

## **‘Silver Starters’: startupper over 50s.**

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**Purpose** - When practitioners deal with the theme of start-ups, innovation, and the birth of new ventures, they associate it very often with the initiatives of young people. (Forbes, 2020).

However, even though data point out that this is the predominant scenario, reality has proven different. This has already emerged from the ISTAT Italia Startup 2018 Report: in Italy, 15% of startupper are under 30 while 2 out of 3 startupper (66%) are aged between 30 and 49 and almost 20% of "new generation entrepreneurs" are actually over 50 (ISTAT, 2018).

Even in the international scenario, the trend is quite similar.

Many studies have focused on innovative solutions to production, distribution and consumption of goods and services aimed at utilizing the purchasing potential of older people (Djellal and Gallouj, 2006; Mostaghel, 2016; Yang *et al.*, 2016) investigating organizations that provide services ‘for’ the silver economy’ but there is not enough literature evidence of start-ups borned ‘by’ the silver economy.

A step forward was made with the studies of silver entrepreneurship (Cannon, 2008; Aversa and Ladevaia, 2019, Peric, 2020) observing therefore silver entrepreneurs are over 50’s who utilise their experience to create a business in later life.

However, no scientific study has focused on the phenomenon of over 50s who challenge themselves at creating new innovative businesses and therefore start-up companies.

Many people over 50 consider the creation of a start-up, despite the focus being on young entrepreneurs. Many programs are designed only for young people. Conversely, we have chosen the case study of the 'Silver Starters' European program which aims to support entrepreneurs over 50 to start and manage their business.

**Design/Methodology/Approach** - The study adopts a qualitative approach with case study methodology (Yin, 2012). It analyzes the case of the EIT Health Silver Starters 2020 program. The program, organized by four different European Universities, included a free online training course helded between September and December 2020.

**Findings** - The preliminary findings offer the opportunity to explore that mature workers are finding the advantage of starting new careers as entrepreneurs. As Europeans live longer, they spend more years working than ever and many people find themselves making a late career transition to entrepreneurship.

**Research limitations/implications (if applicable)** - This study has theoretical implications as it contributes to the growing start-ups, silver economy and silver entrepreneurship literature.

**Practical implications (if applicable)** - From a practical point of view, this research furthers the understanding of the possible positive local economic impact of entrepreneurs over 50s who found a start-up. We also identify that entrepreneurial training programs allow the profilerations of new business ventures in the start-up ecosystem.

**Originality/value** - Until date, no studies investigated entrepreneurs over 50s founding a start-up company and even less investigated its underlying inspirations. Finally, through empirical research, we capture a new dimension of start-ups' phenomenon and the advantages and challenges still open.

**Keywords (max 5)** - *start-ups, silver entrepreneurship, silver economy*

**Paper type** - Research paper