative approach, focusing on a deeper understanding of the profile of the "normal" or planned entrepreneur, their crisis-coping strategies, and their role in local economic development. The choice of this approach is justified by the nature of the phenomenon investigated, which involves subjective aspects such as decision-making, risk perception, leadership, and innovation—elements that require contextualized interpretation and descriptive analysis.

The research was primarily based on secondary sources, including a systematic literature review of academic works, scientific articles, technical reports, and specialized publications available on digital platforms and in the institution's library. The theoretical framework covers topics such as planned entrepreneurship, innovation, business resilience, and leadership styles, with an emphasis on the challenges small businesses in Brazil face.

Complementing the theoretical analysis, a semi-structured interview was conducted with a small business owner, selected based on performance in the local market and experience managing their own business. The interview sought to capture, across open-ended questions, the entrepreneurs' perceptions of the essential obstacles they face, the innovation strategies they have adopted, the sources of support they have used, and the position of planning in their journey. This stage aimed to connect the concepts under study to practical reality, enriching the analysis with empirical elements.

The qualitative method, therefore, enabled not only the identification of patterns in these entrepreneurs' practices but also an understanding of how factors such as resilience, adaptive leadership, and innovation contribute to the sustainability and success of small businesses, even in adverse contexts. In this way, the methodology reinforces this work's commitment to critical, interpretive analysis aligned with the realities of Brazilian entrepreneurs.

3.1 Data Collection and Construction Process

The construction of the theoretical framework and data collection for this research were conducted alongside a secondary-source investigation, with a systematic literature review as the primary method. The survey included books,

scientific articles, dissertations, institutional reports, and case studies available in academic digital databases and in the educational institution's library collection. The objective was to identify and analyze the factors influencing the sustainability of small businesses, focusing on the profiles of planned entrepreneurs and the strategies used to address crisis scenarios.

To ensure consistency, relevance, and timeliness of the data collected, sources addressing the following central thematic areas were selected:

- Historical and conceptual evolution of entrepreneurship;
- Characteristics of the "normal" or planned entrepreneur;
- Leadership styles adopted by small business owners;
- Innovation and digitalization in small businesses;
- Business resilience in adverse contexts.

The collection and analysis of information occurred in an integrated, continuous manner, allowing critical interpretation and theoretical synthesis to be carried out progressively as new relevant sources were incorporated.

This methodological step helped consolidate the research's theoretical basis, enabling the analysis of the planned entrepreneur's practices with concrete evidence and practical examples.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis revealed significant findings on resilience strategies, the role of innovation, and the difficulties faced by small entrepreneurs, especially those with a planned profile.

As Dornelas (2016) points out, successful entrepreneurs are those who manage to transform obstacles into opportunities, demonstrating creativity and the ability to reinvent themselves as competitive differentiators.

Among the positive results, the identification of resilience strategies stands out as an essential element for maintaining businesses during periods of crisis. The cases analyzed showed that planned entrepreneurs demonstrate adaptability, learn from mistakes, and continually seek creative solutions to overcome economic and market obstacles.

Another important finding was the relationship between innovation and success. Innovation, especially technology-based innovation, was perceived as a key driver of sustainable growth for small businesses. The use of digital tools, for example, enabled expansion into new markets, increased operational efficiency, and greater competitiveness in challenging contexts.

The value of support networks, both personal (such as family and friends) and professional (such as trade associations, cooperatives, and entrepreneurial groups), was also observed. These networks provide emotional, technical, and strategic support, helping entrepreneurs navigate moments of uncertainty with greater confidence and capacity for action.

On the other hand, the negative results point to structural challenges that limit

these entrepreneurs' performance. The first of these is the lack of access to financing. Many small business owners face serious financial difficulties, which restrict their capacity to invest in innovation and modernization. In the context of an economic crisis, this problem intensifies, especially due to bureaucracy and limited access to credit.

These results reinforce the importance of public policies that strengthen planned entrepreneurship, focus on entrepreneurial education, facilitate access to credit, and promote innovation to ensure the sustainability and positive impact of small businesses on the local economy.

4.1 Analysis of the Interview with a Planned Entrepreneur

As part of the qualitative research for this study, a semi-structured interview was conducted with Mr. Hugo Pereira, an entrepreneur in the restaurant sector with over 18 years of experience. At 37 years old, married and father of two, Hugo shared his entrepreneurial journey, focusing on his initial motivations, the challenges he faced, and the resilience and innovation strategies he applied throughout his career. The choice to interview him was based on his performance being representative of the profile of a "normal" or planned entrepreneur, that is, one who builds their business based on clear goals, strategic decisions, and a long-term vision.

The interview covered topics such as reasons for starting a business, choice of sector, length of time in operation, advantages and disadvantages of the business, moments of crisis, personal characteristics, family support, type of business, and expectations for the future. The responses reveal a trajectory marked by realism and optimism, strongly guided by planning and overcoming daily challenges.

According to Hugo, his motivation to become an entrepreneur arose in childhood, fueled by the idea that businesses like bakeries or pharmacies would be financially promising. Even though his entry into the restaurant sector was unexpected at age 18, when he participated in a selection process to work in a factory and was instead hired by a restaurant, where he found the environment welcoming and developed a passion for the industry.

Over the years, Hugo climbed the ranks at the organization, starting as a dishwasher and rising to operating partner. His trajectory reflects continuous, hands-on learning, a typical characteristic of a planned entrepreneur who values technical mastery of the business, constant improvement, and strategic management. By recounting his rise from operational roles to business partnership, Hugo demonstrates characteristics of transformational leadership, as defined by Chiavenato (2005), who associates this style with the ability to inspire and motivate teams via example and strategic vision.

This vocation, as Dornelas (2014) argues, is the starting point for developing a successful business, since entrepreneurs with clear purposes tend to act with greater determination, taking risks in a more calculated and conscious way.

Among the advantages reported, the following stand out: freedom of management, personal and professional development, and connection with the

public. On the other hand, the disadvantages include the overload of responsibilities, the requirement to work unconventional hours, such as holidays and weekends, and the difficulty in finding qualified labor, a recurring problem among small Brazilian entrepreneurs.

During critical moments, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Hugo admitted to considering giving up. Nevertheless, he emphasized the fundamental task of resilience and family support in maintaining the business's continuity. For him, the family's emotional support is indispensable, serving as the basis for the venture's emotional and strategic sustainability. He states, “Before any business partnership, you need a family partnership. Without it, the strain is inevitable.”

Currently, Hugo considers its business to be large-scale, with a hybrid operation (in-person and digital) serving more than 30,000 clients per month. According to him, technology has been an ally in expanding the client base and making the business more competitive, demonstrating its ability to innovate and adapt to market shifts.

From an innovative standpoint, the adoption of digital tools to expand operations during and after the pandemic can be directly related to what Dornelas (2017) describes as the proactive behavior of innovative entrepreneurs, who constantly seek to adapt their business models to market demands. This conduct also reveals a practical application of managerial flexibility as a resilience factor, a concept addressed by Settembre. Blundo et al. (2021).

When asked how he defines himself, he pointed to the word “fearless,” a term his wife also used. In his view, entrepreneurship requires courage, persistence, and responsibility. In a striking part of the interview, he recalls a question asked by a corporation president during the partnership selection process: “What would you like to have written on your tombstone?” — to which he replied: “Here lies a Brazilian who, through his work, gave his family a dignified life.” This answer summarizes his life philosophy and his motivation: the well-being of his family as the driving force behind his entrepreneurial journey.

The value attributed to the “family society” as the basis of the enterprise refers to the duty of social capital in entrepreneurship, an element highlighted by Rodrigues (2009), who emphasizes emotional and relational support as one of the pillars of the stability and continuity of small businesses in adverse contexts.

The interviewee's accounts reinforce that, in an environment that encourages entrepreneurship, an entrepreneurial vocation is a significant factor in launching new businesses. Thus, people with an entrepreneurial vocation are proactive and identify new business opportunities to meet market needs and carry out commercial activities (Dornelas, 2016).

The interview with Hugo reinforces the theoretical findings of this study by illustrating the characteristics of the planned entrepreneur in practice. His trajectory highlights the importance of strategic planning, adaptive leadership, continuous innovation, and, above all, resilience as pillars for maintaining and growing small businesses in challenging contexts.

5. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the role of the "normal" or planned entrepreneur in local economic development, highlighting the challenges this profile faces and the resilience and innovation strategies it adopts. The research results confirm the initially proposed objectives, demonstrating that even in the face of financial limitations, a lack of technical skills, and economic crises, these entrepreneurs manage to keep their businesses active and relevant through strategic planning, creativity, the conscious use of innovation, and adaptable leadership.

The trajectory of entrepreneurship was revisited from its historical origins to its contemporary configuration, revealing its persistence as an engine of economic development and social transformation. In the current context, planned entrepreneurs, often overlooked in major economic debates, are fundamental to the balance of local economies, especially because they can generate jobs, stimulate regional economies, and develop innovative solutions even in adverse scenarios.

The research also highlighted that the planned entrepreneurial profile is associated not only with the use of management and innovation tools, but also with the adoption of different leadership styles. Successful entrepreneurs demonstrate the ability to switch between autocratic, democratic, transformational, and liberal approaches, depending on the specific demands of the business. This flexibility is one of the keys to the success and longevity of small businesses.

Dornelas (2017) emphasizes that the contemporary entrepreneur must adopt a visionary, flexible stance, leveraging innovative business models that respond quickly to ever-changing markets.

Another relevant point identified was the position of innovation in survival and growth. Technological innovations, product differentiation, and the adoption of more agile business models proved fundamental to maintaining competitiveness in a constantly changing market. These practices demonstrate how resilience, combined with innovation, becomes a powerful formula for the sustainability of small businesses.

From an academic and practical standpoint, this study contributes to the field of knowledge by reinforcing the relevance of planned entrepreneurship as an under-researched economic and social phenomenon. Giving this profile visibility broadens understanding of how different types of entrepreneurs face economic instability and promote real changes in their areas of operation.

However, it is important to acknowledge the study's limitations. The research was based on a literature review and a single semi-structured interview, which restricts the generalizability of the results. The absence of a larger sample and quantitative data limits the extrapolation of the conclusions to different realities. Despite this, the findings offer a solid basis for future reflections.

Based on the results obtained, the following directions for future research are suggested, which could further explore the themes addressed in this work:

- Impact of digitalization on small businesses: To investigate how digital transformation has influenced management practices, innovation, and market access for small business owners;
- Longitudinal studies on resilience: Monitoring the performance of small businesses over time, analyzing how they overcome difficulties and which public policies benefit them most;
- Analysis of management styles in family businesses: Examining how different management approaches impact the performance, succession, and longevity of small, family-run businesses.

It can therefore be concluded that the "normal" or planned entrepreneur, even though often operating outside large corporations, represents a transformative agent in the local economy. Their commitment to planning, innovation, and overcoming challenges reveals a resilient business model aligned with contemporary demands. It is hoped that further research will continue this debate, strengthening the appreciation and support for these entrepreneurs in building a more inclusive, sustainable, and innovative economy.

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