

A Conceptual Framework for Attitudes of Small Business Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT

This paper provided a conceptual framework for attitudes of small business entrepreneurs towards their work. The research methodology is qualitative approach. The results exposed small business entrepreneur expertise may also find its expression in the form of tacit knowledge. The transfer of tacit knowledge to co-workers or successors is conditional upon its acknowledgement, identification and more detailed definition. Tacit knowledge is most clearly transferred through competence and attitudes that may be classified as affective.

KEYWORDS: *entrepreneurs, attitude, s intention, explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Small business entrepreneurs were given an opportunity to express their views in small focus groups of peer entrepreneurs. Consensus opinions formulated by the groups were then meticulously documented. The results expose the very core or soul of entrepreneurial competence and attitudes by determining, what small business entrepreneurs feel they must be able to do. Acknowledgement and acceptance of tacit knowledge as part of one's competence and attitudes would introduce a systematic approach to the recording of such knowledge and enable its transfer to co-workers or successors.

This research concerns the competence and attitudes of small business entrepreneurs, an educational aspect is introduced to the study. The competence and attitudes of entrepreneurs may also be approached from the perspectives of research into entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs as well as the demands of business and competition, which in turn represent the business economics aspects of the study.

The direction of the study is guided by confining the phenomenon to the interface of education and business economics. In the study, the attitudes of entrepreneurs in light of earlier research and to link these with the perceptions of what small business entrepreneurs feel they must be able to do. The study represents a dialogue between theory, which deals with entrepreneurial competence and attitudes and the reality of the matter as expressed by entrepreneurs themselves.

2. Literature review

The theoretical framework consists of theories dealing with the general competence and attitudes and expertise of entrepreneurs. The expertise is divided into cognitive, affective and psychomotor competences and attitudes. (Bloom 1956; Dave 1967; Hukari & Nuoreva 2003). These are then analysed using a theoretical model based on Bloom's taxonomy (1956) along with the summary described by Roodt (2005).

As the phenomenon studied concerns the competence and attitudes of small business entrepreneurs, an educational aspect is introduced to the study. The competence and attitudes of entrepreneurs may also be approached from the perspectives of research into entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs as well as the demands of business and competition, which in turn represent the business economics aspects of the study. (Kirzner 1979; Koiranen 2000; Remes 2003; Gibb 2005). The positioning of the study is illustrated in Figure 1.

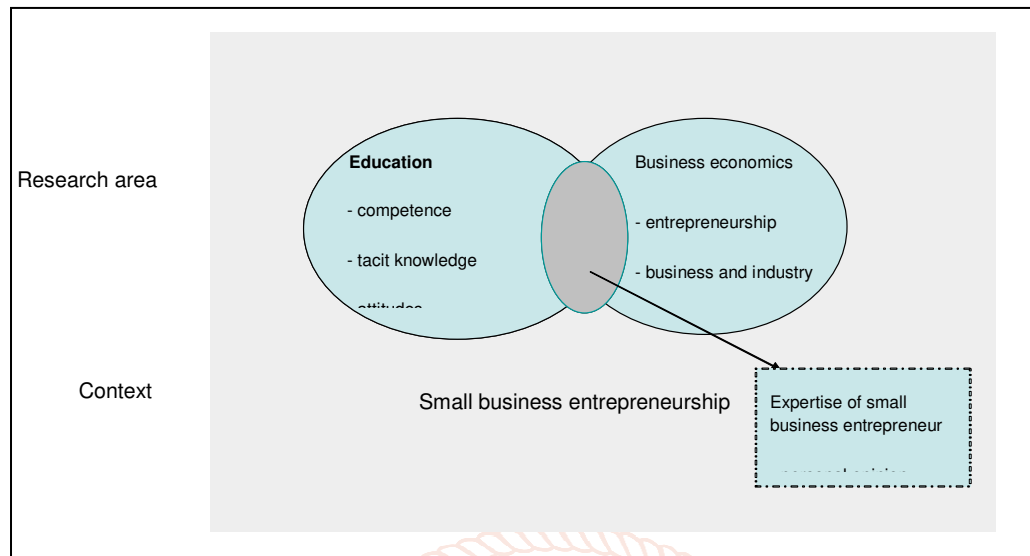


Figure 1 Research positioning

The direction of the study is guided by confining the phenomenon to the interface of education and business economics. In the study, I seek to profile the competence and attitudes of entrepreneurs in light of earlier research and to link these with the perceptions of what small business entrepreneurs feel they must be able to do. The study represents a dialogue between theory, which deals with entrepreneurial competence and attitudes and the reality of the matter as expressed by entrepreneurs themselves. (Voorhees 2001; Drexel 2003; Kupferberg 2003; Ruohotie & Honka 2003; Helakorpi 2005; Singer 2005).

3. Conceptual framework for attitudes of small business entrepreneurs

The research methodology is qualitative approach. In practice, the consensus opinions of knowledge, skills and attitudes formulated by the small business entrepreneurs are recorded and always commence with an action verb. The inspiration for the underlying visual concept was derived from Tagiuri & Davis (1996). Once the rounds of analysis are complete, conclusions may be drawn about the map depicting the core of small business entrepreneur competence and attitudes – the soul – which provides an answer to the question of what small business entrepreneurs themselves feel they must be able to do. The conceptual framework for attitudes of small business entrepreneurs is presented below in Figure 2.

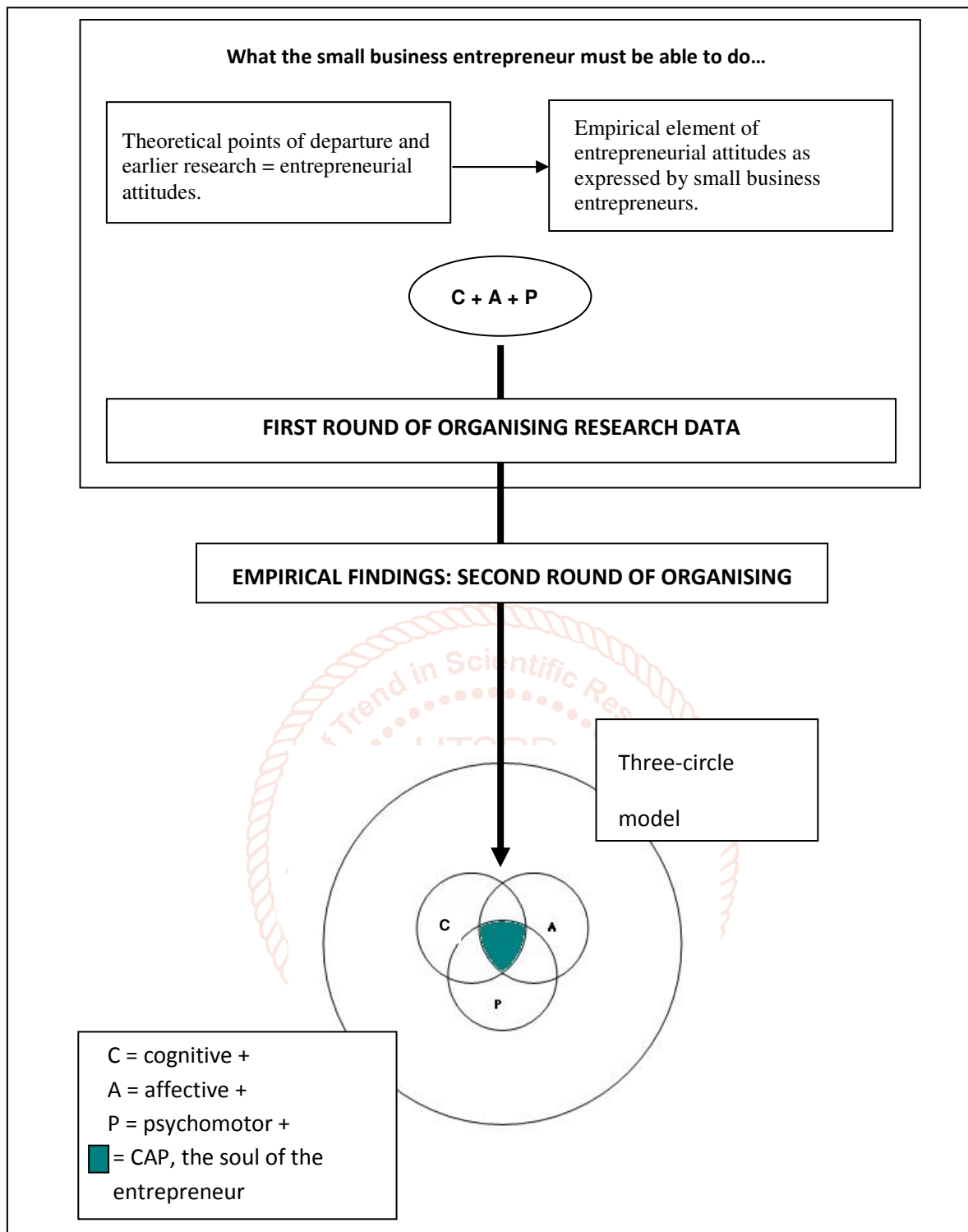


Figure 1 A conceptual frameworks for attitudes of small business entrepreneurs

Roodt (2005) presented the attitudes of the entrepreneur as technical competence and attitudes, communication competence and attitudes, managerial and leadership competence and attitudes, innovative competence and attitudes, information-seeking competence and attitudes and financial and personal competence and attitudes. A comparison of these to the cognitive, affective and psychomotor (CAP) competence and attitudes expressed by small business entrepreneurs themselves in this study shows that managerial and leadership competence and attitudes are given pre-eminence in both. Communication competence and attitudes, innovative competence and

attitudes, information-seeking competence and attitudes and personal competence and attitudes proved to be of nearly equal import.

These attitudes may further be compared to interpretations of the concept of entrepreneur, such as that put forward by Knight (1971, 18) stating, that even if the entrepreneur has the wisdom and the confidence to exploit existing business gaps, uncertainty must nonetheless be taken into account, leaving intuition and judgment as the sole guides. Knight ignores the possibility of entrepreneurs seeking to hedge against uncertainty by resorting to

innovations in routine tasks, which today are referred to as "best practices", as these ideas filter down too rapidly to generate net profits.

4. Conclusion

The attitudes of small business entrepreneurs in light of the underlying theories presented have much in common with those expressed by them personally. The goal was to introduce the notion, that a different approach to studying the expertise of entrepreneurs highlights the currently required competence and attitudes which entrepreneurs must possess. The findings provide additional insight into, what is required to generate knowledge for entrepreneurship education and research, advisory services in entrepreneurship and corporate management.

Small business entrepreneurs must comprehend the concept and totality of the business along with the distinctive characteristics of each sector, i.e. they must possess a cognitive knowledge of business activities. Affective and psychomotor competence and attitudes are now highlighted in the expertise of small business entrepreneurs alongside the traditionally emphasized cognitive competence and attitudes.

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