Participant 39 Interview Transcript

**Interviewer:**

Thank you for agreeing to participate, let me familiarize you with my research for a bit. I'm currently in the third year of my PhD as you know, at Southampton Business School, studying entrepreneurial success and I look at it from the angle of luck and authenticity. Right now I'm writing my second paper in which I'm exploring the views of people who are not entrepreneurs, who have done nothing related to entrepreneurship. So I wanna explore these people's views towards extremely successful entrepreneurs. Uhm, a bit about the data protection measures I have undertaken. This interview will be video and audio recorded and this is only for transcription purposes. Your participation is fully anonymous, so the data that you share with me today is not going to be associated with your name. Uh, and I'll be the only one seeing all the data. And can I please ask you to verbally confirm whether you agree to take part in this interview and whether you uh, agree to be video and audio recorded?

**Participant 39:**

Yeah, I confirm both of them.

**Interviewer:**

Great. So to begin our conversation, can you tell me a bit more about yourself? So starting with, I know your full name already, but you can start with H occupation and educational level.

**Participant 39:**

OK, perfect. So I'm 25. I work as a consultant and and I studied a Masters in engineering in the University of Southampton.

**Interviewer:**

Great. Umm and anything that you would like to share about your personal and professional life, anything that you feel comfortable sharing?

**Participant 39:**

And so, I mean, I was born and raised in Madrid, in Spain, and then I moved for uni to the UK and and now I live in London. So big change, very cultural met and kind of. Yeah. I would say have. I'm Spanish, I feel Spanish, but like I also feel a bit Londoner, let's say, so I can relate to both people. So yeah, I think that's for the background, might be useful.

**Interviewer:**

Great. And anything about your professional life, what is your day to day work life like?

**Participant 39:**

Yeah. So I work. Basically, I'm like technology consultant software consultant. So my day to day is working with clients and we build softwares for them like we designed them, we build them, we test them and then we implement them for their companies. So yeah, very technical. It's still a bit engineering.

**Interviewer:**

Very interesting. And have you had any friends or do you still have any family members or friends who are entrepreneurs or who have started their own business?

**Participant 39:**

I actually have a friend from uni that he’s currently trying to kind of, uh, start a well, he's he has built like a small thing that you put in your rocket and you measure and measure is kind of I don't know for kind of tennis like I don't know what it measures, but he's has like he has have a patent and he's looking to like he has like create the company like kind of that. And so he's in the process of doing something and that's the only person I know.

**Interviewer:**

That's really interesting and I'm so you say that they're in the process of doing something. So they haven't started.

**Participant 39:**

So they they they have for example, they have done the pattern, they have built the the product and they're still kind of like. They haven't gone like commercially. For example, they haven't sold the idea. The idea still there theirs, but they have tyhe company. Like they have legally make the company already and but yeah. Financially they haven't earned anything yet.

**Interviewer:**

Well, hopefully they will in the future, but how about yourself? Have you ever thought of starting your own business?

**Participant 39:**

No, not really. This is no.

**Interviewer:**

You don't find it appealing?

**Participant 39:**

And. I just. I think. I mean, first of all, at the moment I don't have any ideas of anything that could work and. It's a it's you have to risk a lot and you have to put a lot of hours and you have to be really passionate about whatever you're doing. And. Personally, I haven't found that. So yeah, I'm happy with like my nine to five job.

**Interviewer:**

That's great. That's great. As long as it works well for you. That's absolutely amazing. And now let's go on to explore your views on extremely successful entrepreneurs. Umm, so the for the purposes of this interview, let's take uh extreme economic success to mean having earned a lot of money out of entrepreneurial activity. So when we refer to success in this interview, we'll mean financial success.

**Participant 39:**

OK.

**Interviewer:**

And So what or who crosses your mind when you think about an extremely successful entrepreneur?

**Participant 39:**

The first one…probably Mark Zuckerberg or Elon Musk as well. And. But yeah, those two probably.

**Interviewer:**

Right. And can you describe a little bit about them? What do you know what what is your impression of them?

**Participant 39:**

I mean, to be fair, I don't know much about them apart from what they're famous for. So like Facebook and Tesla and my impression of them I feel like. I don't like them personally. Like they they they just. I don't think if I knew there was a person I it would be someone that I would like. I think that's impression like I have from them.

**Interviewer:**

Great. And what? What specific things do you disagree with about them or dislike?

**Participant 39:**

I think. I do not. Maybe it's just the way they appear that they don't appear friendly or they they appear with the like. I'm going to say arseholes but you can like beep this like a bit like yeah, not friendly people, not like socially close like, I don't know. I I don't. I think it's mainly for the physical appearance, cause all obviously like I don't know them, but just they impression they give me.

**Interviewer:**

Great, now I'm. And what about…do you like anything about them?

**Participant 39:**

I mean, I think obviously they are. Very clever people like. Obviously, I envy them like how clever they are and and I think that's what, like I like that that like they are very clever and they have good ideas. But apart from that. I mean, of course on their money. Like if I could have their money, great.

**Interviewer:**

And does your explanation apply to all extremely successful entrepreneurs? Do you think they're not really likable as people? They're socially awkward as you said.

**Participant 39:**

I mean. That is the 1st I'm impression I've got for these two people, but obviously. These are like the extreme. Maybe because I I bet like there is very successful entrepreneurs, but not to like these are we're talking about the best of the best. Right. But I guess like another another one that I was thinking recently is like the female CEO of Bumble, like the Dating app. For example, like she had a be upgrading Bumble and It's maybe because I'm more relatable because she's a woman. So like I, for example, she's a very secure, successful in different but. I like her. I don't know why I I know the same thing, but I feel more close to her than the other two. Maybe because of their the the male and female thing but.

**Interviewer:**

Or do you think it's because of the idea itself about the service or the product that they produce? Because they're quite different. One is more of a dating app, the other one is more of a social platform that we all use.

**Participant 39:**

Yeah. Umm. You. No, I don't think so. I don't think so. I think it's. I don't know. She doesn't give me the same kind of impression as the other two.

**Interviewer:**

Interesting. And what do you think differentiates the people from your example? Uh. So Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk and the lady who developed Bumble. So what do you think differentiates them from entrepreneurs who don't earn billions or millions in entrepreneurship. So those who are just they have some normal level of wealth.

**Participant 39:**

Umm. I mean, I think. I mean. I would say it's mainly luck, like being lucky like. Because, I mean, there's very clever people, there's very good ideas around, but. You need to have that kind of luck. Like find the right connections, find someone that will invest in your idea, like be the best of the best, or be the first one and most of that is is is luck. I think so. Like there's many dating apps that probably didn't like go through or social media that didn't go that much, is it? Are they very different from each other? I don't think so. I think it's just lack of being the first one or having the good connections or I think it's luck basically.

**Interviewer:**

That's really interesting. So luck is probably an external factor. What else do you think of the external environment influences? Their extreme success.

**Participant 39:**

And. Umm, probably as well like. And. Well, I don't know. Maybe the uni, the education they received because obviously like they the people who the that's not receive education or like does not have like access to like to units might not have the same opportunities like in good units you have like. How do you say like this kind of networking events that you have communities where people share their ideas and you get connections? And yeah, I think that's a big external factor as well.

**Interviewer:**

And do you think it's open to all or do you think it's some some sort of a privilege to go to university?

**Participant 39:**

Oh yeah, definitely a privilege. I mean, here in the UK, it's good that you have like the loan, the government loan and you can make use of that, but. That's mainly in the UK, like in Spain, like you need to be and and and obviously like you have the private unis that you can go to the more expensive ones. So for like, yes they they will be the lucky ones that they can get like the sponsorship or you can get like you know like the like the free loans or that that kind of stuff and but those would be like the very, very, very clever people but majority. It's yeah, privilege.

**Interviewer:**

Umm. And so apart from those external factors, do you think there are some internal factors that people like Mark Zuckerberg or the Bumble owner have?

**Participant 39:**

I think. I think it's like. Probably passion about what they do like. They are willing to probably like, spend hours of their day. Doing this up and instead of going out or whatever, so like passion and like determination to do something I would say. Yeah. Mainly that because like. And also like you have to like, really believe that your idea is going to work to kind of focus everything else, because at the end of the day, you need to probably like leave your work or like kind of like focus and 100% of your time on this If you really believe it's going to work. So that kind of believed in your idea and yourself, I think you should also have that to be able to risk it everything and dedicate 100% on that.

**Interviewer:**

That's really interesting. And you also mentioned so, uh, going back to the education that you mentioned, do you think? That entrepreneurs need to receive some special entrepreneurship education. Or do you think anyone can become an entrepreneur?

**Participant 39:**

Umm good question I think. And. So I think. I don't think you need a special education for for this, I mean. I don't know. Before, back then or when whenever they they became entrepreneurs by like now days. If you want to learn, I don't know how to imagine. You need to do like your the finances or the costs of whatever your your new product. You kind of you. You could learn from the Internet or you could buy books like. You don't need someone to give you the education if you want to, you could. Self learn is what you need to do to build your business. I think that's more accessible. But maybe to get it started, it will do, but maybe if you want to grow a bit more, maybe you should do. I don't know course or I don't know.

**Interviewer:**

And you also mentioned intelligence, do you think all extremely successful entrepreneurs are intelligent?

**Participant 39:**

Because I am like the main thing. Because they are successful is like the idea. Like that's how it starts if the if. Like. Yeah, like to have that idea. I mean. Hmm. I'm thinking if you do, you need to be clever to have an idea. Maybe no. But usually yes. Yes, I would say that. I would say that more clever people have better ideas that could lead them to yeah, to be entrepreneur.

**Interviewer:**

Great and what do you think about other people? So do you think other people are contributing to the extreme success of entrepreneurs? Or is it just the individual?

**Participant 39:**

Umm. No, I think. Umm. Is it? I mean, it's the thing is it's related, right? Just to be for your product to be successful for example, it needs to be liked by the people like you need for example to sell it to someone to to get the money back basically. So yeah, they basically depend on other ones to be successful if they if the people don't like your product, you're not gonna be successful.

**Interviewer:**

Great. So you're telling me really insightful stuff so far. What do you think about the aspect of control? So do you think that entrepreneurs were always in control over achieving their extreme success?

**Participant 39:**

Umm. No, I think no. Because so yes, they have control over like the hours they put the ideas. They have all of that. But at the end of the day, I think, for example, that luck that aspect of luck is out of their control like you cannot. You cannot really control for example, if people are gonna like your product like that's gonna going to be on the people and. And yeah, like. I think there's an there's there's yes, you can't like most of it you can control it, but to be very, extremely successful, you need that luck that you cannot control.

**Interviewer:**

Really interesting. And UM, what do you think in they control so if they can't control their extreme success. What do you think is within their control?

**Participant 39:**

Within the control it's like they're like basically the product, their idea, the work, like the amount of hours they put into making it work and. Probably like and. Like the networking they do, like who they communicate with and. Yeah, I think pretty much that.

**Interviewer:**

So. What I hear is probably a lot of their actions are within their control. Right. Umm and what do you think about hard work? Do you think entrepreneurs are hard working people?

**Participant 39:**

Umm. Yeah, I think so because like. In, they wouldn't be where they are if they didn't. Like I think. For for now, yeah, I think for sure they must be have hard work and people.

**Interviewer:**

And it's interesting that you mentioned luck throughout the interview as the main factor that contributes to extreme success. So, UM, some people hold the extreme view that luck actually plays a very important role and is all behind extreme success. So people like Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk don't deserve to be that wealthy because they've they've just been lucky to achieve that. So what would you say in response to this?

**Participant 39:**

I mean, I wouldn't say they don't deserve. Deserve it like. They like. Initially they had the idea they had the work like they put the hours. Yes, they were lucky. Yes, it's unfair that they have that amount of money and. But that's life like. And yes, like I would say, I'm a hard working as well as I put a lot of hours and I turn air that's much on that somewhere as well. And but I I I don't think that they do not deserve it. It is what it is, right? Like it's just that luck. They they did. They did their work. They were lucky that it was a great idea, that everyone loved and people wanted to pay for that.

**Interviewer:**

And UM, what do you think is the definition of luck that you use? How do you define it in your mind?

**Participant 39:**

Umm. I would say for this case it's. Umm, being in the right moment and. With the right people because most of these stuff are…were very innovative at that point in time, so it's basically being lucky on in time. So being the first one in doing something and to be in like being with the right people so finding those people that will see the value of your product or your idea and that will be willing to invest or whatever on your, yeah, on your product. So I think both I think for me luck is being in the right time with the right people.

**Interviewer:**

Great. And do you think that you can earn your luck in a way by doing something by taking action? Or can you create your own luck do you think?

**Participant 39:**

You. Yes, like you could, I think you could. I mean, it's not that you could create your own life, but you could make the conditions more favorable to make this happen. So like, I don't know, if you think something has not been developed yet like. At that point you're ahead of everyone else, or if you go out and you meet new people or go to these networking events, you are again putting yourself out there to meet those people that will give you the money. So you kind of, you could make the conditions more favorable. But again, I think there's just that aspect of no control that is.

**Interviewer:**

Umm.

**Participant 39:**

Being the first one on meeting the correct people.

**Interviewer:**

Great. So uh what I gather from you is that probably it's very difficult to become an entrepreneur, extremely successful entrepreneur nowadays.

**Participant 39:**

Yeah, I think it is very, very difficult.

**Interviewer:**

Yes, especially there is not many people that can become as extremely successful as Mark Zuckerberg, for example.

**Participant 39:**

Impossible. Impossible.

**Interviewer:**

So the next question is important for me to fully capture your thoughts on extreme success and what do you think is uh Mark Zuckerberg or Elon Musk's contribution to our society or any other entrepreneur?

**Participant 39:**

I think it's just the the product that they leave behind, so Facebook and. Tesla basically. Themselves as a person I don't say they give me anything. They don't give anything to society. Cause now the product is is fully already developed so. Yeah. So I don't. I think it's more the product than themselves to be fair.

**Interviewer:**

Great. That's really interesting. And how do you think, uh, the products that they develop influence us?

**Participant 39:**

Umm. The so I mean one is like obviously social media and it was kind of like the first one that it was like, yeah and now owns everything. So obviously it's like a big part of. Our day to day and and. Yeah, Tesla, I'm not sure. Like. I don't know why it became that popular to be fair, since that an expensive electric car. I don't, I don't know. Why? I think it's more because of his ideas. Of like. This space and all that stuff like people are going to go to the moon that kind of like. Influence on the product. So it's more his personality than make the product kind of nice, I would say.

**Interviewer:**

That's really interesting. So do you think that the product itself is not, uh as environmentally friendly or as great as he?

**Participant 39:**

I think, yeah, I think I think the Elon Musk case is a bit different because he's a very special character. I would say like he's a bit crazy with his ideas and and I think. And yeah, I think like him being known as a character is what makes Tesla popular because. Yes, it's a fancy car, but it's like very expensive, no one can really come buy it, no one can really use it. It's electric, which is not really. Like very used at the moment. So I think in this case. Him being who he is is what makes him or his product popular. Hmm.

**Interviewer:**

And do you think that translates to other entrepreneurs? For example, like Mark Zuckerberg or if we take someone completely different like Kylie Jenner or Kim Kardashian?

**Participant 39:**

And. Yeah, definitely. I mean, Kylie Jenner is a good example like her product was popular because of what of who she… of who she was or she is like. I've never used her makeup, but like. Is not. It's not because of the makeup like I've seen the Kardashians full series. And it's not because of the make-up. It's because of who she is.

**Interviewer:**

So Umm yeah, probably nowadays the billionaires are is more about the person rather than the product. It's not about the innovation of the product.

**Participant 39:**

Yeah, exactly. Exactly like I would say, I mean it's two different, it's it's like. I mean, would I consider Kylie Jenner an extremely successful entrepreneur? I don't think so. Just because for me, like the like for me. Entrepreneurs come from having a great idea and like making this idea or the this idea into a product that people like. She just put, like her name into a lipstick and then sold the lipstick. But the lipstick was nothing new, like nothing innovative, nothing special. So like for me, that's not she's not an entrepreneur. At least not within this context. Yeah.

**Interviewer:**

That's really interesting because the Forbes identifies her as the youngest self made billionaire.

**Participant 39:**

No. Right. I don't, I don't think so, I I. I don't think so. Like. On. The fair like she. Yeah, she did. I mean all the. Products that she sells is because of her health, what food she is, not because of the product. Yeah. So. Yeah, she. No. I don't agree with that.

**Interviewer:**

And that actually reminds me of another question. So. And we often hear in in the news or in media that entrepreneurs are self-made. Do you think, uh, that is true for extremely successful entrepreneurs, or do you think there is something else?

**Participant 39:**

Like self-made as how like?

**Interviewer:**

Self made meaning starting from nothing to building their billions in wealth.

**Participant 39:**

Yeah, I think I think. What I consider entrepreneur, so if we take Mark Zuckerberg. Yes, he he wasn't, I mean probably he was. He was at Harvard. So probably his family was not no one. But what I mean is like he was he was a no one in terms of like someone with money but not like extremely wealthy and and yeah. I think he had the idea to build the social paint, some blah blah blah. Yes, that for me. Yes, it's like self made Kylie Jenner was not self made because because she had the family already being famous. So like. It's a different thing.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, that's really interesting. And do you think a lot of entrepreneurs are self made or do you think it's more like Kylie Jenner, so they have some prior financial wealth to begin with? Privilege.

**Participant 39:**

I think probably it's more likely that you find entrepreneurs that already have some kind of privilege or wealth from a family like that can that help that you need to to to again to like meet the the right people for example like have the resources to do your product or your prototype or whatever. So yes you need some kind of wealth or like some, something like, I think the majority are probably like that. I'm sure there's cases where like out of the blue, this person invented this and they they have nothing on that. They have everything. I'm sure this case is I I I don't know any, but even more, I think even more now with. Like. And. Like, I don't know, let's say. Umm. Like famous people that could take that advantage, like Instagrammers or whatever, they could take like that advantage of being famous to become millionaires kind of thing like for example, you know Chiara Ferrani like the Italian of like she she I think she was quite an entrepreneur for example like what not I think this one is tricky.

**Interviewer:**

You're actually the third person who mentions her during the interviews. This is how I know about Chiara Ferrani.

**Participant 39:**

OK, so yeah, I don't know if she. I mean, I don't think I I honestly don't think so like this again like she used that kind of like social media and all that stuff of being famous and kind to then do her brand and so on. But she started with social media. So like, I think now it's easier to become a more wealthy, extremely wealthy. But personally, I would not say they are enterpreneurs because all they did was create a brand of clothes like it's nothing crazy to me. It's nothing that is gonna change society, right? Like the social media or sending people to the moon. That that's gonna change society. Not the not the makeup or clothes.

**Interviewer:**

Great. Uh. That that's really interesting actually. So, Umm, what do you think about UM, hard work and luck in relation to these examples? So do you think it is more about working hard to achieve that extreme success or do you think it's more about luck? If we have to juxtapose these two?

**Participant 39:**

I think it's if if you have to compare both of them like put them kind of in a balance with balance kind of thing, I would say more luck because people can work really hard all their lives and never reach anywhere, so I think if you have to compare both of them for entrepreneur I I would say luck.

**Interviewer:**

And that's probably relatable to the entrepreneurs that you just, well, uh, debatable whether they're entrepreneurs. But yeah, the ones that you gave us an example.

**Participant 39:**

Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

**Interviewer:**

Uh, great. Uh, really interesting stuff. I I have one question. I'm on money. So do you think money are being an indicator for how much an entrepreneur has contributed to our society? So for example, if we take Kylie Jenner as being a billionaire, do you think she has contributed more to our society than someone who earns, let's say, thousands out of entrepreneurial activity?

**Participant 39:**

No, I think it depends like. No, I think like what they earn is not. Like, that's not represent what they give to like it's not proportionate, let's say like and someone that. Is, I don't know, earn less, might have a more… a better product than that, like, helps more society than her. That makeup doesn't really help society kind of thing.

**Interviewer:**

Great. And so while we're on the money, what do you think about taxation so often on the media outlets, we hear stuff about tax avoidance and how very famous entrepreneurs tend to hide their taxes into different countries. So what do you think about taxation? Do you think they should be taxed more because they're billionaires?

**Participant 39:**

And. I mean. Umm. I mean, yes, I think everything like at the end of the day, we. Just like in London, right? With your salary, if your salary increases like your your, you pay more tax. So I think that should still be proportionate until. The highest level and and then then, then the they do. And like tax avoidance, all the tax paradise, these like countries where they move their money to pay less task. I think that that's like so bad I just like. It just that that that is just being greedy like you already have a lot of money like. Pay your taxes like be a good citizen.

**Interviewer:**

But do you think they should be taxed more than they are currently?

**Participant 39:**

I mean, I don't know how. I don't know how much they are, like how much they are taxed. I don't know, I guess it has to be in proportion to what they income is, I don't know. I I guess I don't know how much they there is. Ask if it's what I don't know. I don't know if there's a limit on the tax. Umm.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, there, there, there is a limit.

**Participant 39:**

So yeah, then they they should be taxed more. Because I'm sure that limit is not their money.

**Interviewer:**

Great. I really appreciate your willingness to express your views on this topic. I've got one last question. Do you have anything else that I didn't ask about extreme entrepreneurial success that you want to share?

**Participant 39:**

Umm. I think maybe. Just like. I think cause overall. I don't know. I don't know what the I like you. You will know more than me that you have interview more people. But I think overall the the view. Is not. I think there is some kind of negative view towards them and the money they make because people might feel like a big jealousy of having their money kind of thing, so I think. More than. I think the the main factor at the end what drives well. I I don't know the drives. Opinions are like, at least mine is the money. Is the money that they earn in comparison to to me. And but yeah, but also from my side. If. It depends on on two things like. If it's. A woman. I don't know why I'm like, so affected by this. But if it's a woman and she's entrepreneur and she has like, in her way to the top with a great idea like the Bumble woman. I respect that and I like I go good for you. If it's someone that or like. Ohh Kylie Jenner. Let's say. Like she didn't do anything. I'm like no girl. And then even with someone. Yes, I'm more jealous. I might feel a bit. Huh. But I think that's just the gender thing. But yeah, I don't know.

**Interviewer:**

Really interesting. And uh, do you think there is some sort of unfairness in how money are being distributed? So with billionaires and for example, if we take you as an example, as a taxpayer, you know, having a job.

**Participant 39:**

I think. Yeah. Yes, I think it's unfair to because. It's. It's it's unfair to the point that it's like. When it's so extreme, it's like billions of money. And yes, it is their money but I think it could be used to something else, like for example the I'm thinking about Bill Gates when it has like the the Bill Gates and Melinda Gates Foundation where they, like, put a lot of money into that. For example, I think that's a good example of how to make their billions less unfair for them, like they share it amongst people who need it more and, but yeah, I think overall very unfair. I mean, they've deserve it, but. If it was me, I'd probably be like Melinda Gates and Bill Gates that I will share it around.

**Interviewer:**

Great. Umm, thank you for participating. I will stop the recording now.