Chapter 2

Leading entrepreneurial youth – Leadership and entrepreneurial skills for shaping the markets and the jobs landscape in a mobile and collaborative economy in Greece

Betty Tsakarestou, Lida Tsene, Dimitra Iordanoglou, Konstantinos Ioannidis and Maria Briana

We are living in an era where young people face everyday challenges deriving both from the global financial crisis and from digital technologies. On the one hand, the business environment is becoming more and more unstable, while on the other hand, digital and mobile culture offers a series of opportunities. In both cases, young people need to be equipped with an array of skills in order to adapt to the constantly changing landscape.

Our chapter discusses the findings of two studies, one self-funded and the other with EU support. Both were conducted in Greece, and focused on young leaders and their new characteristics and skills as described within the context of the emergence of mobile (Stald 2008) and entrepreneurial culture, as well as the collaborative trends of the sharing economy (Botsman and Rogers 2010). The questions we address explore awareness and attitudes regarding the use of mobile technologies in each of the following clearly segmented areas – consumption; gaming; work; start-ups and entrepreneurship; democracy and social/political activism – while investigating the association of Emotional Intelligence (EI) (Petrides and Furnham 2001) with emerging collaborative practices and culture. In addition, we attempt to map the new set of skills young leaders should develop within the digital economy landscape in terms of future employability as well as during economic crisis.

A mixed research methodology was employed with a sequential exploratory design (Creswell 2003). The initial phase of the study included quantitative data collection (a sample of 470 participants) and analysis. An online survey technique was preferred as the most appropriate to reach online users and examine attitudes and behaviours in the above-mentioned sectors of the digital environment.

In the qualitative stage, in-depth and semi-structured interviews were used, necessary to acquire elaborated and detailed responses (Gillham 2000). In addition, scaling questions with 41 leadership skills – identified by the literature review as the most important – were included in the discussion guide (Cox et al. 2010; Whetten and Cameron 2007; Perth Leadership Institute 2008). These were organised in three categories: self-management, business management and people management skills. The sample for the interviews consisted of 48 experts, namely start-up founders, human resources managers and leadership academics/researchers. A judgmental non-probability sampling technique was applied to recruit the participants. The population elements have been purposely selected based on the judgment of the research team. For this study, broad population inferences were not required; however, we needed to focus on experts in specific fields. The discussion guide for the interviews was divided into three main areas (Iordanoglou and Ioannidis 2014):

- ▶ important leadership skills for future leaders;
- ▶ important leadership skills in times of economic crisis;
- ▶ leadership skills observed in young professionals and entrepreneurs in the workplace.

Results from the quantitative research provided an outline of the emerging mobile generation in Greece. In addition, EI was found to be a significant predictor of collaborative consumption. Results from the qualitative research showed that among the most important leadership skills for young leaders were passion, trustworthiness, flexibility, inspiring others, self-confidence, strategic thinking, collaboration and teamwork. In times of economic turmoil, most of the important skills remain the same, with adaptability and innovation entering the top-10 list. Furthermore, a gap between required and observed leadership skills in the workplace was revealed, mainly in people management skills. The results are compared with those derived from similar research conducted in four other European countries (Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria) and the implications for educating the next generation of young leaders and entrepreneurs are discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The rise of social networks and generally of Web 2.0, as well as mobile networks, which enable participation and collaborative production and consumption of content in novel, unprecedented ways, is multifaceted. It represents a convergence of technological innovations and of a new architecture of social life. It is hard to think of another invention with such a profound impact on the daily lives of its users. Though perhaps an evolution of known concepts rather than altogether unique inventions, the cell phone and the tablet are essential tools for people in the developed countries of the West as well as in emerging and developing countries that, according to a recent Pew Research Center survey, "are quickly catching up to those in advanced nations in terms of access to technology" with "a median of 67% [using] the internet and 43% [owning] a smartphone" (Poushter 2016). In developed countries, smart devices are even perceived as a status symbol for their holders, and are devices that carry out an ever wider sample of daily activities as well as communication tools and enablers of a new dimension in the life of an individual. In the developing and emerging countries, smartphone and internet users, according to the above-mentioned Pew report, "are

more frequent users of social networks compared with the US and Europe". According to GSMA's latest report on the mobile economy (2016), mobile technologies in the developing world are the "dominant platform for internet access", providing opportunities for growth and addressing social challenges from access to mobile money services to education, health care, disaster response, social ventures and tech start-ups.

Both cell phones and tablets are devices through which the mobile identity (Stald 2008) of the individual manifests itself. According to Stald, young people's identities are influenced by the use of mobile phones, as they are "ubiquitous in youth cultural contexts as a medium for constant updating, co-ordination, information access and documentation" (ibid.). Individuals who regard the cell phone as a central, defining characteristic of their lives cannot really consider their lives without this device and without its influence on them; the absence of such devices seems to create stress. Those currently under 40 or even younger, in particular, have gradually adapted to living a double social life, both offline and online.

What are the major trends that contributed to this paradigm shift? Following Stald, we may discern four major traits of this new identity tied to wider trends in the societal context.

The crux of this new mobile identity is one's constant availability for a number of activities that range from the personal to the social. People are able to communicate literally all the time, day and night. With cell phones operating even when their owners are asleep (since hardly anyone turns them off), people send a signal that they are reachable. Norms of when and how one might set aside some personal mobile-free time have emerged, although they are not always enforced or respected.

People are thus surrounded by devices that communicate with networks or with themselves all the time. It seems only natural that, given the opportunity, we will communicate in the same way ourselves. It has been several centuries now that people have broken the natural day/night cycle that directed their activities and split their lives into neat, discernible patterns of work and rest. More recently, our activity has tended to follow cycles directed by other entities, such as the media industry. Shirky (2010) notes for instance how people tended to follow television programming cycles, memorising their patterns. Just think how some people went to great lengths to make sure they were home in time in order to watch their favourite shows on TV. Certainly on-demand video, internet broadcasting and streaming have quickly rendered that cycle obsolete.

Moreover, despite what has been said, such deep interconnection is considered desirable by many and it has been made possible via mobile technologies. In other words, people tend to create and then use parallel channels for communication. One could argue that despite what Shirky says about technologies like television that tend to drain people's time, the content of these so-called old technologies is the enabler of creativity. Let us consider a globally popular series such as *Game of Thrones*, which creates an enormous volume of content (for example fan fiction) and metacontent (speculation about what is next in the series) that is channelled exclusively via networks. Further, one cannot ignore the collaborative effort required to rapidly create, edit and disseminate subtitles for such a series in multiple languages literally within hours of the original airing. In short, several years since Shirky's original, glum analysis, old media and (new) networks are not necessarily competing for one's time and creativity, and this is particularly true for younger people using networks.

Virtual mobility, on the other hand, grants presence or rather virtual omnipresence to the individual. Being always available and also being selectively exclusive makes us appear to be beyond the bounds of any physical constraint. People are connected physically with their devices and, on a deeper level, within their devices. This is creating connective action, as Bennett and Segerberg (2012) have described it.

People do not merely appear, they are everywhere and they can move freely. This has a political angle as well. People perceive freedom of movement to be equal to freedom of expression; they cannot separate one from the other in their implications. Since the Second World War people have increasingly considered physical freedom of movement to be an integral part of their lives. The ease of travel from one continent to another, and political institutions like the EU that enable the crossing of borders, were followed by technological breakthroughs for easier and near-instantaneous communication across the world. Physical mobility and especially cross-border mobility is, in fact, political. People would find it quite strange to be able to travel hassle-free from Athens to Paris (as they are part of the same political union) if, upon reaching their destination, they were subject to laws that severely curtailed free speech. This has been apparent in the Arab Spring: younger people with experience of a life beyond their country felt there was too much dissonance between, say, Egypt and the United Kingdom regarding free speech. However, this makes them more visible to themselves.

A third important dimension, following on from this, concerns the extension of these devices from mere record-keeping devices to enablers of societal change. It is hard to say whether the features themselves (such as being able to connect to the web and perform text- and video-editing tasks via a service) were responsible for bringing about change or whether an undercurrent for societal change expressed itself via these devices. In any case, record-keeping in the form of text, images, or video evolved towards a kind of history logging or at least, news tracking.

People are creating and consuming more text and multimedia content as well. From the explosion of text, as manifested a little before Web 2.0, to the explosion of creativity via mobile devices, even to selfies, people seem to love to consume, even if superficially. This consumption becomes collaborative for both tangible and intangible material. Botsman and Rogers (2010) provide an impressive list of schemes including swaps, peer-to-peer currencies, time swaps, crowdfunding and food co-ops that could not really exist without being supported by mobile technology and assistance.

These schemes come at a time of profound rethinking and even distrust regarding capitalism and its logic. While on a small scale, it may be subversive enough to make a dent in the logic of economic action, which seems to be at odds with the logic of these swapping schemes.

To summarise: at a deeper level, the ever extending use of mobile devices in order to forge and express a mobile identity creates new kinds of norms for the individual. Again, it is hard to tell which came first. In the grander scheme of things, the logic of a collaborative economy follows several undercurrents that were already present in society – and it may have forged several of them. Essentially, it is a matter of the right thing at the right time: a collaborative economy provides a timely answer or – better yet – is the glue that binds several disjointed solutions and answers to outstanding issues.

Terms like the "sharing economy" or "peer economy" or even "collaborative economy" seem to overlap both in common usage as well as in stricter settings. There is a fluidity in these concepts, notes Botsman (2013). However, she states that they attempt to describe a common core of ideas and adds that despite the lack of more formal definitions, it is essential not to misunderstand the space these ideas and initiatives cover and the power of the always-on generation whose activity is "fuelled by enjoyment, economic incentive, reputation and self -fulfilment" (Hamari, Sjöklint and Ukkonen 2015). In a nutshell, the transformation of classic market behaviours in ways and on a scale not possible before the internet (Botsman 2015) seems to unlock the "idling capacity" of society.

At the same time, the current socio-economic landscape affects young people in multiple ways. Unemployment and difficulties in getting a job are issues that concern the majority of youth on a global level. According to the European Commission (2015a), 8.7 million young Europeans cannot find work. In addition, "finding a long-term contract or a stable job is reported as a concern by 31% of respondents, and having to move to find a job is a concern among 16%", as highlighted by another survey on European youth (European Commission 2015b).

Within the EU, there is also a shift towards entrepreneurship. The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan or programmes such as Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs and the European Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs (YES) aim to revolutionise the culture of entrepreneurship in the EU and to create a more supportive environment for future and existing entrepreneurs to grow with a pervasive sense of connection in the natural fabric of everyday life, also building "the confidence to be an initiator, a designer, a problem-solver" (Erickson 2012), all critical elements for an entrepreneurial mindset.

On the other hand, we are facing a paradigm shift, as "growing numbers of young people are making an about face – turning their backs on working for 'the man' and creating their own ventures" (Sanford 2011). This implies that younger people are more willing to take on the risk of establishing their own entrepreneurial presence than previous generations. This new generation of entrepreneurs seems to list leadership skills as part of the DNA of a successful contemporary entrepreneur.

Youth leadership is a challenging concept as "the nature and meaning of leadership is changing in response to a dramatically changing society, and the rise of complex challenges. Leadership is increasingly seen as situational and as an inherently collaborative, social and relational activity" (Kahn, Hewes and Ali 2009). In addition, "examining youth leadership, specifically, adds another layer of complexity, tied as it is in popular conception to other ideas such as youth development, citizenship, youth action and engagement, and participation" (ibid.).

What are the competences that young leaders should develop today? Strategic thinking (39%), being inspirational (37%), strong interpersonal skills (34%), vision (31%), passion and enthusiasm (30%) and decisiveness (30%) are among the most popular for Millennials (Deloitte 2015). According to other studies, vision, passion, drive, integrity and innovation are the top qualities of successful entrepreneurs, while innovation, risk-taking, resilience, proactiveness and ability to team, flexibility, a relentless focus on quality and loyalty came next (Ernst and Young 2007). In addition, the European Commission's report on entrepreneurship competence (2015c) highlighted decision making, innovation, collaboration, problem solving, negotiation and networking as

skills associated with leadership and entrepreneurship. Iordanoglou et al. (2014) found that in times of crisis, the 10 most important leadership skills are self-confidence, trustworthiness, optimism, analytical decision making, strategic thinking and planning, creative problem solving, collaboration and teamwork, interpersonal communication, building networks and connections, and motivating others.

Collaborative leadership is a model of leadership that has emerged in the last few years (Chrislip 2002). Inspired by the theories and trends of the collaborative and sharing economy, this new leadership model proposes a shared decision-making process. Chrislip and Larson listed several principles for collaborative leaders, including peer problem solving, sustaining hope and participation, and inspiring commitment and action (Chrislip and Larson 1994, Miller and Miller 2007). According to research conducted by Ibarra and Hansen (2011) for the *Harvard Business Review*, collaborative leadership "requires strong skills in four areas: playing the role of connector, attracting diverse talent, modelling collaboration at the top, and showing a strong hand to keep teams from getting mired in debate" (Ibarra and Hansen 2011).

The aforementioned leadership skills and collaborative behaviours require an underlying set of emotional abilities and traits that can be described by the popular concept of EI, which has emerged in the last decade as a significant component of human interaction in many different contexts. The term was introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990), who define it as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions". However, it was Goleman (1995) who popularised the concept, describing EI as consisting of four dimensions: two personal (self-awareness, self-management) and two social (social awareness, relationship management).

The theory of trait EI (or trait emotional self-efficacy) emerged from the distinction between two EI constructs: ability EI and trait EI (Petrides and Furnham 2000). Trait EI is formally defined as a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies (Petrides, Pita and Kokkinaki 2007). It essentially concerns people's self-perception of their own emotional abilities. Numerous studies that have investigated trait EI have yielded significant associations with important outcomes, including academic performance (Laborde, Dosseville and Scelles 2010), scholastic achievement and deviant behaviour at school (Petrides, Frederickson and Furnham 2004), cognitive appraisal of stressful events (Mikolajczak, Luminet and Menil 2006), burnout (Mikolajczak, Menil and Luminet 2007), stress levels in athletes (Laborde et al. 2011) and body image (Swami, Begum and Petrides 2010).

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Collaborative consumption

Toffler (1980) has investigated how the roles of consumer and producer can be blurred, introducing the idea of "prosumption". In the 1990s, the trend for tailoring and customisation (Pine 1999) led to the conclusion that owning is not an end in itself but a means to personalisation and creativity (Ahuvia 2005). The high penetration of mobile networking technologies over the last decade has totally reshaped the relationship

between producers and consumers. Botsman and Rogers (2010) have documented collaborative consumption trends, where individuals can find active and engaging ways to fulfil desires, not by possessing, but by co-creating, sharing and exchanging not only goods and services but also information, know-how, lifestyles, risks and attitudes.

In our survey, following the research by Botsman and Rogers (2010), we found that a discrete segment among the respondents has particular traits associated with collaborative consumption (hereby labelled the High Collaborative Consumption Index), since they are very keen to exchange products or services with others; share or exchange space, time and skills; and pay for the use of a product or service, instead of ownership. In addition, the vast majority of respondents believe that collaborative consumption practices develop personal skills such as experimentation (73%), open-mindness (71%), risk-taking (70%) and an entrepreneurial mind (64%).

Gaming

According to the global literature (for example McGonigal 2011), games can cultivate emotional and collective intelligence, strategic planning, decision making, collaboration and creativity, and act as catalysts for social change. In Greece, however, gamers appear to need more time, information and experience to adopt games as a force for social collaboration and change; they tend to underestimate the concept of playing and gaming as a serious tool for learning and developing skills. In our survey, less than half of online gamers (44%) had utilised gaming as a tool for real life. Users declare benefitting from gaming experiences in terms of social and personal skills, yet they do not see these benefits as motives for engagement in gaming. Two out of three respondents believe gaming can be addictive (63%) and that it can reinforce solitude (62%), though the majority play online games to "get away from daily anxiety" (60%). Others, however, believe they can develop skills by playing, such as becoming more decisive (38%), more competent (36%) or more organised (32%), skills that could help them to develop a leadership profile in their professional environments.

Start-ups

In the last decade start-ups have become a trend in the business world and have monopolised the interest of the biggest businesses. A start-up is "an organization formed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model" or "a culture and mentality of innovating on existing ideas to solve critical pain points" (Blank 2013; Ries 2011). Start-ups have become popular in Greece only in recent years, where they often appear as solutions to economic crisis. In our research, we found that the start-up community in Greece is likely to grow, since one out of three respondents (37%) "would like to create their own start-up". In addition, the vast majority (70%) are interested in crowd-funding schemes.

Work 2.0

Social media has reshaped job markets and changed the way individuals search for jobs, interact with companies and communicate with professionals and colleagues (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Social networks have been transformed from

simple databases of personal information to enriched biographical narratives and many users shape their online identities to gain popularity and recognition. Individuals engage rapidly and simultaneously with contacts, leverage relationships and demonstrate their skills and abilities. According to our survey, two out of three respondents use social media and networks for professional purposes (68%). The vast majority use social networks to inform themselves about labour market trends (75%), to create a network of people (75%) and to exchange ideas/opinions within professional groups (72%). These trends seem to be similar across Europe. According to a Eurostat report (2015), 33% of young people in the EU use the internet to look for a job or submit job applications (compared to 17% for the whole population in 2013).

Social and political activism 2.0

In recent years, there have been many examples of people using social networks during protests that influence connective action (Faris and Etling 2008; Bennett and Segerberg 2012). Platforms for social activity can significantly lower the cost of co-ordination and help diffusion. Alternative media, essentially produced outside the established journalistic field, is a key component of Activism 2.0 (Kahn and Kellner 2004). In Greece, mass anti-austerity protests exhibit widespread use of mobile technologies for co-operation, propaganda and cyber-activism. In our survey, almost all respondents (83%) would think to participate in a protest organised online and half of the total sample (53%) had already participated. Online technologies do not give permanence to a social movement, though they can keep members alert and informed: 92% read news regarding online protests, while 69% shared information, and 62% commented online.

Correlation of collaborative consumption and emotional intelligence

Our research hypothesis was that trait EI is a positive predictor of the collaborative consumption (CC) index. A linear regression analysis was performed to investigate the direct influence of trait EI on the CC index (see Table). Trait EI was found to be a significant positive predictor of CC (beta = .31, t = 2.67, $p < .001$).

Table 1: Linear Regression analysis with the Trait Emotional Intelligence Entered at Step 1 as Predictor of Collaborative Consumption Index

Dependent variable CC Index			
Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Intercept	3.179	.457	6.961	.000
EI	.317	.119	2.671	.001

*$p < .001$

Important leadership skills for young leaders and entrepreneurs

Interviews with Greek experts revealed the 10 most important leadership skills in terms of future employability, with passion, collaboration and teamwork, and trustworthiness named as the top three skills (Table 9).

Table 9: Important leadership skills for future leaders in terms of future employability

Passion
Collaboration and teamwork
Trustworthiness
Inspiring others
Flexibility
Strategic thinking and planning
Creative problem solving
Self-confidence
Setting specific goals and targets
Conflict management

Interestingly enough, the least important leadership skills were international mobility and implementing organisational change, although the first was included in the top-10 list of the skills observed in young professionals in the workplace and the latter in the top-10 list of the most important leadership skills in times of crisis, which are presented below.

Important leadership skills in times of economic crisis

Especially in times of crisis, some of the aforementioned skills remain in the top-10 list, such as flexibility, and collaboration and teamwork, with new skills listed as well (Table 10).

Table 10: Important leadership skills in times of economic crisis

Adaptability
Flexibility
Innovation
Defining and solving complex problems
Inspiring others
Strategic thinking and planning
Collaboration and teamwork
Motivating others
Creative problem solving
Implementing organisational change

The least important leadership skills in times of crisis were giving speeches and presentations, and conducting meetings.

Leadership skills observed in young professionals and entrepreneurs in the workplace

Table 11 lists the leadership skills observed in young professionals and entrepreneurs in the workplace. Among the skills least observed were gaining and using power, and managing diversity.

Table 11: Leadership skills observed in young professionals and entrepreneurs in the workplace

Passion
Adaptability
International mobility
Resilience
Optimism
Trustworthiness
Flexibility
Building networks and connections
Interpersonal communication
Collaboration and teamwork

A comparison between the Greek results and those derived from four other European countries, namely Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria (Iordanoglou et al. 2014), reveals both similarities and differences regarding the importance given to certain skills. More specifically, collaboration and teamwork, strategic thinking and planning, creative problem solving and motivating others were among those listed across the board, while skills such as adaptability, flexibility, innovation, and implementing organisational change were found to be of particular importance only for Greek youth. Furthermore, a gap between required and observed leadership skills in the workplace was revealed in all five countries, mainly in people management skills.

DISCUSSION

This chapter aimed to discuss the leadership skills, required and observed, among young leaders in the converging contexts of an emerging mobile and optimistic entrepreneurial culture within the collaborative and sharing economy and the aftermath of a crisis-driven global economy, exemplified by the notorious and persistent Greek crisis. We observe the concurrence of two disruptive forces – mobile, collaborative technological, social and entrepreneurial innovations and the crisis-driven dismantling of traditional organisational and entrepreneurial models – that are shaping the awareness and attitudes of young mobile generations regarding the skills needed to successfully anticipate present challenges and empower them to build their futures in the workplace and the labour market.

In Greece, based on our quantitative research findings, we can provide evidence of the emergence of a mobile generation engaging in collaborative economy practices. A key predictor trait for this collaborative and mobile culture is EI, along with the ensuing development of experimentation, open-mindedness, risk-taking and an entrepreneurial mindset. These characteristics provide some evidence about a culture shift in the making within Greek society, more in tune with global developments in the field of mobile and collaborative economies, despite the fact that the country is enduring a long period of crisis-driven policies and economic repercussions, high percentage unemployment being one of the negative future predictors.

The 10 most important leadership skills for young leaders and entrepreneurs for future employability that we identified, with passion, collaboration and teamwork, trust, and inspiring others topping the list, are very similar to the skills reported by published research by other organisations such as Deloitte (2015) and the European Education and Training Strategy 2020. This is a sign of a broad global consensus about the leadership skills needed for our times.

Despite this normative consensus about the leadership skills for young leaders and entrepreneurs, we should also "mind the gap" between the required and observed leadership skills (see Tables 9, 10 and 11). Although the top three required skills (passion, collaboration and teamwork, trustworthiness) were also observed to be necessary for young professionals and entrepreneurs, other important skills such as inspiring others or strategic thinking and planning were not observed. This can be explained by the lack of working experience or the lack of education and development of these skills in universities. The latter explanation may in fact reveal a gap between the skills and competences developed in universities and those required by the industry today. Future research could contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex and correlated factors that might boost or hinder the transformation of perceptions into actual behaviours in different organisational and social contexts.

When new challenges come into the picture, such as an economic crisis or concerns over employability, then new skills top the list, such as adaptability, defining and solving complex problems, innovation and implementing organisational change. In our fast-changing global, networked societies, where we are faced with complex challenges, we can find a connecting thread between these skills, with an almost global "faith" in experimenting with innovative start-ups and businesses and collaborative leadership. Taken together, leadership skills, innovative entrepreneurship and collaborative leadership are more inspiring to youth development, citizenship, action, engagement and civic participation. Greek respondents have related their desire to start up their own businesses as a response and a "way out" of the crisis. The "crisis" context might be a triggering factor, but does not reveal the full potential for entrepreneurial youth to shape the markets and jobs landscape in a mobile and collaborative economy.

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