

Qualitative Research SBPD_7002

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Proposal/ Data Collection/ Analysis

Title/ Research Question:

**Qualitative Research: An Investigation of How
Entrepreneurs Manage Uncertainties: the Role
of Business Planning**



Literature Review

The Effectiveness and Importance of Business Planning

McMillan, Siegel & Narasimha (1985) to Kirsh, Goldfarb & Gera (2009) stated that the overall conclusions suggest that business planning cannot be overlooked, particularly when entrepreneurs are seeking finance from external sources.

An appropriate business plan could also provide the basis for targets, operational budgets, management systems and process” (Frien& Zehle, 2004).

Ettinger & Witmeur (2003) mainly observed four uses for the business planning: 1. decision-making tool; 2. computational and analytical tool; 3. communication tools; 4. controlling and managing tools

Literature Review

Relationship Between Business Performance and Business Planning in Uncertainty

Brews and Hunt (1999) discovered a positive relationship between business performance and formal business planning.

Delmar and Shane (2003) discussed that business planning can positively affect business performance.

(Lumpkin et.al, 1998) argued that in an uncertain business environment, formal business planning had no or less impact on business performance, neither for new ventures nor established enterprises.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurs Manage Uncertainties with Business Planning

Sarasvathy (2001) discussed that entrepreneurs could select the suitable resources and the most appropriate method that may lead to the expected goals.

Entrepreneurs are not required to foresee what exactly could happen in future because they should improve their ability to manage and control uncertainties (Sarasvathy, 2001).

A hypothesis is that assumes that all the markets are entirely unpredictable could cause business leaders to abandon the analytical rigor of their traditional fixed planning process altogether and base their strategic decisions primarily on gut instinct (Courtney et al, 1997).

Limitation

- Due to the small study time, this qualitative research paper could only focus on one of the four pillars discussed by Sarasvathy (2001). However, the subject of this research paper went in depth.

Methodology- Research Philosophy

- The methodology and method of this research follows the journal article written by (Hill et.al, 2001).
- The Constructivism philosophy was selected as a main approach because it accepts reality as a construct of the human minds, thus realities are perceived to be subjective (Andrew et al, 2011).
- This research project follows constructivism philosophy in order to construct the meaning and implication from the feedback of interviews.
- The methodology advocated here for researching the entrepreneurship context is the qualitative approach. Some researchers describe this approach variously as the **constructivist approach** (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), the **interpretivist approach** (Smith, 1989).

Research Participants



The participants are business co-funder and partner of this researcher. They are two entrepreneurs who run their own international import and export business in pets supply product industry and business mainly across Singapore, China, America, Canada, and Mexico and so on.

Methods- Data Collection

- The participants are business co-funder and partner of this researcher. **The data were mainly collected by conducting interviews.** During the interviews, there were certain specific open-ended questions were asked. Please refer to the appendix for the interview questions. According to the qualitative research methods, this study involves researcher in cooperating with participants. This research also collected participant-generate meanings as well as paying attention to any single phenomenon and concept. Additionally, the personal values and viewpoints of two selected participants were brought into the research. **The interviews were conducted after company's regular meeting and the content of each interview was recorded by taking note.**

Research Ethics

-  Follow the university's guidelines. Ethics were tackle discussed in the data collection process.
-  The two entrepreneurs were invited to participate in the research interviews, and given the freedom of choice to withdraw any time.
-  Confidentiality of personal particulars of all participants is absolutely secured.
-  The final work of this qualitative research paper will be never published to the public areas or used for any types of commercial use.
-  All the original data are destroyed within a maximum of a month after releasing the results of this research.

Finding

- This qualitative research discovered that comprehensive business planning could support entrepreneurs to predict and manage uncertainty effectively. Regarding the literature review, there were four answers out of five interview questions support the academic opinions from the literature. And only one result slightly against the discussion of Sarasvathy (2001)' controlling unpredictable futures rather than forecasting an uncertain one', because Entrepreneurs do tend to predict and prepare for the uncertainties, particularly prepare for the worst outcomes. Furthermore, whether entrepreneurs manage unpredictable rather than foresee the uncertainty or not, could be left for further research.

Finding

- 3rd interview question: 'To what extent how effective your business planning could support your decision making when encountering uncertainties?'
- Participants' answer: 'Uncertainty sometimes can change the entire situation, so business planning could help entrepreneurs to prepare for dealing with it in certain levels. More importantly, BP makes entrepreneurs to mentally prepare for the most unpleasant situations or scenarios.'
- Literature: 'Sarasvathy (2001)' controlling unpredictable futures rather than forecasting an uncertain one.'
- Research answer conflicts the literature review

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