

EXAMINING ADAPTATION STRATEGIES OF AFRICAN IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS IN CHINA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN GUANGDONG

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ABSTRACT

This paper looks at how Africans do business in China particularly in the province of Guangdong. Through a qualitative approach, the paper analyses data obtained from twenty interviews with African entrepreneurs doing business in China. The study explores the strategies, tactics, and attitudes adopted by Africans to cope with the particularly tough Chinese business context. Using the concept of foreignness and adaptation strategies, the study identified four categories of Africans: the assimilators, the conservatives, the adventurers, and the cautious. Concomitantly, this research also identified particular factors and skills that contributed significantly to running a successful business in China. Furthermore, the paper underlines key challenges that African businesses face in China and the unconventional manners with which they coped with those challenges. This study represents an insightful exploration on a subject that is becoming increasingly important but yet under-studied. It lays the ground for more research toward the understanding of African entrepreneurs and adaptation behaviors in the most economically dynamic province of China.

KEYWORDS

Culture; Foreignness; Adaptation; Guangzhou; China; Africa; Diaspora; Entrepreneurship