

Grounded Theory and the 'And' in Entrepreneurship Research

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Abstract The paper puts forward the researching of entrepreneurship through the application of grounded theory methodology. Like much business and management research it contends 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. The paper considers grounded theory methodology against the canons of accomplishing worthy social (scientific) inquiry. It addresses grounded theory as a means of emphasising how socially constructed experience is created and given meaning. It 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.

Keywords *Grounded Theory, Research, Naturalistic, Canons, Entrepreneurship*

1. Introduction

We used to think that if we knew one, we knew two, because one and one are two. We are finding that we must learn a great deal more about 'and' (Sir Arthur Eddington, Mathematician and Astronomer, 1882-1944, quoted in Rose, 1988).

Researchers are more and more realising that methods within the positivistic paradigm, the *ones* and the *twos*, do not necessarily offer appropriate approaches to improved understanding of business and management bounded phenomena. Researching the naturalistic world of enterprise, for example, is not necessarily better understood from attempts at devising laboratory conditions and simulations and assigning numbers to human behaviour.

The paper contributes to the 'and' in business and management research by discussing grounded theory methodology. It examples grounded theory in researching entrepreneurship and addresses the methodology against canons of accomplishing worthy social (science) inquiry. From the underlying precepts of validity and reliability, the principles of trustworthiness, generalisability, transferability, consistency, credibility, reproducibility, confirmability and dependability are considered. It emphasises grounded theory as a means of how socially constructed experience is created and

given meaning (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Advanced here is a critical appraisal of grounded theory as a contributor to the development of entrepreneurship research, and more generally to business and management inquiry. Some argument on interpretations of methodology (Glaser, 1992; 1998) and method (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998) are highlighted, with subsequent evaluative examination of their research processes.

2. Grounded theory

Championing their argument for the inductive discovery of theory – grounded in a systematic approach to data analysis, sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967) conveyed a discontent with dominant logico-deductive approaches to research practices of their time. What has emerged from their early and subsequent critiques of established methods has been enlightenment to what can be available to researchers of social phenomena.

Grounded theory beyond sociology has experienced application and discussion (if somewhat limitedly) over subsequent years, [for example: Connell and Lowe, 1997 (tourism and hospitality management); Charmaz, 1990 (medical studies); Douglas, 2003a (research supervision); Henwood and Pidgeon, 1995 (psychology); and lastly, business and management studies]. This latter, pertinent, broad field of academic inquiry has seen grounded theory applied, again

limitedly [Douglas, 2003b (management research); Douglas, 2004 (entrepreneurship research); Goldkuhl, 2004 (information systems); Locke, 2001 (management research); Lowe, 1995 (innovation), 1998 (business mergers); Partington, 2000 (management action)].

What is pertinent to social research, through grounded theory, is that it seeks to approximate to the context of that being studied, that is (as illustrated in the paper) the enterprise, its actors, their interactions and interrelationships; thus conveying a conceptual understanding of issues that make up their naturalistic worlds (Van Maanen, 1979). Emergent conclusions highlight theoretical explanations for human behaviour, within the bounds of a chosen substantive social investigation. The emergence of meaning from data, but not data themselves, predicates grounded theory as a systematic research approach to understanding a particular social phenomenon. Strauss and Corbin (1990) claim that grounded theory can be used to better understand any chosen phenomenon about which little is yet known. Whilst Glaser (1992) remains an adherent to the principles of their seminal grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), his traditionalism irrespective of a disdain for the later revisionist approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998), assures the qualitative researcher of the values of grounded theory in developing answers to socially purposeful questions of *what* is happening and *why*.

Strauss and Corbin are significantly more prescriptive in specifying the steps to be taken by a researcher in open, axial and selective coding, and following their process model (identifying codes as causal conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action/inaction strategies, consequences) in developing a theoretical framework. The Glaser adherent allows for the central concept to emerge inferentially from the coding process – reflecting key issues or problems as perceived by the actors being studied. The research initially may be broadly focused in terms of the enterprise's general management with subsequent emergent constructs becoming central foci of research attention, *in grounded theory we do not know, until it emerges* (Glaser, 1992:95). Thus, following the Strauss and Corbin

approach, the researcher could elect in advance to focus one's observations, interviews and other data gathering on a particular issue, such as management-employees communication. Coding is then oriented around this topic, with a central concept then sought to represent the interplay of subjects' and researcher's perceptions of the nature and dimensions of the elected phenomenon.

As a critique of Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1998) revisionist methods, emergences of conceptual themes may not legitimately freely surface, then arguably a true ontology would not materialise (Glaser, 1992). In essence the grounded theory researcher is left with a basic choice between Glaser's advocacy of a less specific analytical approach, and Strauss and Corbin's provision of more detailed operational guidelines. The latter offers greater potential assistance to the field researcher, who must nevertheless take particular care to avoid imposing concepts that reflect the researcher's own epistemological predilections, rather than those emerging from interaction with the study site, its participants and subsequent data.

3. Entrepreneurship research and grounded theory

In exemplifying the previous argument - when seeking understanding to naturalistic enterprise bounded phenomena, detailed predetermination of research foci, beyond generalized parameters, could be contended as inhibiting the true emergence to questions of what and why entrepreneurship focused events have occurred. To research an entrepreneur's leadership style in an attempt to discover his or her business failings (applying the grounded theory method of Strauss and Corbin, 1990) may inhibit the emergence of the true source of an entrepreneur's limitations. The Glaser (1992) methodology would allow for the flexibility of approach, and freedom of focus, to iteratively develop emergent conceptual categories. Consequently, focusing on an entrepreneur's leadership style, for example, may not necessarily reveal limitations to an entrepreneur's decision-making.

Accomplishing entrepreneurship research is arguably more often neither easy nor a straightforward procedure.

...the apparent simplicity of the small business has tripped up a lot of researchers ...Much small business research, for example, concentrates on the motivations and actions of just one person, the entrepreneur or owner-manager, but invariably others are involved who also shape the enterprise and its destiny. (Curran and Blackburn, 2001:5)

Entrepreneurship studies have increasingly concentrated on only one actor, the entrepreneur (or owner-manager), as contended by a number of contemporary writers (Curran and Blackburn, 2001; Davidsson and Wiklund, 2000; Davidsson, *et al*, 2001). Any qualitative research, including that of grounded theory, should not avoid the fact that other actors, both within and without an organisation, will have various measures of influence on the behaviour of the entrepreneur. This realisation will subsequently develop research contributions to enriching findings beyond individual firm level attention.

The aim of developing improved understanding of the construct 'entrepreneur', with its attendant social processes, causal explanations and meanings; embeds its antecedents in the premises of 'symbolic interactionism', *human action is constructed by the actor on the basis of what he notes, interprets, and assesses; and the interlinking of such ongoing action constitutes organizations, institutions, and vast complexes of independent relations.* (Blumer, 1969:49). Any research design therefore must take account of understanding participants' behaviours from *their* points of view, *their* interpretations, *their* dynamics and properties of interactions, contextualised within *their* worlds – grounded theory advances such underlying principles of inquiry.

Qualitative research reports are typically rich with detail and insights into participants' experiences of the world. In studying human relations within an enterprise, the unit of analysis can be

highly complex, which is not necessarily the enterprise itself as an entity, nor may it necessarily be individual actors as separate units of analyses, including that of the entrepreneur. Through the application of grounded theory, what typically emerge, as units of analyses are social relationships and patterns of actors' behaviours. The close proximity of actors within an enterprise and the manifestation of entrepreneurship in practice can generate a complex interplay of social behaviours and human cognitions.

Grounded theory's worthiness in entrepreneurship inquiry must in its defence consider its epistemology in 'grounding' an authentic account, and meaningful interpretation, of entrepreneurship phenomena. Classical rational economic explanations (Kirzner, 1973; Casson, 1982) and psychological-behavioural accounts (McClelland, 1961; Schumpeter, 1934) have been advanced as to why enterprises occur. The underpinning pivotal philosophy of the economic explanation, that of equilibrium and optimum size of the firm being regulated by market forces, has nonetheless been challenged (Penrose, 1995) with assertions that more 'human' explanations need to be considered. Thus, psychological-behavioural aspects of entrepreneurship have also been argued as indicators of why businesses fail. Human deficiencies arguments are maintained as being important factors in the downfall of enterprise.

Consideration has been given to this person, the entrepreneur, for more than two centuries, with contemporary scholars having considerably extended research of the concept. The debates have been dominated by attempts to articulate what identifies this special person, the entrepreneur, and makes him or her different from other people generally and other business owners especially. Personality characteristics have been considerably argued (Casson, 1982; Kirzner, 1973; Knight, 1921; McClelland, 1961; Rotter, 1966; Schumpeter, 1934; Shackle, 1966). Such personality explanations have also been contextualised within philosophical arguments focusing on power, bureaucracy and legitimacy (Clegg, 1975; Lukes, 1986; Weber, 1930). However, attempts at the personality explanation

have also come under rising criticism (Chell, 1985, 2001; Chell, *et al*, 1991). The classical economic and the contemporary psychological and cognitive explanations all appear not to be without faults in attempts at offering explanations.

Critiques of various attempts to psychologically and behaviourally explain the phenomenon of entrepreneurship has resulted in a general agreement that a meta-model of entrepreneurship is probably an appropriate means of understanding this complex area of research. Such an approach is somewhat synonymous with an appropriate *modus operandi* of researching and understanding the complexities of the domain of business enterprise and management as a whole – as it ranges from the macro-level socio-economic-political attention to the micro-level activities of the owner-manager-entrepreneur.

A methodological argument may however be put forward that any attempt to gain macro level explanations for entrepreneurial behaviour (as worthy a pursuit as it is) will remain illusive or fabricate a superficial product. Arguably the only true ontological explanation for entrepreneurial behaviour lies at an individualistic level (the entrepreneur and that which affects entrepreneurship activity). The uniqueness of the entrepreneur (Brazeal and Herbert, 1999), however conceptualised, warrants investigation at a micro level of (entrepreneurial) activity. In such instances the qualitative paradigm naturally assumes prominence in its epistemology and methodology - with grounded theory offering an approach that was developed to enhance understanding of socially centred phenomena - entrepreneurship *is* a human condition.

Grounded theory offers the entrepreneurship researcher appropriate inquiry processes with which to address research issues at the micro-level of entrepreneurial activity. Investigating, in minute detail, *the* entrepreneur and his or her immediate environment are well suited to the grounded theorist. Grounded theory research is methodologically appropriate for researching both the entrepreneurial domains of economic explanation theories and psychological-cognitive-behavioural

perspectives. Setting aside the debate as to which grounded theory method or methodology to follow, both processes support the central tenet of human group life inquiry - from which grounded theory originally emerged (Glaser and Strauss, 1964).

4. Discussion

An essential question requiring attention by any researcher is the notion of trustworthiness in interpretation of one's research data - *How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?* (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:290). A general but enduring view remains to-date of the scientist as someone who rigorously applies *experimental methods of inquiry*. Controlled experimentation is the underlying practice in the establishing of scientific principles and positivistically derived ontologies. Such methods thus proffer the notion of the Baconian thesis being firmly established and can offer no better practices and philosophical beliefs in the establishing of truth.

Holding such blinkered 'trust' thus excludes, say, pure mathematics from being within the purview of scientific practice. Such a constrained belief would therefore preclude the applied scientific practices of, say, the astronomer or geologist. In reality, these science-based practitioners only observe consequences of phenomena and circumstances over which they have had no control. Whilst, for example, the notion of a 'black-hole' remains an unobserved theoretical construct, science-based argument appears to give credence to the concept amongst the astronomical research community. It is a contentious statement that scientists work in ways that result in deductively derived at claims of truth established in nature – which can in fact be no more or less than that which they believe to be in existence from their observations. Experimentation may distinguish science from precursory spiritual, religious and metaphysical claims of ways to establish knowledge, but it does not in reality describe fully scientific method.

Having the conviction that science arrives at truth by logical inferences from

empirical observations, and is thus the benchmark underpinning scientific standards of practice and is defended on the premise of induction, and the belief that what has been observed to occur many times is almost certainly to occur again. Therefore, such ontological conclusions may be accepted as a basic fact or even a law on which a fundamental structure of theory may be established and reaffirmed. From it one can deduce a number of practical procedures, such as the testing of theory by 'predictions' of the results of future observations, and their subsequent confirmation. The importance of speculative thinking is rightfully acknowledged, as long as it is restrained by adherence to facts. It is at this juncture that the qualitative researcher can countenance his/her approaches in establishing knowledge.

Trustworthiness can therefore under such circumstances be consensually agreed. Naturalistic-based research inquiries cannot realistically be duplicated in researcher controlled (sic) settings. To improve our understanding of the entrepreneur and the world in which he or she operates within can never be other than superficially replicated. To understand the naturalistic world of the entrepreneur requires qualitative research designs, and getting close to the actors being studied (Mintzberg, 1979). Natural scientific experiments, carried out under laboratory controlled conditions, arrive at partial and incomplete knowledge and, like all research endeavours, are not truly scientific, however honestly pursued.

Human reasoning for the natural scientist would normally be supported by mathematico-deduction, with unavoidable interpretation of data as a human functioning process. Deductive, or for that matter inductive, ontological explanations are a consequence of human attempts at the approximation of truth at a given period in time. Science is therefore the application of intellectual discipline as one would expect to see applied in any intellectual pursuit of knowledge? The goal of science is to seek consensus of rational opinion. Scientific research is a socially embedded activity. The scientist learns by imitation and experience, and applies conventions that reflect social peer relationships, irrespective of academic discipline.

Thus the serious researcher defends his/her derived theories and knowledge claims within contemporaries' social relations, be it the natural scientist or social inquirer. The evolution of scientific methodological canons has developed the scientist's defence arsenal. The emergence of canons of ontological 'credibility' to one's knowledge claims, and 'trustworthiness' of epistemology and methodology, has become significant research tenets. Consequently, in conjunction with credibility and trustworthiness such underpinning canons as the following, have become embedded in the broader research lexicon: generalisability, transferability, consistency, reproducibility, confirmability and dependability.

Nonetheless, when judging qualitative work, *the usual canons of 'good science'...require redefinition in order to fit the realities of qualitative research* (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:250). Theory building is not a *perfected product* [but an] *ever-developing entity* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:32). One of the requisite properties of grounded theory is that it be *sufficiently general to be applicable to a multitude of diverse situations within the substantive area* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:237). It is not necessary to insist that the product of qualitative inquiry be a theory that will apply to a large number of diverse situations. Naturalistic inquiry is always a matter of degree and so the extent to which researcher reflexivity conditions response from the interviewee and imposes categories on the data creates uniqueness (Patton, 1990). As earlier stated, the readership of grounded theory based entrepreneurship research findings may best be the judge of the generalisability canon.

Inductive theory generation is embedded in explicit explanation of phenomenon, rather than broad generalisations. The explanatory power of grounded theory is to develop predictive ability – to explain what may happen to a business, or an entrepreneur, given incidents that tend towards replicating previous grounded and other interpretivist theories. Naturally, the wider the theoretical sampling frame develops the more embedded (and grounded) the theory is established, and whilst generalisability in the naturalistic world of enterprise requires

circumspection, general theories can emerge from within the qualitative paradigm. Once random samples are established, generalisability is often taken for granted from within the quantitative paradigm. Conversely the qualitative researcher, and therefore the grounded theorist, must carefully consider the particular findings of others and their transferability and generalisability on a more case-for-case basis. The triangulation of qualitative methods of deep levels of inquiry by non-associated researchers focusing on entrepreneurship is capable of developing a 'generally' agreed view – as has consequently occurred with the current multi-dimensional perspectives of the construct 'entrepreneur'. Thus generalisability does not depend on sampling criteria but on substantive data (Patton, 1990).

As inferred the naturalistic paradigm of 'transferability' depends on the degree of similarity between the original situation and the situation to which it is transferred. The researcher cannot specify the transferability of findings; he or she can only provide sufficient information that can then be used by the reader to determine whether the findings are applicable to the new situation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) - Stake (1978:6) refers to this as *naturalistic generalization*, whilst Patton (1990:489) suggests the term *extrapolation*. Connected to the countenance of grounded theory, case study research holds common associations. The grounded theory style of handling and interpreting data may be incorporated into case studies (Locke, 2001). In the area of organization studies, Post and Andrews (1982) contend the usefulness of applying grounded theory in the creation and analysis of cases. Strauss also supports the link between the two presentational methods, *In the grounded theory style of analytical presentation, case studies are constructed not very differently than by most qualitative researchers* (Strauss, 1987:218). Thus the manifestation of a grounded theory approach to entrepreneurship inquiry, in the reporting style of a case study, may countenance the transferability canon in such an area of the qualitative paradigm.

Developing the potential strengthening of findings by case study association, the canon of consistency, through grounded

theory, also contends that external triangulation (with other methods) can examine the consistency of a grounded theory's findings. Internal consistency is verifiable through grounded theory's levels of abstraction and saturation of theoretical constructs. Therefore, consistent with interpretive theoretical meaning and *definitions of a situation* (Schwandt, 1994:118) entrepreneurship inquiry beyond that of the sole entrepreneur (Curran and Blackburn, 2001) offers accounts and meanings to incidents beyond the two primary interactive individuals (the respondent entrepreneur and the researcher).

The canon of credibility for the naturalistic researcher assumes the presence of multiple realities and attempts to represent these multiple realities adequately. Credibility depends less on sample size than on the richness of the information gathered and on the analytical abilities of the researcher. Credibility can be enhanced through triangulation of data. Patton (1990) identifies four types of triangulation: methods triangulation; data triangulation; triangulation through multiple analysts; and theory triangulation. The progressive move towards saturation of data sources from wider, but associated actors' perspectives, beyond that of the entrepreneur, is an example of grounded theory's processes of establishing ontological emergence of theoretical concepts beyond singular perceptions of phenomena (namely those conveyed by the entrepreneur alone). Thus, associated actors' perspectives of a phenomenon or incident knowledgeable to others, as well as the entrepreneur, offers the grounded theory researcher multiple perspectives and multi-faceted personal accounts. Employees within, say, a small enterprise offers the opportunity for multiple data sources over and above that of the principal actor (the entrepreneur).

The reproducibility canon is usually interpreted as meaning a particular study can bear replication of research processes. Replication of process and matched results gives credibility to original research findings. Reproducing socially constructed entrepreneurship phenomena is arguably problematic, if not impossible. Whilst the natural scientist would contend that reproducibility of processes are possible (to some degree) within

controlled laboratory conditions, thus verifying credibility; it may be countered by the social scientist that reproducibility, due to the complexity of human variables, is not (ever) wholly, or even in part to any meaningful extent; attainable. However, reproducibility of entrepreneurship phenomena is unfeasible as the researcher cannot replicate original conditions or control all the possible variables of human group life under study. Researching in the naturalistic world of enterprise requires another perspective on the notion of reproducibility.

Researching within the qualitative research paradigm relies on interpretations and is admittedly subjectively value-bound. In the world of quantitative research, subjectivity arguably leads to results that are both unreliable and invalid. However, one may call into question the true objectivity of statistical measures and, indeed, the possibility of ever attaining pure objectivity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Patton (1990) believes that the terms objectivity and subjectivity have turned into ideological ammunition in the 'paradigms debate'. He suggests avoiding the use of either word and to stay out of pointless debates about subjectivity *versus* objectivity. Alternatively, he strives for *empathic neutrality* (Patton, 1990:55). While admitting that these two words appear to be contradictory, Patton points out that empathy, *is a stance toward the people one encounters, while neutrality is a stance toward the findings* (Patton, 1990:58).

A researcher who is neutral tries to be non-judgmental, and strives to report what is found in an unbiased way. Lincoln and Guba (1985) choose to speak of the *confirmability* of the research. Grounded theory based entrepreneurship research is a stance toward the informants-participants and a neutrality structured methodology, with *confirmability* of theory being embedded in adherence to grounded theory's established processes of inquiry. Essentially, Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to the degree to which a researcher can demonstrate the neutrality of the researcher's interpretations, through a *confirmability audit* (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:320). This means the entrepreneurship researcher should be able to provide an audit trail of his/her knowledge claims back to the raw data

(interview notes, tape recordings, observation notes, etc.) and: analysis notes; reconstruction and synthesis methods; process notes; personal notes and memoranda; and preliminary developmental ephemera. This epistemological process embeds the confirmability of knowledge claims and methodological processes. It can ideally offer other interpreters the opportunity to review previously gathered data and their interpretive analyses.

A quality measure that helps to substantiate the canon of dependability and safeguards against data coming under too subjective interpretive biases, especially by the single researcher, is the evaluation of data by multiple interpreters – thus giving some dependability on range of perspectives. Interpretation by a team across a variety of dimensions (for example; age, gender, discipline, pre-knowledge, etc.) can guard against singular biases of interpretation and give a triangulation of data perspectives and analyses. To retest the data both with the same and different team members at a later date can also be used to substantiate the dependability of earlier interpretations of data. Capturing data for future re-appraisal is a common practice by the grounded theorist and is usual in entrepreneurship research – especially where the researcher often has only 'one chance' with a respondent.

In keeping with the original guiding principles of grounded theory, the generating of a substantive theory of a phenomenon, with the assumption of similar conditions encountered, do offer entrepreneurship researchers credible reproducibility potential. Distinctive characteristics from original findings should not be regarded as undermining the uniqueness of original phenomenon's interpretations - but enriching and deepening understanding of similar incidents. Socially embedded inquiry will always have uniqueness. However, wide discrepancies can often be explained through the re-examination of data. It is from the accumulation of replication and interpretation that grounded theory can develop entrepreneurship understanding from localised substantive theories to the maturity of formal theories, and potentially general theories, that offer interpretations

across wider situational and theoretical understanding.

Concluding almost where we began with grounded theory's trustworthiness and the canons of scientific inquiry, an important point needs to be addressed. The debate as to the appropriateness of the revisionist approach to grounded theory as propounded by Strauss and Corbin (1990) against the traditionalist approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) does continue to beleaguer any agreed grounded theory approach. For the new grounded theorist the revisionist approach to theory building is well delineated and overtly applicable to entrepreneurial researching. The traditionalist approach is iterative and requires creativity that may possibly be more likely to be found within the established and developed abilities of the well-practised qualitative researcher. Though such a person may him/her-self have developed biases that could stymie the necessary open 'no-baggage' approach that is a useful starting point in traditionalist grounded theory?

The traditionalist approach, due to an abandonment of *a priori* research questions, produces long periods of ambiguity and uncertainty. However, the abandonment of preconceived conditions within the unit of analysis (be it the entrepreneur or the enterprise) does aid in understanding particular individually centred events within their naturalistic 'idiographic' settings. From an ethnographic analytical perspective, the idiographic standpoint will encourage the development of theory that is emergent from that of the 'informant', or perhaps better considered as the 'participant' ('emic'). This somewhat non-prescriptive process gives strong argument for the emergence of theory from a circumstance that has had minimal conditioning from the researcher (Glaser, 1992). Conversely, the prescriptive principles of the revisionist method (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) propose a more controlled environmental context by the researcher, with consequent researcher centrality ('etic'). Whilst it can be argued that the traditionalist methodology allows for iterative reflection and working with data until they become *saturated* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and cease to reveal anything fresh, and conversely the revisionist method that takes the

researcher along a linear path to a more arguably processual closure - both options necessitate detailed researcher interaction with data. Therefore, whilst it can be argued that gathered data could be different through choice of approach in developing entrepreneurship theory, the researcher would be countenanced (as a defence of research validity and reliability) in establishing to the readership one's elected research approach.

5. Conclusion

The paper's initial starting point was the contention that grounded theory, within the qualitative paradigm, seeks to compliment existing entrepreneurship understanding through the application of an recognised alternative and established research approach. The scope of grounded theory needs to be rationalised as part of that contention. Where existing theory is well developed, then arguably, deductive methods could be more useful in developing entrepreneurship understanding, especially at a macro economic level. Conversely, this discussion has countenanced in-depth micro level studies of entrepreneurship activity through the meticulousness of grounded theory. Thus offering a reporting style that conveys contextual depth of understanding that would not be attainable, nor even expected, from within the quantitative paradigm

The argument put forward for the support of entrepreneurship inquiry, through grounded theory, contends that micro level concerns such as complexity, contextuality, opaqueness, interdependencies, time-frames and other unique variables, necessitates (and gravitates towards) applying research methods that elucidate interpretive understanding as to what is happening and why. Thus grounded theory particularly orientates towards eliciting theoretical-conceptualisations of processes of social interactivity. Such phenomena are not so well disposed to improved understanding through the logic of mathematics.

The mathematics is not there till we put it there (Sir Arthur Eddington, 1939)

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