

# Grounded Theory and the 'And' in Entrepreneurship Research

**Dr. David Douglas**

**Business School, Staffordshire University, UK.**

[d.j.douglas@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:d.j.douglas@staffs.ac.uk)

The paper considers the researching of entrepreneurship through the application of grounded theory methodology. Like much business and management research it advances the contention that entrepreneurship research should both embrace the complex processes of enterprise activity and the inherent contextual factors that effect entrepreneurial behaviour. Accounts from other fields of social inquiry have conveyed the worthiness of grounded theory in phenomenological studies. Exemplifying entrepreneurship, the paper considers grounded theory research against the canons of accomplishing worthy social (scientific) inquiry (for example: trustworthiness, generalisability, consistency and reproducibility). It addresses grounded theory as a means of emphasising how socially constructed experience is created and given meaning.

What is pertinent to social research, through grounded theory, is that it should seek to approximate to the context of that being studied; for example the business enterprise, its actors, their interactions and interrelationships; thus conveying a conceptual understanding of issues that make up actors naturalistic world. Exemplifying one of the cited methodological canons, the basic question addressed by the notion of trustworthiness, in interpretive research, is: *How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?* When judging qualitative work, *the usual canons of 'good science' require redefinition in order to fit the realities of qualitative research.* Theory building is *not a perfected product [but an] ever developing entity* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

The paper concludes that the requisite properties of grounded theory whilst addressing the principles of substantive social inquiry, as in entrepreneurship research, with some contextual and methodological considerations, offers an inductive approach to revealing complex characteristics of enterprise management, and potentially other business areas of inquiry.

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