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≈ INTERACTIVE PAPER ≈

**CELEBRITY RESTAURATEURS: NARRATIVES OF
ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT**

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Principal Topic

Institutional changes within the restaurant industry increased chefs' autonomy and enabled their creative freedom, turning some of them into entrepreneurs (Rao, Monin & Duran, 2003). But, these changes created also the need to develop the ability to reconcile the professional, artistic and business tensions by chefs (Gillespie, 1994). Consequently, the fine dining segment became innovative and entrepreneurial, and the phenomenon of celebrity restaurateur emerged.

Competence reflects the capacity to effectively interact with one's environment (Johannisson, 1991). Gaining entrepreneurial competence requires restaurateurs to build capacity to create new means-ends frameworks and successfully deliver them to the market (Sarasvathy, 2001). While research showed that role models and achievement motivation facilitate the process, the understanding how this process occurs remains under-theorized. Hence, this paper explores how role models and achievement motivation facilitate entrepreneurial competence attainment.

Methods

Narrative analysis offers an excellent method to explore how entrepreneurs make sense and explain their lives. Drawing on literature on expertise and Johannisson's (1991) classification of entrepreneurial competences, I analyze narratives of six celebrity restaurateurs and their recollection of the learning process. The data combines stories told by industry insiders (renowned chefs themselves, i.e. Thomas Keller, Heston Blumenthal, Rene Redzepi) with those written by writers (about Bernard Loiseau, Mario Batali) and researchers (about Ferran Adria). The analysis involved pattern matching and constant comparison.

Results

The analysis highlighted existence of diverging patterns in narratives used by chefs driven by either learning- or performance-orientation. In particular, while learning-oriented restaurateurs emphasized the inspirational function of their role models for their competence attainment, the performance-driven restaurateurs referred to their role models as valutors; their narratives emphasized more who they were than what they did. Finally, narratives of the learning-oriented restaurateurs emphasized more the importance of in-depth understanding of what and why was being learned, while the importance of outcomes was stressed more in narratives of performance-driven individuals. The paper provides a foundation for better understanding how the source of motivation is likely to influence the strategies used by entrepreneurs to imagine new means-ends frameworks and generate new offerings, and how the reliance on role models changes over time. This paper contributes to the literature on entrepreneurial education suggesting the necessity to adapt adopted roles to competence level.

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