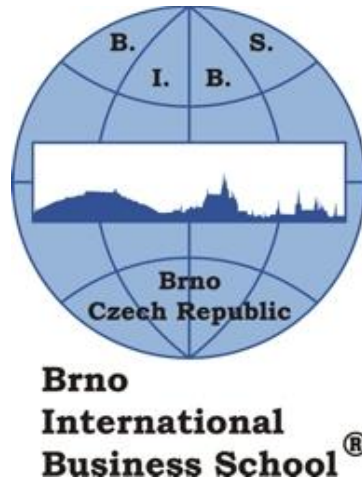


The Nottingham Trent University

B.I.B.S., a.s.



DBA in Business Administration

**The influence of entrepreneurs' education
upon their success at the first stage of business life cycle
of their enterprise**

Introduction to the DBA and project identification and planning

Document One

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1 Introduction

Although the relationship between the education and the professional success of the entrepreneurs has been the object of the various studies abroad, in the Czech Republic it is mostly unexplored field, with the exception of a few researches focused mainly on the perception of success by the entrepreneurs.

As the researcher is an entrepreneur who has eighteen-year's practical business experience and as she has been studying for most of her life, she has decided to undertake a deeper research into these two fields in the Czech context. Her interest concerns especially the entrepreneurs' perception of the education and their opinions regarding the usefulness of education in the various stages of their enterprise.

Therefore, this work will be focused closely on the apprehension and evaluation of the gained education by the Czech entrepreneurs.

This research will be carried out within the study programme Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) at Brno International Business School (BIBS) accredited to the Nottingham Trent University (NTU). The research within the doctoral study will be in accordance with the criteria assigned by this school. The doctoral thesis will include both qualitative and quantitative research, and it will be divided into several documents with the time limit of 3 years.

Except for a deeper understanding of the abovementioned relationship by the author she expects that the findings of such a research could be of benefit especially to the educational institutions as creators of business teaching programs.

Already at the beginning the researcher believes that there is a positive impact of education upon entrepreneurs. Above all this thesis aspires to contribute to the field of understanding the individual perception of the available educational programs and possibly suggest the areas for further research in the area.

The following pages outline the preliminary studies of the research. The main concepts and research questions are defined and the theories and methods that should support this study

methodologically are explained briefly. Consequently, there will be the critical literature review elaborated in Document 2 as the basis for the qualitative and quantitative parts of the research itself in Documents 3 and 4. As the author presumes the research to be mainly interpretative, the changes in the first outline are envisaged and will be implemented according to the needs of the research and with the regard to the questions arisen during the research. Finally, this chapter mentions the ethical issues connected with the practical implementation of this work.

2 Subject and objectives

Almost 20 years after the revolution in 1989 and after joining the European Union in 2004 it is possible to say that the private enterprise in the Czech Republic has now been developed despite the objections regarding the business practice coming both from the experts in the Czech Republic and the entrepreneurs from abroad who accentuate that „the post-communist transformation of the Czech society is still in the progress and there can be no debate about the deeper convergence of the Czech and west-European society“(Nešpor, 2003).

However, the small and medium-sized enterprises that managed to maintain their position on the market will be of interest for this work as the cornerstone of any enterprise is an entrepreneur, who via a company implements his or her needs, visions and aims.

The structure of the educational system had not changed much during the transformation to the capitalism but there are definitely more options to choose from while considering business studies as the new educational institutions in secondary and the tertiary educational levels have been established.

The survey carried out with legal and physical entities in 13 countries of the EU, the Czech Republic included, suggested that the education may be one of the key factors of successful business (ČSÚ, 2005:7)

The objective of this study is to specify the relationship between the education and the business success of the entrepreneurs at the beginning of their professional career with the view of the possibility to evaluate the gains (contributions) induced by the educational process. From this point the strategic questions ensue.

2.1 The strategic questions

How does the entrepreneurs' education influence their success in the first stage of the enterprise? Is education able to provide the person-entrepreneur with the relevant information, knowledge, skills and competencies they need within their business career?

2.2 Research questions

On grounds of the abovementioned objectives it is possible to proceed further with the research questions which are supposed to be answered by this research:

- 1) What kind of education (formal, non-formal and informal) concerning his entrepreneurial a) information, b) knowledge, c) skills, d) competencies did the entrepreneur acquire and in what stage of the enterprise life cycle did it happen?
- 2) What led the entrepreneur to the need to educate him/ herself? Was the need of (further) education¹ initiated by the enterprise development? Or did the entrepreneur intend to develop further the enterprise?
- 3) Did the received education meet entrepreneur's expectations? What kind of a) information, b) knowledge, c) skills, d) competencies did the entrepreneur need most in the first stage of the enterprise?
- 4) Which competencies did they need to strengthen via education?
- 5) How and where did the entrepreneur obtain a) information, b) knowledge, c) skills, d) competencies needed in the first stage of their enterprise?
- 6) What changes did the education (formal, informal or non-formal) cause in a) information base², b) knowledge base, c) skills base, d) competencies base?
- 7) Did the education (formal, informal or non-formal) attained have an influence upon entrepreneur's success? What role did education (formal, informal or non-formal) play in connection with business success?

¹ Education in this chapter is meant as being comprised of three components: Formal education, non-formal education and informal education-each of them is specified in chapter 3.4 of this work and will be dealt with separately within this research.

² By the base is meant a set of a) information, b) knowledge, c) skills, d) competencies the individual had at the particular moment of his/her life.

- 8)** Can we specify the most appropriate a) information, b) knowledge, c) skills, d) competencies for the entrepreneurs in the first stage of the enterprise life cycle?
- 9)** Does the entrepreneur's education (formal, informal or non-formal) limit him/her or her when learning informally?
- 10)** Which competency model elements did formal education strengthen?

3 Conceptual framework and the preliminary literature review

As suggested by Bryman (2007:157) the concepts „are the building blocks of the theory and represent the points around which business research is conducted”. In the light of this suggestion there is a need to identify and describe the concepts that are going to be the pillars of this thesis.

3.1 *The entrepreneur as a research subject*

To define an entrepreneur is a challenging task because there seems to be no universal representative of an entrepreneur.

The law specification of a small and medium-sized entrepreneur equips the researcher with external characteristics relating to the business size and profit³ but leaves just a limited space for seeing an entrepreneur as a human being.

“The problem of identification of an entrepreneur has been confounded by the fact that there is till no standard, universally accepted definition of entrepreneurship” (Chell, Haworth and Brearly, 1991, in Kirby, 2002).

Gerber (2004:31) suggests that the entrepreneur is a person who sets up a business which meets the established criteria and on the basis of a business plan chooses a subject and form of their enterprise. He is convinced that it should be a strong, single-minded personality, who possesses the ability to lead people towards the set goal. Entrepreneur is an innovator, strategist and visionary.

³ * According to European Union definition (www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise) the small and middle sized enterprise is characterized by:

- number of employees: maximum is 250
- net sales in last calendar year : maximum 40 millions euros
- total assets maximally 27 millions dollars
- the other subject's participation on the leadership is maximally 25%

Shim (2000) states: As firms grow, managers must develop competencies in supervision of subordinates and delegation of authority and responsibility. They must have the ability to change the nature of their role as the business grows. (Phelps, 2007:29)

Generally, four main approaches to the role of the entrepreneur can be traced in available literature:

Entrepreneur/ Leader

Koontz and Wehrich (1993:466-468) mention the “leadership” among the essential managerial characteristics. Leadership consists of four components: power, understanding people, the ability to inspire the successors and the ability to create and sustain the environment catalysing the efficient performance.

Entrepreneur / Bricoleur

The other role of the entrepreneur is being the implementer of his or her ideas. There is no fixed procedure determining the implementation of entrepreneurial ideas and it depends largely on entrepreneur’s creativity how he realises his plans and visions. Thus it is possible to compare the entrepreneurship to a bricolage activity.

The bricoleur’s characteristics defined originally by Levi-Strauss were summarized by Hubik as in the table below:

Science	Bricolage
straightness	divergence
specialisation	non-specialisation
no limitation of instruments	limitation of instruments
anything has a unique function	anything can be for anything
concept as instrument	sign as instrument
creation through realisation of project	creation through reconstruction
inventive innovation	discovery innovation
discovery innovation	inventive innovation
system	play
play	ritual

(Hubik, 1997:63)

The difference between the bricoleur's and engineer's approach also subsists in the area where their minds operate while coping with the problems- "the engineer is always trying to make his way out of and go beyond the constraints imposed by a particular state or civilisation while the bricoleur by inclination or necessity always remains within them". (Levi-Strauss in Hubik, 1997:62)

Entrepreneur/ Engineer

Holman (1999) presents Hayek's reflection of the difference between the entrepreneur and the engineer and emphasises that while the entrepreneur is well orientated in the system where the parameters change, the engineer wants the stable environment and needs to rationalise and plan the events.

However, the entrepreneur is bound to function in the same market environment as an engineer and therefore he should be able to rationalise and evaluate the market processes in the same way the engineer would do even when he internally does not associate himself with such an approach.

Entrepreneur / Manager

There are entrepreneurial activities that can be ranked among the managerial ones, such as planning, organizing and personal management, controlling and supervising activities within a firm as well as outgoing projects.

Saddler(2003:53) cites Hodgetts and Kuratko who "drew a distinction between entrepreneurial style (characterized by creativity, innovation, and risk-taking behaviours) and managerial style (characterized by planning and organizational behaviours) but didn't see these as mutually exclusive". This conception bears a resemblance to the 'engineer versus entrepreneur' one and points at the necessity of taking into account the rather conservative side of the business environment.

Which entrepreneurial skills and traits within the typology above are developed by the process of education and which type of education (see pg.15) is the most significant during this process?

For the specific purpose of this study there arises a need to establish the particular criteria according to which the entrepreneurs will be enlisted as a subject of this study.

With regard to the objectives of this work (pg. 4) and the difficulties connected with the precise and unified definition, the author considers appropriate to delimitate the external characteristics of the research subject- an entrepreneur as follows:

- They operate a business by means of legal entities (over the last few years they were able to analyze the risks related to physical entities' enterprise)
- They represent small and medium-sized enterprise (due to the intended interpretative nature of this research)
- They make an active contribution to enterprise management
- Their enterprise is profitable and stable

The criteria for the profitability and stability (see also pg. 13) for the purpose of this work will be:

- a) the entrepreneur's monthly profit amounts to triple average salary in the Czech Republic^{4,5}
- b) the entrepreneur exercises the business activities as a legal entity for more than one year (therefore we can assume that he has cleared the difficulties connected with the start of the business) in the field of trade, manufacture or services in accordance with The Trades Licensing Act.

⁴ The average salary for the second quarter in 2008 amounts to 23.182, - Czech crowns (koruna). (<http://www.czso.cz/csu/faq>)

⁵ In connection with the entrepreneur's monthly profit it is necessary to mention the existence of the 'grey economy'. Country study on informal economy in Czech Republic (2003) defines "any paid productive activity that is lawful as regards its nature, but not declared to the public authorities" as a part informal economy. Considering the historically recent regime change and the following legislative discontinuity and law re-creation, there has been a fair amount of opportunities for profiting from and establishing the informal economy linkages. The report informs that "a relatively high tax burden of both natural and legal persons strengthened efforts for tax evasion" and "sanctions for infringement of legal regulations were enforced rather against small economic entities, whereas big companies, possible bankruptcy of which could jeopardize employment in the whole region, remained unsanctioned and received subsidies from all taxpayers." (op.cit.).

The author refers to the whole report which can not be commented on in detail due to the limited space and the different objectives of this work. However, she considers it to be a significant point which should not be omitted when talking about the entrepreneur's income.

3.1.1 The entrepreneur's competency model

One of the starting points for this study is the list of the general competencies (possibly useable in Czech context) defined by Czech author Hroník (2007:223) which enables us to classify some of the important entrepreneur's characteristics.

The entrepreneur's competency model
Vision and strategy
Communication and influence
Coaching and leadership
Teamwork
Integrity
Interpersonal sensitivity
The ability of learning and analytic thinking
Focus on the customer
Creative thinking
Focus on the result

(Hroník 2007: 223)

Peter F. Drucker, "management guru", operates with competencies in two ways- a) the individual characteristics which relate closely to the effectiveness-a person's abilities, likes, dislikes, and goals, b) the characteristics of the management which he calls 'core competencies'- these are different for each company but he emphasises the significance of "innovation competence" for each organisation. As for the leaders basic competencies, he concludes that they are all within the individual self-discipline and ability to put them into practice and mentions four main ones- a) willingness listen, b) willingness to communicate, c) not to alibi/ reflection of the real situation and d) the realisation of the self-unimportance comparing to the task. (Drucker, 2007)

Kirby (2002) mentions fifteen behavioural traits required of the entrepreneur based on the classification by Lessem and Timmons. With regard to their conclusion that all of them can be learned they represent relevant categorisation considering the perspective on education in this

work (although Hronik's overall opinion is that some of the competencies connected with individual temperament can hardly be learned and the main focus should stay on the individual behaviour and approach to work, not on the personality features). Despite some contradictory views, the author has decided to use this classification for the purpose of this work as the discussion regarding the (im)possibility to learn the particular competencies is an open-issue:

- Total commitment, determination and perseverance
- Drive to achieve and grow
- Orientation to goals and opportunities
- Taking initiative and personal responsibility
- Veridical awareness and a sense of humour
- Seeking and using feed back
- Internal locus of control
- Tolerance of ambiguity, stress and uncertainty
- Calculated risk-taking and risk-sharing
- Low need for status and power
- Integrity and reliability
- Decisiveness, urgency and patience
- Learning from failure
- Team builder and hero maker

This work aims to find out how the education attained by the entrepreneurs supports the development of these characteristics and they will be used as base items for the questionnaire (interview), where they will be further elaborated in order to point out the possible educational gaps.

3.2 Success in the first stage of the enterprise

Rogoff, Lee and Suh (2004) have already stressed that “there is no single agreed-upon definition of ‘business success’ or ‘business failure. Research...generally uses continued viability or longevity as a surrogate for success.” From the perspective of this claim there is an open field for the researcher to define the success according to the purpose of the research on the basis of the existing concepts.

Claiming that “man can be considered successful when meeting the expectations of the society regarding the external factors and achieving the feeling of internal fulfilment thanks to which he feels content at the same time”, Lubasova (2007:11) expressed both the objective and subjective character of the success.

The concern of this work does not lie in the subjective perception of success but primarily in tracing up whether and how the different forms of gained education relate to entrepreneur’s success (defined by objective criteria that imply overcoming the problems connected with the business establishment) in the first stage of his/her business career.

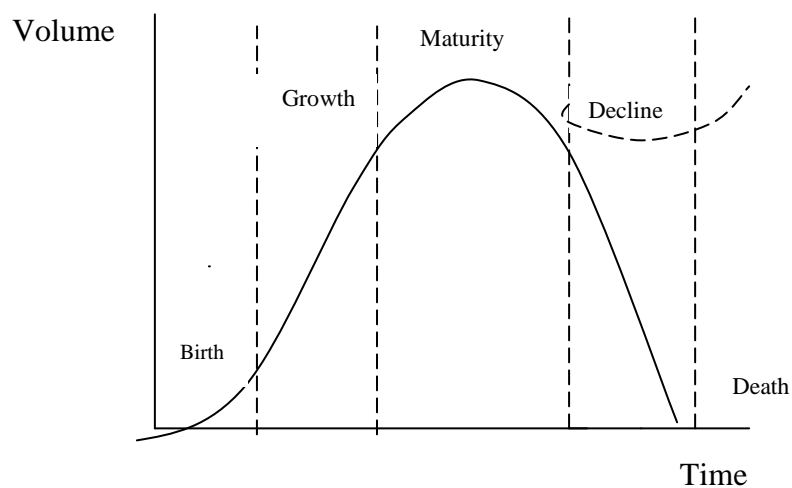
Therefore, the ‘success in the first stage of the enterprise’ in the context of this study is represented by current profitability and stability of the business (see pg. 10). Taking into account the main problems connected with the start of the business (see chapter 3.3) the researcher assumes that a successful entrepreneur can cope with the problems identified below and his or her enterprise can progress to the following stage.

The eventual evidence of an internal perception of success in this research will serve as supplementary information that could enlarge the researcher’s understanding of the complex issue.

3.3 The enterprise life-cycle

On the basis of the works of Adizes,1988, Kazanjian 1984, Gersick *at al.*, 1997 and Hanks *at al.*, 1993, the recent study (Hoy, 2006:832) suggests that the enterprise “life” can be grouped into 4-5 stages of growth on average (see the graph below). *

Life-Cycle Model

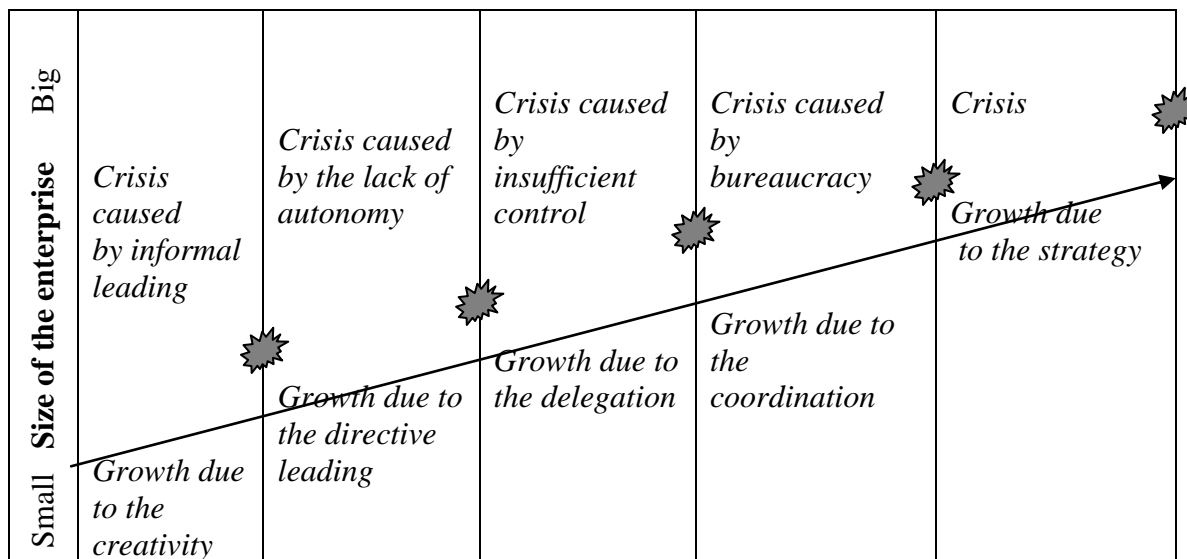


(Hoy, 2006: 83)

These phases are defined by various activities and problems connected with enterprise growth. Among the most important are: producing results, acting entrepreneurially, administering formal rules and procedures and integrating individuals into organization. (Phelps, 2007:24)

Stemming from Hronik’s five-stage classification of company’s development there is a possibility to characterise the phases of the enterprise in the terms of growth and crisis specific for the first stage (see table on pg.15). The component of creativity is emphasised but with regard to the danger coming out of exaggerated creative approach and non- formal attitude to leadership.

* Eggers (1994) suggests using “phases of management” instead of “stages of growth”



Terpstra and Olson (1993) identified 10 different types of problems: obtaining external financing, internal financial management, sales/marketing, product development, production, general management, HRM, economic environment, regulatory environment. (Phelps, 2007:28)

Nicholls-Nixon (2005) define six categories of problem experienced by rapidly growing firms as transitions in the firm's personnel, business model, organization/management structure, financial management, external environment and role of CEO/entrepreneur. (Phelps, 2007: 7)

In authors professional judgment the prevailing problems in the first stage of the business career are connected mostly with financial management and firm's personnel followed by organisation/ management structure. However, it is one of the tasks of this research to find out which problems the entrepreneurs consider the most serious at the start of their own career and what type of education they see as being useful in order to overcome them.

For the purpose of this work the first stage of the enterprise will be represented by the first year of the enterprise functioning on the market and by the problems connected with this functioning according to the cited literature and obviously the entrepreneur's themselves- with regard to the findings obtained by the qualitative part of the research.

The categorisation of the problematic areas should enable the researcher to assign the particular problems to particular types of education being used in order to cope with them.

3.4 Education

Simonova comments on dictionary definitions of the education as “a process during which the pieces of knowledge, abilities and skills (collectively referred to as knowledge) are gained, a mean of gaining the cultural capital and “a mean of integration into the particular culture“ with the possibility of participation on further culture development.

Keller (2008:39) makes a reference to the fact that today’s educational institutions are “criticised for the inability to integrate the absolvent to economical structures that exist independently on the educational system”.

From both comments the assumption can be made that the integration to an existing system is the socially expected function of the education. Related to the entrepreneur’s education this would mean that the business focused educational programs should provide the individual with sufficient knowledge to succeed in the current market system. To what extent are the schools able to meet this expectation is a question that could be answered more accurately by this work.

Types of education in the Czech republic

The report of Rabusicova and Rabusic (2006) on adult education in the Czech republic distinguishes three types of education:

a) Formal education is organized within schools or formal school institutions and ends in awarding the formal certificate confirming the completion of the particular educational level.

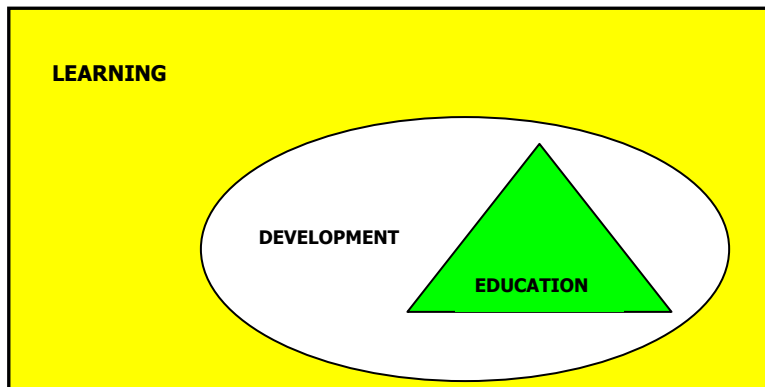
The Czech republic official website classifies formal education into four categories: **pre-school, elementary (basic), secondary and tertiary education**. This research will operate within this education level classification, with the exception of pre-school education.

b) Non-formal education is purposeful and structured activity outside the formal school system which can be provided within the workplace or as a complementary program to formal education. It is usually organized in small classes, but can be individual.

c) Informal education comprises any kind of learning or acquiring knowledge, both intentional and unintentional and it covers everyday situations and experience that can serve the purpose of learning, including reading books, TV and radio broadcasting and computer use. Also the aimed self- education belongs to this category.

Hronik suggests that the education is one of the learning methods, organized and institutionalized, and sees the educational activities as delimited, having their beginning and end. However, from the scheme depicted below it is clear that his concepts of ‘development’ and ‘learning’ can be practically matched with the concepts of ‘informal’ (development) and ‘non-formal’ (learning) education.

Fig.1: Relations between learning, development and education



Hroník (2007:31)

According to the already mentioned EU survey the education [formal] has a positive influence on profitability and approach to innovation⁶. (ČSÚ, 2005:7)

But it has been also found out that the entrepreneurial advice gained before starting up a business prevailed from friends and family background [rather than education]. (ČSÚ, 2005:10)

This contradiction regarding the objective findings of the international research and the prevailing approach at the beginning of the business activity reflects the main challenge of this research- to justify and explain what kind of education the entrepreneurs are using within the first stage of their business activities and to what extent they apply their knowledge obtained by formal education.

⁶ In the group with higher education the initial motivation to start up a business was also more related to the idea for a new product or service whereas for the people with lower education it more often meant just not to be jobless. The rate of entrepreneurs with college education is 6% higher than that of employees. (ČSÚ, 2005:7)

MBA

Despite the focus on the first stage of the enterprise in this work the author also intends to register in which stage of their professional career the entrepreneurs realised the need to extend their academic knowledge in MBA educational programs.

The Czech republic's association of MBA educational institutions CMBAS declare that the MBA program is designed for the university graduates who have three years of practical experience with a perspective of a career growth. MBA is a specialised program for the professionals who want to increase their knowledge in internationally approved educational institution.

Other criteria

The business categorization in accordance with the trade law incorporates enterprise in manufacture, trade and services. The entrepreneurs participating in this research will be addressed irrespective of their branch of business.

4 Methodology

Considering the ontological and epistemological questions of this research where the main purpose lies in recognising the value of the education for particular individuals at some stage of their (enterprise) life the author regards her position as 1) nominalistic- the reality will be regarded not as existing by itself but through the particular individual and 2) gnostic- the knowledge will be regarded as based on the subjective perception. However, she realises that in fact her position will have to reflect the nature of the research and move closer to the objective and orthodox perspective while conducting the quantitative- realist part of the survey in Doc 4.

The doctoral thesis requires the realisation of both qualitative (Doc 3) and quantitative (Doc 4) research. The researcher is supposed to opt for a suitable approach regarding the research paradigm considering the objectives of his/her study.

Despite the facts that the methodological pluralism is usually not recommended and the discussion regarding the mixing of methodological approaches is staying open, Fisher (2004: 57) points out that the combination can be useful for certain type of research, e.g. when the hypotheses are generated by the means of interpretative research and consequently tested within the realist research criteria.

The author sees the application of the abovementioned combined strategy as the most suitable approach in this research for the reasons explained in detail in following paragraphs.

4.1 Interpretivism, phenomenology, constructivism

Fisher (2004:20) suggests that Interpretivism, Phenomenology and Constructivism are all the different expressions for the same research approach. Hendl (2005:75) observes the slight differences between phenomenologist and constructivist approaches. He states that “the aim of the phenomenologist research is to describe and analyse the experience which the individual or the group of individuals have with the particular phenomena” while the main function of such an approach is to achieve the deeper understanding of the researched phenomena.

Constructivism accentuates the interpretative character of the reality and its objective is “to depict the multileveled constructions of reality with the aid of shared research of the concepts (involving the researchers and the participants) and explanations.”(Hendl, 2005:54)

As the influence of the education will be studied in term of subjective evaluation by the research participants followed by analysis (conducted in Doc 3) there is hardly any space for any other stance than interpretivist in this part of research. The emphasis on socially structured reality is in a perfect agreement with the intentions of the research focused on the individual perception of the education.

Therefore, within the qualitative survey the meaning of the main concepts will be necessarily derived from the perspective of the research participants (during their interaction with the researcher), their significance will be given by the subjective evaluation.

The methods used in the research should be chosen with regard to their ability to provide the subjective information about the studied subject. The interview and the questionnaire (not categorised, but using open questions) are intended to be used as the appropriate means to record the immeasurable characteristics of the individual opinions and perceptions.

The phenomenological principle to comprehend the essence of the researched phenomena definitely applies to this research. Also, the gradual uncovering of the reality by the means of an interaction and explanations between the subjects of the study and the researcher will be taking place while conducting the interviews.

In this context it is necessary to mention the attribution theory which has been already successfully used in some qualitative management studies, e.g. the one by Freedman (1984) who elaborated the management problems caused by faulty attributions in particular organisation. Firstly, the value the respondents attribute to different forms of education reflects the object of this study from the subjective perspective. Secondly, his point that there is a need to be aware of the tendency “to internalize the cause of success” (and externalize the cause of the failure) should be taken into account when interpreting the outcomes of this research.

Taking into account her researcher's role of the "judge" (Fisher, 2004: 58) who is a part of the studied population the author is aware of a possible biased interpretation- especially within the qualitative survey- in case that the evidence gained is not in agreement with her professional experience and intends to be extremely cautious when conducting a survey and analysing the research outcomes. On the other hand, being the part of the studied population brings also the advantage of closer relationship with the subjects of study and possibly easier access to the required information.

The interpretative approach should not only get the researcher acknowledged in detail with the role of education in particular entrepreneur's life but its purpose is also to identify significant patterns and consequently suggest the hypotheses for the following qualitative survey.

4.2 Positivism, realistic research

The studies that had been realised so far in the field connected with entrepreneur's education and success could not usually take a strict positivist stance for a simple reason which presents the difficulty of defining and measuring concepts as entrepreneur, success and the usage of the knowledge gained by education.

The positivist criteria could be properly applied only in connection with the concept of formal education which could be measured and classified according to strictly objective nature of the positivist approach.

However, most of the studies in this area have been conducted within the realistic paradigm, also accentuating the existence of the objective reality, usage of measurement and statistical methods and the determination of the relations between particular variables, but with regard to possible subjective explanations of these relations.

Fisher (2004:41) drew an attention to the fact that although the positivist and realist stance are often being ranked within the same category of research approaches, there is definitely a difference consisting in the recognition of this subjective nature of the relations between phenomena.

The quantitative part of this research (Doc4) will be undertaken within the borders of the realistic approach. The main concepts (entrepreneur -competencies, education, success in the first stage of the enterprise) are going to be regarded as components of the objectively

existing reality and as such will have to be transformed into measurable quantities. Therefore the entrepreneurs will be defined via the size of their enterprise and their profit (according to the law definition), the success and the problems in the first stage of the enterprise will be delimited by the designated criteria (pg. 9, 12) and the classifications of levels and types of education will be used. The entrepreneur's competencies classification will be used as a reference item for the skills possibly gained by different forms of education and will be related to the problems identified as crucial at the stage of business establishment.

In relation to the competencies it is necessary to point out that their development due to the particular type of education will still be the object of subjective evaluation of the respondents within this realistic research as the issue of their development in objective way would probably demand the longitudinal study infeasible within the time and extent limitations of this project.

The optimal method for conducting this part of survey is a (categorised) questionnaire. The limited choices within the particular question and numeric scales will be offered to the participants in order to delimitate the extent of the answers and measure the significance they attribute to particular types of education.

Fisher (2004:43) logically identifies the problem of reduction and simplification of the events coming inevitably with the transfer of the complex concepts into measurable quantities as one of the main drawbacks of realist research.

4.3 Triangulation

The methodology outline implies that both the triangulation of the research approaches (theoretical triangulation) and the triangulation of research methods are going to take place in this study. Hendl (1997b) analyses comprehensively all the aspects of the triangulation usage in the research and emphasises four ways in which the statistical survey can support the analysis of qualitative data:

- a) The correction of researcher's interpretations within the qualitative data analysis
- b) The demonstration of the commonness of particular case
- c) The verification of the qualitative interpretations
- d) The clarifying of unexpected outcomes of the qualitative survey from different angle of view

The abovementioned strategy points b) and c) are possibly usable within this research. The main space for the elaboration and commentary of triangulation use is envisaged in Doc 5 where the outcomes of the survey will be interpreted and the contribution of each approach and method evaluated.

The use of the triangulation in theoretical way is expected to be of benefit to this research as the interpretative-phenomenological will be used as a base for the following realistic research. Hendl (2005:100) cites Huberman who “recognises the importance of the subjective, phenomenological and the meaning-creative [phenomena] in the centre of the social life. Our aim is to register and transcend these processes by the establishment of theories which inform about the real world...and test these theories within the various [scientific] disciplines”. The author plans to register the events and processes connected with a) formal, b) informal, c) non- formal education within the interpretative frame and test them afterwards within the realistic research where the main concepts will be elaborated in the most possible measurable way. Because the topic of education is both highly subjective in individual way and unquestionably objective regarding the socio-political impacts the careful ‘diffusion’ of both approaches is envisaged during whole research.

The methods used for the planned approach will be the interviews (open questionnaires) – based on the information obtained by content analysis of these the structured questionnaire for the quantitative part will be prepared. The particular types of the education will be specified with the reference to the activities which they are acquired through; the problems connected with the start of the business will be confronted with the evaluation of the education useful in the course of dealing with these problems. Also, the particular contribution to the a) information, b) knowledge, c) skills and d) competencies development subjectively perceived by the respondents/entrepreneurs will be assessed with regard to the gained a) formal, b) informal and c) non-formal education.

Using the aforementioned approach and methods should enable the researcher to answer the research questions from the perspective of both the individual entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurs as a specific population, resulting in deeper understanding of the entrepreneur’s education phenomena in Czech Republic and possible recommendations to Czech educational institutions.

5 Research outline

5.1 Doc. 2

The critical literature review where the relevant sources of information (contemporary studies, available literature) will be analysed in more detail follows (Doc 2) the preparatory stage schemed in this document. Literature review aims to embed the proposed research into the existing frame of knowledge on the topic. Hart (1998) emphasises the role of the effective evaluation of the available documents based on the researcher's particular point of view. On grounds of the knowledge gained by this critical elaboration Doc 3 (qualitative research) and Doc 4 (quantitative research) will be conducted in accordance with the methodological stance outlined above.

5.2 Doc 3

The qualitative research will be conducted locally within the area of Olomouc region. On the outset the author relies on contacting the subjects who are the members of Regional Chamber of Commerce and also her business acquaintances that might be able to recommend the other participants known to them due to their professional activities (the snowball sampling method). The author intends to contact about fifty entrepreneurs in order to obtain an interview, however, considering the extremely busy schedule of these professionals and the possible reluctance against the interview, the questionnaire (using open questions) is considered in case the interview is refused. The arrangements of the interview will stem from the research questions which should be answered from an individual perspective of each participant in this part of research.

Disman (2000:289) emphasises that the aim of qualitative research is "to understand the people in social situations". As some of the research questions are aimed directly on the individual evaluation and their transformation into measurable quantities would cause the significant reduction and possible bias of the data obtained by the research, using the

qualitative methods should facilitate the researcher to answer the research questions which are based on the subjective perspective of particular individual, reduce the danger of misinterpretation and shed more light on the topic in a non-measured way. Therefore mainly the research questions 2), 3), 6), 7) and 9) which are supposed to clarify the subjective motives for entrepreneur's (self)education, the role of the particular types of education, the changes the particular type of education caused in their a) information base, b) knowledge base, c) skill base and d) competency base, and the possible limitations given by the particular type of education are expected to be answered by using the qualitative tools.

The content analysis of the realised interviews (questionnaires) will enable the researcher to identify the particular meaning the subjects are ascribing to different forms of education and the consequent use of it within their professional career. Based on this evidence she intends to find out whether there are apparent common patterns in the individual evaluation of education and suggest the hypotheses for the quantitative part of the research (Doc 4).

5.3 Doc 4

The quantitative research will therefore be conducted with the main purpose of verifying the hypotheses suggested on the ground of the previous qualitative survey.

The author's intention is to contact 200 entrepreneurs, half of which should be currently studying for or have already gained the MBA title. The Czech Chamber of Commerce and B.I.B.S. databases will be the main sources of contacts.

Due to the limited options of getting an access to the contact details of the entrepreneurs, there might be no opportunity for random sampling of the entrepreneurs and the necessity of using all the contacts obtained without any further selection might arise. Disman (2004:112) mentions this case of a "purpose sampling" in connection with a limited accessibility to given population. In this case the representativeness is derived from the accurate and purposeful sampling from the population with the same particular characteristic- in this case the entrepreneurs with/without MBA title.

The data collection method in this part of research will be the categorised and structured questionnaire. The questions will be formulated in compliance with the definitions of the

education, the success in the first stage of the enterprise and the entrepreneur's competencies. The questionnaires will be compiled with the aid of SPSS.

As this research is meant to be merely exploratory, the outcomes of the quantitative part should enable the researcher to make general conclusions about the role of education in the first stage of entrepreneur's career and offer the answers to the research questions in accordance with the objective character of realist research. However, Bryman (2007:171) writes that "the possibility of a lack of objectivity and of the intrusion of the researcher's values would appear to be much greater when examining social world than the natural scientist investigates the natural order." Aware of this fact the author intends to explain continuously the particular steps she is taking in order to answer the research questions so that the procedures aiming to pursue the objective criteria can be traced.

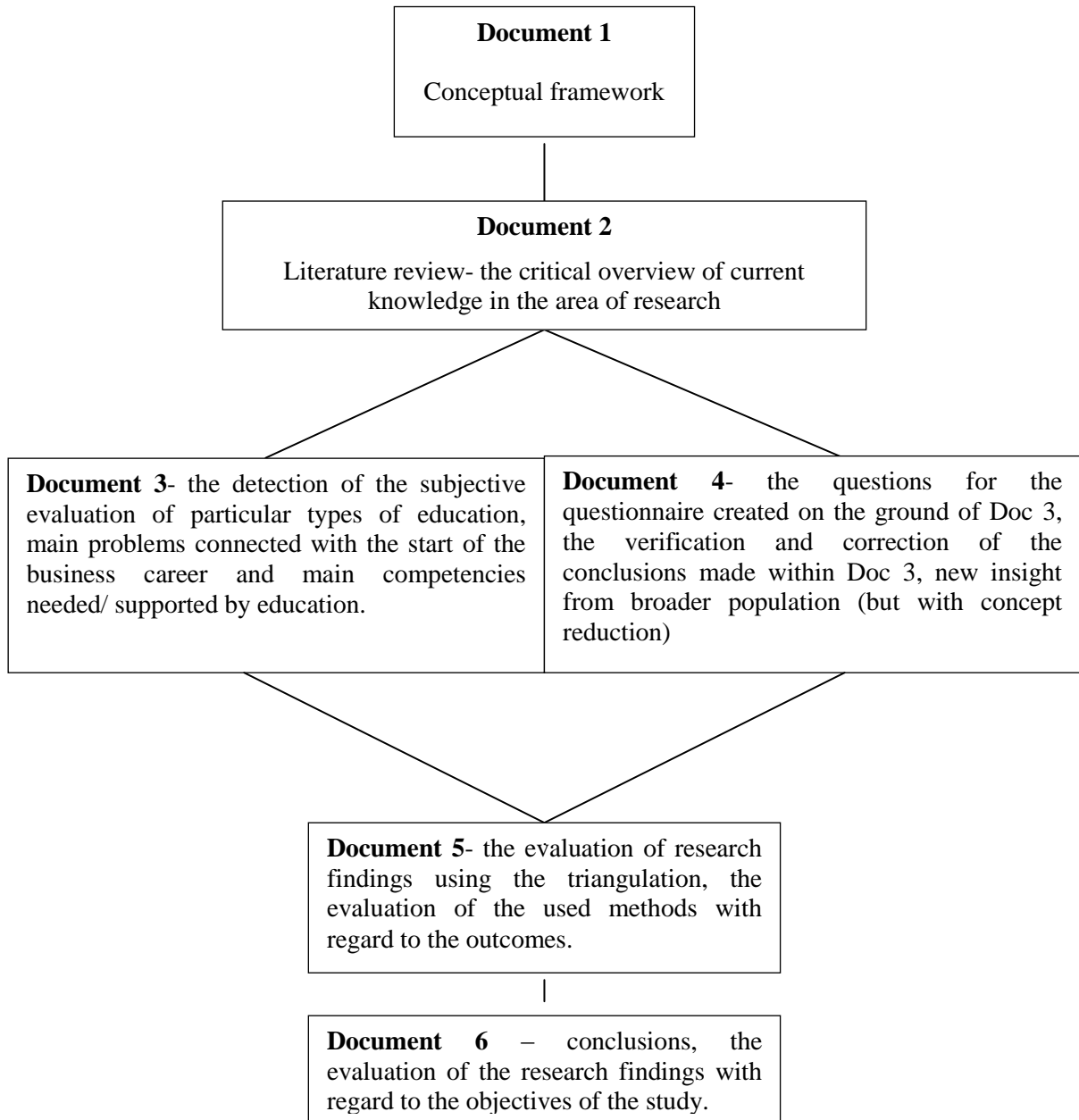
Mainly the research questions 1), 4), 5), 8) and 10) dealing with the concepts of education, information, skills, competencies and success in a measurable way are expected to be answered with the aid of quantitative methods. The description of the process of concepts transformation into measurable entities will be the part of this document.

5.4 Doc 5

After conducting both qualitative and quantitative survey this document will content the analysis of the outcomes revising the evidence provided by the means of interview (questionnaire) in the perspective of the facts revealed by quantitative survey and vice versa. The use and the outcomes of the triangulation will be further commented and the efficiency of the chosen methodology evaluated from the researcher's perspective in the light of the gained information and encountered problems. The contribution of the particular types of education to the changes in competencies (vital for the succeeding in the first stage of the enterprise) will be evaluated in this part of research.

It will be necessary in this phase to consider Fisher's point that "it might be sensible to view the interpretation that you make of your research material as one of several you can make"- and point out the other possibilities of interpretation even when they would not be followed by this particular work.

5.5 Work structure



5.6 Time design

After finishing the preparatory steps and elaborating the critical literature review during the first quarter of 2009, the research is intended to be practically conducted mainly during the second and third quarter of 2009 with a view of the research completion by the end of the year.

6 Political and ethical issues

6.1 Political issues

The questions of education and the access to it are quite powerful political weapons, especially in form of public orientated claims within the political campaigns but the design of this research does not indicate any direct political implications.

Regarding the objectives of this work, the educational policies at the nation-wide level could be influenced indirectly by the further research in the area of entrepreneurs' education. Due to the better understanding of the actual educational requirements the education policy could be adjusted at various levels in order to answer the demands for providing the relevant and useable knowledge. But these efforts might be complicated considering the constant changing of the market demands and the long-term nature of the educational process.

In their recent study Keller and Tvrđy (2008) mention that the aimed education in certain areas could be an efficient tool of the employment policy in two ways- a) lowering the unemployment rates might start with providing the education currently demanded by the market needs and b) to keep the young people in the schools means to keep them away from the employment market and possible unemployment (in this perspective the education becomes fairly expensive tool).

Sage (1993) states that "a number of U.S. studies have shown the growth of smaller enterprises to be a prime motivator of economic expansion".

Within the context of this work the question arises whether the complex formal education increases the chance of individual's successful functioning as an entrepreneur and brings the expected benefit of economic development. The support of the entrepreneurship through the university educational programs as an economic incentive might prove a rather fruitless strategy- the recent studies (Keller, Tvrđy, 2008:15) didn't find "significant relationship between the higher proportion of university graduates in population and the rate of entrepreneur's activities in the society".

Due to the lack of studies in this area in Czech context no premature conclusions should be made at the moment, however, the scientific insight can contribute to the development of functional strategies within the education system.

6.2 Ethical issues

The ethical issues within the empirical research are connected mainly with the personal participation of the respondents- the entrepreneurs. Obviously, there will be more issues related to the qualitative part of the research where the personal contact with the respondents brings more situations that could be considered ethically arguable.

The participation in the research is absolutely voluntary and all the individuals addressed by the researcher will be informed about the purpose of the research and the character of the information demanded in compliance with the university ethics code. The ethical approval from the university will be sought before proceeding with the actual research and the informed consent form will be prepared for the respondents to read and sign up. All the data will be considered confidential unless the respondent states otherwise.

The information gathered during the research will not be the data of personal nature, which are protected by Personal Data Protection Act no. 101/2000 Sb. as their collection requires special measures. There will be no economic data gathered on entrepreneurs' companies except for the monthly profit ascertainment (the respondents will be asked to specify whether it amounts to triple average salary in the Czech republic in order to meet the criteria set up on pg. 9).

Also, further analysis and interpretation will not mention the names of the respondents and the questionnaires will be anonymous.

While performing quantitative survey it is necessary to keep the database of the addressed entrepreneurs for some time in order to trace the returning of the questionnaires and possibly contact the respondents who did not react again to ensure the sufficient amount of information is gathered. However, the personal details unconnected with the research object will not be a part of the analysis and will not be used in any other way.

In the research there will be no distinction made regarding the gender, ethnic origin or nationality of the respondents.

Another issue is gathering the personal evidence regarding the practical professional experience within the qualitative survey. The author does not intend to comment on the business practice possibly revealed during an interview and make any judgements connected with the ethical issues of entrepreneurs themselves. Although the probability is quite low with the regard to the objectives of this research, in case of revealing a practice which is not in

compliance with the socially approved rules or even with the law, the researcher will act in accordance with her conscience and professional ethics.

The consequences of the abovementioned ethical rules should not have any crucial impact on the collected data of significant nature for this research; however, there are some issues that might influence the research material. The issue of voluntary participation can cause the reduction of information gathered through the research, the elimination of the questions connected with the economic data does not allow the researcher to estimate the business success according to the concrete financial criteria.

6.3 *Research rules*

All literature sources and quotations will be properly marked in the text. The reading list will then form a single appendix of this document.

The research work will comply with the school ethic code.

In the course of my research I will consult the BIBS and cooperating schools consultants on the progress of my work.

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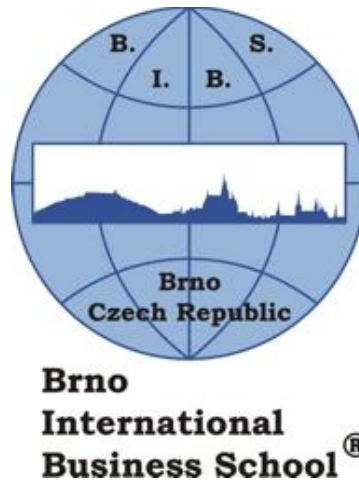
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3 – 5 Relations between learning, development and education

5– 1 Work structure

The Nottingham Trent University

B.I.B.S., a.s.



DBA in Business Administration

**The influence of entrepreneurs' education
upon their success at the first stage of business life cycle
of their enterprise**

Critical Literature Review and Conceptual Development

Document Two

Author: Bc.Bohdana Hošková, MBA
Study cohort: DBA_11_2007/2008

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1 Introduction - Society, Education and Entrepreneurship

1.1 Overview

The roots of the entrepreneurial education research lie probably in the second half of 19th and first decades of 20th century when Weber wrote *The Protestant Ethics and The Spirit of Capitalism*, Schumpeter published his essays on socialism and Emile Durkheim formed his thesis regarding the sacred or profane character of the objects and events in our world and the role of the individual regarding these categories. Reynolds and Day (2006) located the origin of the role of entrepreneur delimitations within the particular economic and social settings in classical theoretical works of Smith and Cantillon who both mentioned the uncertainty and risk components of entrepreneur's position. Although these writings are rather far from being focused on entrepreneurs and the ways they learn, they undoubtedly created the base for the future researchers on the subject by pursuing the wide social topics in systematic and complex way.

The actual relationship between the education and subsequent entrepreneur's success or non-success has been the object of various studies and researches in the 'Western' world, mainly in the US and UK since the second half of the 20th century. Not surprisingly, these kinds of studies have mostly taken place in the countries where the socio-economic conditions enable each individual to function as a self-employed entity responsible for running their business.

The situation differs substantially in continental Europe, especially in the eastern part, where the capitalism has been re-established recently, following the long-term period of communism, and as such has been based on not so solid, historically unanchored foundations. The common perception of entrepreneurship has gone through a lot of changes over the last 20 years as the former communist bloc had been gradually transformed into "coordinated market economy" (Hall, Soskice, 2003:241). However, the research in the field of entrepreneurship does not have a long tradition and most of the studies had been conducted rather within the large projects of European Union, usually covering all participating countries with the same type of quantitative research. As Křížková (2007:164), noticed "the rise of entrepreneurship is one of the fundamental processes in the transformation of Czech society, and yet the phenomenon of small independent business has not been significantly studied by

Czech sociology.” It should be remarked that most of the conducted wide-range international studies had been primarily focused on education and the eventual consequences [of gained education] for the entrepreneurship and have been commented on as a subsidiary issue as a natural consequence of a gradual development of the specific ‘capitalism traits’ in central and eastern Europe. However, the necessity of a deeper understanding of the relationship between education and entrepreneurship becomes apparent. These days, when entrepreneurship is often regarded as a mean of economic growth (Lenko, 1995, Hisrich, Langam-Fox and Grant, 2007, Masurel et al., 2002), the most suitable incentives to support the functioning of the entrepreneurs within the particular economic are being sought and discussed. Especially small business are being attributed a significant role “both because of its ability to adapt to a changing environment and because its structure allows it to adjust itself to technical change at a rate fast enough for survival” (Garravan, 1994a:3).

On the contrary, with the existence of the entrepreneurship the possibilities for the establishment of ‘grey economy’ mechanisms increase, especially in the economic environment going through substantial changes in the legislative area where “the legal regulations were being created slowly and in an unsystematic way” (Horáková, Kux, 2003:6), and some the illegal practices have been, at least at the beginning, accepted almost uncritically by the society as inevitably connected with newly established capitalism. Mlčoch (2000:165) points out that the culture, legitimising the newly established market economy, has not been an object of interest at the beginning of the last 20th century decade in the Czech Republic and, in consent with renowned sociologist and philosopher Bělohradský (ibid.), recognises that „the institutions of private ownership and capitalist market economy on the whole must be anchored in culture, morals (and possibly even religion)“. Persisting lack of responsibility and trust flowing from this state, mirrored in entrepreneurial environment, had been analysed several times by the same author (Mlčoch, 2001, 2002, 2006), supporting his views by citing Stiglitz: „If there is commonly accepted fact that the people do not respect contracts soon there will be no contracts at all...“ (Stiglitz, 2001 in Mlčoch, 2006:86)

Despite the drawbacks specific for post-communist development in the Czech Republic, entrepreneurship stays an important component of the functional market economy and as such deserves the attention of [not only] policy makers who, by

creating the legislative frame and therefore setting forth the regulations, should be able to make the most of its economical potential. However, the right settings of law is not the only condition for the flourishing entrepreneurship and among the factors being mentioned most in the connection with successful start and ‘maintenance’ of business the education occupies a notable place.

Notwithstanding the (un)importance one ascribes to this topic, it is apparent from the number of studies and essays relating to the entrepreneurship education in ‘western countries’ that there are many professionals involved in the current discussion and that the topic deserves further attention as on the basis of relevant research in this field the opportunity might arise for education policy makers to contribute to the stable and prosperous economic environment (Kiyosaki, 1996).

Bender et al. (1990:38) point out that in the older studies the “entrepreneurial activity is seen as an outcome of, rather than the input to, economic development”. It should be noticed that this view is being changed in favour of the entrepreneurship regarded as a one of the elements constituting the particular economical environment. Reynolds (2005:362) is claiming that “necessity entrepreneurship has higher association with subsequent national economic growth than ‘opportunity’ entrepreneurship” which indirectly supports the view of entrepreneurs being mainly an active components of economic environment creation rather than the elements functioning within the given market as a consequence of current favourable conditions. This view is shared e.g. by Hisrich, Langam-Fox, Grant (2007) who characterise entrepreneurship as being the major source of employment, economic growth, innovation, competition and economic flexibility and Masurel et al. (2002) evaluating the positive contribution of entrepreneurship to coping up with structural unemployment.

The Economist (1998:61-63) published a comment on Tony Blair’s efforts to promote teaching entrepreneurship in schools and reported that the conclusion of „all the research is that a high birth-rate for businesses is a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for a healthy economy.” But in connection with Blair’s support of entrepreneurship teaching mentions that it “is worth thinking hard about whether the overall benefits to the economy of aid and advice to entrepreneurs really justify their cost”(ibid).

Education is one of the components considered a possible incentive to the employment market in the ways that will be discussed later in this paper. Despite this

fact, no study focused primarily on the influence of the different types of education upon the entrepreneurial success has ever been conducted in the Czech Republic and this field stays open for the scientific scrutiny. The scope of the literature dedicated to current educational programmes in the Czech Republic is quite narrow and entrepreneurial education as such is not covered at all. However, the observations of Czech academic authors regarding the conditions for entrepreneurial education will be described and then the findings of up to date foreign research will be presented with regard to the objectives of this work and in a way that enables the researcher to proceed responsibly with her research, reflecting on the existing knowledge of the subject.

The relevance of the literature has been assessed in continuous two-step process, first consisting of thematic ranking in order to cover appropriately the fields determined in Doc 1 and the second involving the critical assessment of theoretical and methodological criteria from the perspective of my work.

2 Society and Role of Education within an Entrepreneurial Context

2.1 Positivism

However contributing the education might be to a particular individual, in a sense of gained knowledge and personal development connected with the use of such knowledge, the question regarding its usefulness in a view of the benefits which the educated person brings to society persists since the nineteenth century when the first comprehensive sociological theorising about the education value appeared. Keller and Tvrđý (2008) describe Durkheim's concept of 'sacred' society and the unique role of education in the process of the individual's integration into the society. State, both as a guarantee of such an integration and the one who benefits from a successful integration process is supposed to oversee and control the distribution of the knowledge. Durkheim's approach had been developed further in a work of Bourdieu (1998), which analysed the intentional distribution and consequent maintenance of cultural capital within the society through and with the aid of the education and educational institutions (see chapter 6 for more details).

Durkheim's positivism has been further reflected on in two main ways- 1) opposed to this concept are the oppressive theory advocates and their successors and 2) in

contemporary studies seeing the education as a mean to national prosperity and welfare, but mostly in consensually anchored way.

2.1.1 Conflict theories

The need to change the education role within the state and society was a crucial point of e.g. Freire and Gramsci, who see Durkheim's concept of state role as educational supervisor and strategy planner as a means of oppression by which the state manipulates the individuals in intended ways. Education, from their angle of view, is always related to power. They consider education to be the main mean of empowerment and point to the fact that most educational programs just make people literate enough to become a "complacent workers, satisfying the demands of the marketplace" (Cox, 1990:74). Stemming from conflict paradigm, education is conceived as a highly influential or even controlling part of a system, able to direct individuals in a desired direction- the value of education, a power generating and maintaining tool, is derived from these power-related qualities. The thought of education as a means of empowerment has been further elaborated in relation to workforce education by e.g. Gordon, Morgan and Ponticell (1995). However inadequately radical this approach may seem, it is related to the entrepreneurial environment profoundly, implying that state actually directs the individuals to their work positions/roles of content, promoting unimaginative employees instead of supporting creativity, decisiveness and independent thinking. Whether this state is a result of intentional strategy or unintentional/inconsiderate steps, the consequences are reflected in entrepreneurial opportunities profoundly¹.

Without accepting radical views of education as a means to maintain/ make away with oppression as a theoretical base for this work, the consequences projected on subjective/interpretive level must be considered- the borders determined by existing educational [and superior political and economic system] do undoubtedly create a frame for individual educational experience. Admittedly, the level of freedom to choose an educational path individually starts with existing opportunities. Although these are not limited to one's country these days, the educational opportunities available (for a particular individual in a particular country) are the sources of the first educational experience and, in a process of further education, they create at least the reference base for each individual.

¹ See Matějů, Straková, 2006:93-95, for an objective, although consensually anchored, critical elaboration related to this matter).

However, the Czech Republic today's problematic educational issues do not appear to be conflict based these days (contrary to the past when the educational opportunities had been influenced by the communist regime substantially), rather they show the signs of inadequate attention, debatable measures and insufficient significance ascribed to education (see chapter 3 and 4 for detailed elaboration).

2.1.2 Consensual theories, Functionalism

The consensual/functionalist views represented by the academic papers on the value of entrepreneurship for economy or society respectively (Porter,1990, Keller, Tvrđý, 2008) emphasize the significance of education in a process of country's economic/social development and as such the authors analyse the current state with regard to particular country's prosperity and competitive advantage- e.g. Czech authors Keller and Tvrđý (2008) do, in this respect, point out the contradictions, lying in the ubiquitous and available character that education is supposed to have these days: "The social-political pressure emphasised the wide massification of the education, the economic settings require its top specialisation" (Keller and Tvrđý, 2008:155). The statement reflects the unclear understanding of the education role in Czech environment. The emphasis on (especially tertiary) education availability is being expressed constantly by the Czech public (see e.g. Matějů, Straková, 2005), together with the demands for maintaining free of charge education, coming mainly from the left-wing parts of political spectrum. However, Keller and Tvrđý (ibid.) point out that these dualistic expectations are inducing the effect of education devaluation as it can hardly be assumed that by enabling the participation in the educational process to wide strata of the population the sustainable quality and the consequent function of higher education as a means of insurance against the unemployment, let alone the means of social up-grade, could be maintained.

Porter's (1990:4) evaluation of country's competition abilities presents education as a means to an "innovation based economy", the highest level of country's independence scale. Similarly, Czech authors Mertl and Vychová (2007:41) state that "There is a strong relation between attained education level and wide field of positive social assets to whose creation the education is able to contribute in three directions: by changing the individual preferences, by changing the limits the individuals face to or by enlarging the knowledge and information...substantial for decision making processes..." Keller and Tvrđý (2008), despite recognising Bourdieu's conclusions,

analyse current educational opportunities from the perspective that each individual, disregarding their social status and financial issues, should have a chance to attain desired level of education (in this sense desired by an individual, not the state). However, their approach is functional, not interpretive, assessing the chances of the Czech Republic's to become a "knowledge society" and emphasizing the necessity to adjust individual wishes to market demand.

From this angle of view, however imperfect the current system is, the causes of the imperfections are not primarily related to power. Rather, prioritizing of other political issues, implementing of measures unable to bring presumably positive results for society as whole or wrongly based strategies are being blamed for today's unsatisfactory state (e.g. Porter, 1990, Matějů, Straková, 2005). The consensual efforts are directed to current state improvement by pointing out to such imperfections and suggesting the steps leading to a common welfare.

Functionally based academic debate on (entrepreneur's) education, reflected e.g. in Mora and Vila's (2007) analysis on higher education, society demand and its connection to well-being, Graff's (1996) empirical analysis of educational level and economic development relationship and Singule and Ticha (1991) comments on optimal educational settings with regard to limited financial sources, stems from general discussion of the potentially contributive education role in any particular society and is inevitably connected with the issues of the appropriate setting of the educational system role in 'growing the entrepreneurs', the impossibility to attain this without the political support and the clearer definition of the entrepreneurial environment demands to which the educational institutions should answer.

2.2 Interpretive approach

Proceeding from the general educational system level to an individual sphere also offers various points of view. Individual aspirations, choices and decisions made within the existing system (even the choice of different systems/institutions abroad) regarding the educational path, including the factors involved in such a choice or decision, represent the other side of scheme. They may be regarded as intentionally restricted within radical/conflict/oppression paradigms, and to a certain extent unintentionally limited by existing imperfect system within the consensual paradigm and, within the interpretive paradigm as the steps driven by each individual

themselves in order to cope with given conditions and lead their paths in a desired way/direction.

The individual motives and actions are rarely considered a base for establishing formal educational system settings. In general, individual perspective as an object of scientific interest appears with reference to particular range of human activities, in this case, entrepreneurship.

Within the entrepreneurial education sphere, the individual sphere became an object of interest lately in order to map the range of opportunities and insufficiencies within particular educational system (Nurmi, Passio, 2007, Johnson-Hunter, 2004, Bender et al., 1990, Wadhwa, 2005). Further, the recommendations for current policies are being derived from the outcomes of interpretively focused researches (see chapter 5.3 for details). The interpretive paradigm, logically being connected with individual actions and decisions due to its subjective character, occurs rather in later studies within an educational-entrepreneurial context (Křížková, 2007, Johnson-Hunter, 2004, Grotkowski, 2008, Bender et al., 1990, Robinson, 1994).

Concentrating primarily on an individual's chances to start/run a business successfully, they promote subjective individual views of making their own choices, decisions, conducting particular steps within given system/conditions. The suggestions are not being directed to system changes but to changes in (learning) strategies enabling the individual to develop their potential in full.

The education therefore represents potential base of individual (entrepreneur's) coping/functioning and a mean of entrepreneur's activities facilitation or improvement respectively in given conditions. The conditions in this context consist of market environment, country's legislation, entrepreneurial practices and formal knowledge required for particular enterprise establishment (see Nešpor and Holub, 2006:137).

2.3 Postmodernism

Similarly, the postmodernism (sometimes referred to as post-structuralism) is a rather exceptional approach within entrepreneurial education studies. By questioning issues taken for granted, doubts would be established regarding the traditionally understood outcomes of educational schemes in a society. "Postmodernists tend to be deeply suspicious of notions that imply that it is possible to arrive at a definitive version of any reality...it problematizes and questions our capacity ever to know anything"

(Bryman, 2007:710). The post-modern approach is of actual use, especially within the qualitative surveys, where the narratives are often a main base of gathered data and their correct interpretation might be a questionable issue (see e.g. Learmonth, 2006) or in the essays reflecting the contemporary dimensions of education/knowledge which, accessible via new sources, is being perceived in diametrically different ways (Hubik, 2007). Presumably, the essentially abstract postmodern approach does not correspond with entrepreneurial, but rather practical views (Sage, 1993, Penning, 2005, Garravan, 1994a, 1994b, Mc Larty, 2003) and in this respect is not promoted, except for a few exceptions (Learmonth, 2006), within entrepreneurial-educational research.

2.4 Summary

Intertwined with the problem of disunited views on the essence of entrepreneurship which is reflected in disunited terminology, the entrepreneur's education stays the challenging topic for current research, especially in the countries with little precedent research in the field.

Considering the objectives of this work and the current state of entrepreneurially focused research in the Czech Republic, when some partial information is known about the entrepreneurs and their level of education (see pg. 50- 51), it seems useful to start with investigating on individual/personal level. At the moment, some consequences of interrupted process of capitalism development and its following re-establishment after almost half a century are known (see chapter 3), however, the educational system as a relevant factor contributing to entrepreneurs' success has not been the object of scientific scrutiny yet, contrary to western Europe and US with the history of entrepreneurial research having prevalingly positivist or realistic character. The prevalence of quantitative strategies can partly be explained by the earlier reluctance to accept the relevance of qualitative/interpretive methods, partly by the nature of entrepreneurial/business/management issues and their inclination to statistical/numerical expressions.

However, starting with subjective individual level should help to shed a light on entrepreneurs' functioning in the Czech Republic (the specifics are described in chapter 3) with regard to their background and educational experience. The phenomenological approach, stating "that a scientific explanation must be grounded in the meaning structure of those studied... [and] that the social world is socially constructed" (Aspers, 2004:2), in particular should enable the researcher to

understand the meaning that the entrepreneurs ascribe to formal, informal and non-formal educational experiences and their more or less limited extent of individual choice involved in the educational process with respect to their initial entrepreneurial ventures. Presumably, due to a former educational regulation and newly established institutions (see chapter 3 and 4), the situation will differ in some aspects from the outcomes of foreign research. Individual evidence should be able to predicate in detail about the educational (non) contribution to successful entrepreneurial career and its causes- be explanatory instead of informative.

In compliance with interpretatively based studies (Křížková, 2007, Johnson-Hunter, 2004, Grotkowski, 2008, Bender et al., 1990, Robinson, 1994, Nurmi, Passio, 2007 Grotkowski, 2008), the education will be seen as a potential facilitating or performance improving component enabling an individual to base an existence on entrepreneurial activity in the Czech Republic. The entrepreneurs themselves will comment on their chosen strategy and particular steps regarding the education attainment and determine its meaning and significance in respect of their professional experience.

The theoretical background of interpretive strategy, i.e. phenomenological, grounded theory and reflexive methodology, promoted mainly by Johnson-Hunter's, 2004 and Křížková, 2007, enables to encounter the research questions (see Doc 1, pg. 4-5) from individual level and Aspens' (2004) detailed elaboration of empirical phenomenology research procedures seems to be an appropriate way of grasping the practically focused issue with methodological orderliness.

However, the entrepreneurial performance facilitation/improvement potential of education on individual level, crucial in the following Doc 3, represents a base for further discussion regarding the significance of entrepreneurial education for country's potential competitive advantage. The referring to consensual/functional views, as foreshadowed above, is envisaged for following discussions, mainly in Doc 4 and Doc 5, reflecting the author's intended effort to suggest the conclusions regarding the [not only] formal education strategies that could possibly bring the entrepreneurial issues closer to educational curricula. Despite her inclination to interpretative stance within this work, the author associates herself with abovementioned views of Porter (1990) who highly appreciates innovation-driven economy based on educated, innovative work force, and agrees with Keller and Tvrđý (2008) promoting the knowledge society as the only possibility for the Czech

Republic in order to gain a competitive advantage in comparison to other countries and ensure its place among the growing economies.

3 The consequences of recent historical and political orientation for entrepreneurial culture and environment in the Czech Republic

The political character of education had been accentuated already at the beginning of the 20th century by the first Czech president T.G. Masaryk, also placing a special emphasis on the state [contrary to the church] and social character of the schools, by saying that the “school is the first political instance”(Cach, 1990:54-55).

Even during the socialist era, the political dimension of the education process could be perceived. In different context, Tuček et al. (2006:20) note that “in communist Czechoslovakia the access to the education has been reglemented politically”, confirming the significant position of education even over the totalitarian period, when it used to be denied to politically ‘inadaptable’ individuals.

After the regime change in 1989, many Czech authors (to name just a few- Nešpor and Večerník, 2006, Horáková and Kux, 2003, Mlčoch, 2000, Tuček, 2006) dedicated their attention to the transformation process in the Czech Republic and the consequences of the overall process for various political and social areas, and the different impact on the Czech entrepreneurial scene.

Generally, all the politics had been influenced by the transformational efforts, but “behind the exterior façade full of changes the Czech society lives its own life which is far more continual regarding the [socialist] past that it would seem” and “it is necessary to avoid the simplified interpretation of the transformation process as an interrupted modernisation returning the society to its pre-war roots” (Večerník, Nešpor, 2006:13-14). This statement and following analysis on Czech approach to entrepreneurship and business reflects on the current situation in Czech entrepreneurial environment where the values like honesty and integrity (mentioned although their presence in Czech entrepreneurial environment during the pre-war times is rather anecdotal and therefore arguable) have been sometimes conceived very specifically by the new generation of the entrepreneurs (see e.g. Mlcoch, Kabele, 2001, Mlcoch, 2006), partly probably due to the lack of prior experience with the actions and behaviour corresponding with them and leading to a success.

Therefore, the reality in the Czech Republic sometimes doubts the gist of Smith's theory that 'homo oeconomicus' is driven by his own interest, but at the same time has an 'inner moral self-limitations' (Mlčoch, 2000:42). It is possible to claim that Smith's emphasis on the mutual trust among the economic participants has not been accepted as an ideal to which the society heads, but the persistent non-transparent bonds have been reinforced instead, and consequently "inappropriate disproportions in income between public and private sectors following the period of strongly equalised wages from the socialist period created in many people brought up in socialist ideology an opinion of undeserved profits and losses resulting in feelings of injustice" (Horáková, Kux, 2003:5), inevitably followed by the 'grey economy' practices regarded as a means of this 'injustice' compensation (ibid.). It is necessary to mention that the 'injustice compensation' relates to both public and private spheres, when the private sector does not feel enough relevant support for their entrepreneurial efforts from government (especially in relation to demanding administrative rules connected with running a business) and the public often perceives the entrepreneur's profit as undeserved (see Horáková, Kux, 2003, for detailed analysis).

On the other hand, Sojka (in Mlčoch, Kabele, 2001:88) mentions the complicated situation of small enterprises in the Czech Republic writing that "small entrepreneurs are discriminated [within the market environment] due to their insignificant bargaining power" and the state "is unable or unwilling to help" them establish their business on solid foundations, represented by clear and transparent statutory rules.

The fact that the liberal approaches are being put into practice with far more difficulties than one would expect had been expressed by Holub and Nešpor (2006:133) writing that [in the Czech Republic there] "came into being a hybrid between socialist past and externally accepted capitalist economic and social institutions". In consonance with Mlčoch (2001:80-83), they also point at the discontinuous historical process enabling the outlasting of 'socialist' behaviour and norms of the Czech economic subjects/ entrepreneurs which causes considerable problems when dealing with companies from the countries where capitalism had been developed without political breaks/regime changes. All of the abovementioned authors agree that there is no obvious inclination to accept the ethical and professional norms and it remains a question whether the 'bad habits' embodied in existing web of economic subjects, connected by their (in some cases corruptive) interests, can be

eradicated. In this respect, Nešpor (2006) adds that these remains of the past including the lack of trust and biased morals are also apparent in Czech political culture.

Soulsby and Clark (1996, 2007) who tested Granovetter's (1985, 1995) and Grabher's (1993) opinions on social 'embeddedness' of economic activities in post-communist countries, also point out that pre-1989 habits, behaviour and knowledge base remaining in charge have considerable implications for today's Czech [entrepreneurial, managerial and organisational] environment when "the resultant evolutionary patterns of change have often resulted in effective adaptation to the conditions of institutional upheaval" (Soulsby and Clark, 2007:1437).

Hall and Soskice (2003:241-244) polemize on "the issue of whether coordinated market economies can be expected to converge toward a liberal economic model...since effective strategic coordination requires the development of appropriate institutional forms in society and the common knowledge that only experience generates, it cannot readily be legislated...the institutions of coordinated market economies should be responsive to experience, subject to renegotiation and flexible enough to survive periodical challenges".

The flexible response to the constantly changing needs of society in the process of transformation accentuated by Hall and Soskice is probably the greatest issue of all the politics. Education is not an exception, but it occupies a special place within every system due to its potential lying in an ability to prepare the individuals for functioning within the particular system (whether in consensual or conflict theories sense) which will be elaborated within the Czech Republic context in following chapter.

The literature used in this chapter comes mainly from Czech academic authors of the last decade, directly concerned with the situation, and as such provides first hand evidence of the current situation. The outlining contours from foreign authors and their presumably unbiased insight in this case support the Czech authors' conclusions and proved their critical observations justified and to the point.

4 Current Educational Opportunities in the Czech Republic

4.1 Educational Strategies in the Czech Republic within an Entrepreneurial Context

The positive reactions regarding the current state of Czech educational system are a rather missing item both on public and academic level of discussion. The critics focus on political inactiveness and general lack of interest to set the education into the wider political frame writing that “paradoxical is that although our educational system is not able to meet a demand on higher education by which it impedes the educational aspirations satisfaction and therefore is not sufficiently dynamic...in competition with comparable countries...the education does not belong among the main issues of political debate.” (Matějů, Straková, 2005:97) The necessity of changes in the educational environment has been perceived and expressed on some level by each post-communist government, but unfortunately the measures taken have lacked the “integrated conception” (Straková in Nešpor, Večerník, 2006:117).

Therefore the arguable changes (e.g. the extension of compulsory basic education by one year, the unification of leaving exams² for secondary education institutions), together with Ministry of Education theoretical plans, that were meant to adjust and improve the current system according to ‘public order’ (*White Book- National Program of Educational Development, 2001, Long-term Program of Educational System Development, 2005*) or later in accordance with European standards (*Lifelong learning strategy for the Czech Republic, 2007*) and begin the transformation towards ‘knowledge society’ in the Czech Republic, did not manage to change the attitudes from previous historical era and the system remains “very selective, based exclusively on the teachers authority, dominated by ‘pseudo academicism’ ...instead of motivating the graduates to life-long learning and equipping them with skills enabling further education...it embodies the traits of industrial era, especially the mass and short-time preparation of cheap workforce” (Straková in Nešpor, Večerník, 2006:103). In addition Straková states that the significance of the school as an institution is so far not seen in the cultivation of the students and in providing them with the useful knowledge for the future (ibid. p.108) Her view is supported by Večerník (2006:49) who comments on governmental efforts in educational sphere writing that “the process of ‘knowledge society’ creation is fairly slow in our country. The current

² equivalent of GCSE in UK

system”...is not able to respond adequately to the changing demand on graduates generated by the profession markets” and even further education “does not contribute sufficiently to the human resources qualification and flexibility development”.

The abovementioned conclusions unfavourably correspond with Porter’s (1990) evaluation of country’s competition abilities³ according to which the Czech Republic has been ranked into the factor-driven category characterised by “low human capital investment, cheap labour force...and a few products export which factors create a source of comparative competitive advantage (Matějů, Straková, 2005:94)

According to Porter (ibid.), the most developed countries are ‘innovation driven’ and the innovation is, starting with Schumpeter’s (1976:132) view that “the function of the entrepreneur is to revolutionize or reform the pattern of production by exploiting an invention or, more generally, an untried technological possibility for producing a new commodity or producing an old one and a new way...” and ending with current researchers’ (e.g. Matlay, 2006, Kirby, 2002, Shaver, 2001) conclusions, one of the most significant entrepreneurial competencies. All of this implies that it is the interest of particular state to support innovative, and consequently entrepreneurial, thinking and approaches by political/government measures (not only in the area of education) in order to improve the country’s competition ability.

Although Reynolds, having dedicated more that 15 years to entrepreneurs-oriented research, might seem to be rather doubtful regarding the innovative component in entrepreneurs by claiming that “the vast majority of all firms- new and established- are replicating existing economic activity... [and] increase pressures for producing quality products and keeping price low- major benefits for the customers” (Reynolds, 2005:362), his way of thinking should not be considered inconsistent with previous statements such as establishing the enterprise within already-existing market area does not necessarily mean the lack innovation- more to the contrary, the new ways of making the existing product more attractive to the customers have to be found and therefore there is a lot of space left for innovation.

³ Porter (1990:4) recognises three levels of particular economy leading factors with regard to a country’s competition abilities: a) factor-driven economy, b) investment-driven economy and c) innovation driven economy, when these levels are gradual and last mentioned model represents the small level of dependence on the other world economies.

Therefore, from the view angle of this work's objectives, the strategy of detecting the possible 'innovation rate' support as a sign of creating the basis for possible entrepreneurial ventures in existing educational programs has been adopted in following lines.

The National Program for Educational Development in the Czech Republic (further referred to as NPED), created in 2001, the last comprehensive document stipulating the priorities in Czech education, tries to respond theoretically to current demands, could not at the time of its origin face the conclusions of later claims that "unlike the teachers and pedagogical workers, the employers are not satisfied with the level of graduates' competencies" accentuating "the willingness and ability to learn, the ability to work as a part of team and the initiative" (Straková in Nešpor, Večerník, 2006:115). Especially the first and the third request- [lack of] initiative again-mentioned by the employers would also be crucial for the future entrepreneur, and the lack of their presence in graduates is not an encouraging message for Czech economy.

NPED sets a few general strategic lines- among others "to attain higher quality and functionality of the education by creating new educational and study programs that will respond the demands of information and knowledge society...employment and needs of active participation on the life of the democratic society..." (*National Program for Educational Development, 2001:18*). The following emphasised tasks for secondary education in NPED correspond with the abovementioned approach line except for "ensuring the young people's life-long learning, developing the general and specialised educational base and applying of generally useable key competencies " it intends to "support the employment of young people during the lifetime". (ibid. p. 2001:51).

Considering the fact, mentioned by the Czech Chamber of Commerce secretary Šiška (in Sanchezová, 2006), that about 80 percent of the vocational school [the institutions of secondary education where the consecutive tertiary education is not envisaged] alumni do not work in the field they have specialised in during their studies, the need of focusing the secondary education closer to the demands of job market is apparent- the schools providing the education irrelevant to 'public order' burden the state budget without bringing back the expected profit- in this case the qualified individuals able to join the job market, let alone to start their own business, using the knowledge

they gained through the educational institution (see Keller, Tvrđý, 2008 for detailed analysis of the situation in the Czech Republic).

As for tertiary education, the long-term NPED priority is “to maximise the use and support of the human sources development...help student with orientation on the job market by building the advisory centres providing...profession advisory services”.(ibid., 2001:67)

Despite the undeniable beneficial aspects of creating at least some kind of plan, the theorizing on the educational aims should be followed by practical actions- so far, well-considered implementations leading to meeting those aims is far from being the reality in the Czech Republic (commented on by e.g. Straková, Večerník, Matějů, 2006, Matějů and Straková , 2005:6).

The contradiction regarding the education of potential entrepreneurs is apparent: functionality⁴ does not really match the term of ‘employment’ in entrepreneurial context. As Roodt (2005:19) points out: “one of the ‘jobs’ of self-employed is to create job opportunities for others”, not to function as an employee. The educational approach in the Czech Republic supports, already on theoretical level of intentions, the opinion of some experts (Kirby, 2002, Nurmi, Passio, 2007) that current education prepares and intends to continue preparing students for the position of an employee rather than an employer. The positive sign represented by the recent creation of ‘entrepreneurial incubators’⁵ within the ‘science-technical parks’ of various universities (Olomouc, Prague, Ostrava, Hradec Kralove) cannot justify the lack of orientation to entrepreneurial behaviour in Czech educational system as a whole.

The irrelevance of the current discussion on education in the Czech Republic to the entrepreneurial issues is also apparent from the focused discussions taking place occasionally within the public/professionals concerned- the papers presented at the seminars aptly called “*The educational system as the Czech economic growth engine?*”(2007) or within the ‘*Roundels to educational politics*’ (organised by the Educational Politics Centre of Prague’s Charles University, 2005-2008) had been

⁴ Being functional in a sense of “used to contribute to the development or maintenance of a larger whole” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/functional>, Accessed: 9 February 2009)

⁵ The centres where supporting team of experts evaluates the entrepreneurial prospects, offers the premises for entrepreneurial activities in favourable prices and enables the usage of university equipment to nascent entrepreneur.

focused entirely on the critical evaluation of current system, mentioning all kinds of related topics from employer's investment into the particular vocational school, position of the teacher and the lack of technical schools to tertiary education financing, but the entrepreneurship had not been discussed even once. The complexity of the problems cumulated in Czech educational area and the consequential position of the entrepreneurial education in the Czech Republic indirectly confirm Doubrava's (2008) comment on the forthcoming White book (NPED) for tertiary education which indicates central problems of the Czech education being on far more general level (financing and the related legislative issues) and that dealing with specific issues such as an entrepreneurial environment development can hardly be set as a priority in the current situation.

However, Tuček et al. (2006:86) state that "according to the expectations, among Czech elites [where roughly 1/3 had been represented by the owners or co-owners of the companies in 2004-see *ibid.*] markedly prevailed the strategies bringing the success within the liberalised job market and in the society focused on performance" when as a first of them an educational strategy (involving the self-education) had been named. Such an attitude of practising entrepreneurs predicates of the value of current education in a different light and implies that the current education might have some contributive effects on entrepreneurial success.

4.2 The current situation of informal and non-formal education in the Czech Republic with regard to an entrepreneurial environment

4.2.1 Situation in the Czech Republic and the consequences of current strategies

The contemporary focus on non/formal and informal learning within entrepreneurial mirrors an issue of successful individuals, not formally educated and seemingly not predisposed for entrepreneurial career which closely relates to the discussion on whether the entrepreneurs are born or made (see also chapter 6). Generally, the factual observations that some individuals are able to function successfully as entrepreneurs in a given social system without having the privilege of the higher education⁶ on their

⁶ Steve Jobs having started the Apple Computers after dropping out from the university is being an often cited example (e.g. in Macoby, 2001)

side are being ascribed either to social/culture capital or inborn traits (e.g. Garravan, 1994a, Mills, 2008) or, as mentioned above, to the knowledge gained in informal ways (Kilpatrick, 1997, Chivers, 2006, Cheetham and Chivers, 2001, 2005, Reber, 1993, Etling, 1993).

In the Czech Republic, the non-formal and informal education began being mentioned in connection with gaining knowledge rather recently as the former rigid educational system has not been the ideal ground for innovators and the concept of education used to be perceived in a clearly formal way. This perception persists even today within the job market when non-formal (i.e. individually taken courses) and informal education (functioning, practice in particular environment) is often underestimated- as Nešpor and Holub (2006:137) suggest: “the ability to perform well one’s job is declared mainly in a form of formal education in particular field...the state obliges some trade [entrepreneurial] professions through the formal [education] conditions required in order to perform work”.

The effort to change this situation reflects e.g. the report called ‘*Vocational education and training in the Czech Republic*’ (2008:30-31) elaborated by the Czech Ministry of Industry and Trade informing about measures having come into force in 2007 when informal and non-formal education strategies became a part of certified educational programs which means that for the obtaining of the educational certificate there is no need to attend the school regularly and the space self-education is given a space in current certified education structure. Approvingly, Kreidl (2008:251) illustrates on ground of studies conducted in USA (Entwistle, Alexander and Olson, 2004, Chaplin, 1999, in Kreidl, 2008) that for socially disadvantaged individuals it might be the only chance to reach formal education “non standard educational paths can compensate at least some negative effects of low socio-economic background”.

The discussion could be evolved about the prevailing type of education marked as useful and to the point by the entrepreneurs. Not only can the prevalence of informal educational strategies mean the disconnection of formal education and practical entrepreneurial life (as stressed mainly by subjectively conceived studies e.g. by Johnson-Hunter, 2004, but also the realist researchers, e.g. Garravan 1994a, 1994b, Casebow, 2006) but from objective perspective it might imply that the overall character of the entrepreneurial environment in a particular country is based much more on informal relations and off hand information than on the opportunities

regulated on the state level which delimitates the scope of entrepreneurial activities clearly and transparently (as mentioned by Vecernik, 2006, Nespor, 2006).

As a result of such an environment, the ‘grey economy’ supported by the “extensive and unorganised development of small and medium enterprise, insufficient legislation, infringement of legislative regulations and lack of tax discipline” (Horáková, Kux, 2003:5) is being opened. The complexity of education related areas and its linkages to the whole country’s prosperity and economical environment foreshadowed in Doc 1 (pgs. 16-17 and consequently 28-29) had been shown clearly by previous chapters. However, the interpretive strategy chosen for Doc 3 enables the entrepreneurs not only giving their own, subjective evidence of the usefulness of different types of education, but also to comment on the nature of the entrepreneurial environment in the Czech Republic and, afterwards, possibly compare those views with abovementioned objective statements.

Due to the limited existence of relevant literature related to the contribution of informal/non-formal education in the Czech Republic area, additional foreign sources had been sought to create a base for informal/non-formal learning specification.

4.2.2 Informal education

Informal learning in general is being described as an open set of informal activities by which the knowledge is transferred. Each experience has a potential of learning experience and as such should be treated- “with learning replacing education...almost any activity can be seen to involve learning”(Gorard, Fever, Rees, 1999:437), “the experiences...interpreted or explained by elders or peers...constitute informal education Etling (1993:73).

Functionalist/consensual perspective, concentrating on country’s knowledge potential, has been accepted by Rabušicová and Rabušic (2006:1200) who characterize informal learning as “natural accompaniment to everyday life [which] corresponds to independent learning...is not necessarily intentional...so may well be not be recognised even by the individuals themselves as contributing to their knowledge and skills”. However, their study on adult education focuses mainly on formal and non-formal activities, which reflects the complicated character of informal learning operationalization in quantitative research.

The same (objective) perspective regarding the significance of informal learning, but rather in organisational context, is represented by Chivers (2006), Cheetham and Chivers (2001, 2005) who emphasized: [professionals] “learn a great deal by informal (and incidental) methods at work...” (Chivers, 2006:3). Chivers (ibid.) points out that “learning by reflecting on practice” is not included in the works of other authors as a way of learning (mentioning interpretively based studies of Eraut et al., 1997, Schon, 1983 and 1987) which is in contrast with his conclusions that “learning largely arises from reflection upon experience...this process is the key driver of improvements in individual professional competence” (ibid.). In agreement with the abovementioned Rabušicová and Rabušic (2006) and Reber (1993), he refers to possible unintentional character and unrealised results of such a reflection.

Chivers also refers to Marsick and Watkins (1990 in Chivers, 2006) who determined individual characteristics making the informal learning more probable as pro-activity, critical reflection and creativity. The compliance of these with the competencies mentioned as vital for the entrepreneurs by Kirby (2002, see chapter 5.1.1.) implies that the entrepreneurs are prone to maximise the information delivered in an informal way.

Interpretively conceived, Kilpatrick’s (1997) study accentuates “learning-by-doing, learning-by-using and learning-by-interacting” as the main routine activities based components of informal education that create new knowledge and suggests the most important part to be the interaction between ‘facilitators’ and participants- with reference to abovementioned Etling (1993) and Gorard, Fever and Rees (1999), in entrepreneurial-educational context the facilitator is anyone able to provide the entrepreneur with new information on (presumably) entrepreneurial issues.

The other strategies promoted involve Shackleton-Jones’ (2008) emphasizing the role of emotions in a process of (informal) learning and recommending the new ways of teaching consisting in creating emotional flags’ or Killpatrick’ (1997) interactive learning. However, regarding such recommendations, Chivers (2006:9), although holding functionalist position, opposes generalizations and points out that “different individuals find different kinds of experience formative, and this should caution against being too prescriptive in respect of ‘best practice’ learning methods”.

In summary, the concept of informal education does not differ within the particular paradigms, as it represents any activity involving learning potential- what differs is the view of informal learning individual/social significance. In the context of interpretative stance, the informal education, although not being a part of formal or non-formal educational experience, provides entrepreneur with new information/knowledge or improves his skills/competencies related to an entrepreneurial practice (see chapter 5). However, it is necessary to distinguish between 1) conscious and purposeful informal learning (self-education) and 2) unconscious and non-purposeful gathering of relevant information.

This unintentional and sometimes unrecognized character of informal learning mentioned by e.g. Rabušicová and Rabušic (2006), Reber (1993), Chivers (2006), Glen (2003) or Simpson, Tuck and Bellamy (2004), supports the intended phenomenological/interpretative/qualitative approach for Doc 3, as the possible contribution of informal learning could stay unrecognized or unmentioned by using other than individual-subjective approach in the first phase of research.

4.2.3 Non-formal education

Etlung (1993) characterises non-formal education as “any intentional and systematic educational enterprise in which content is adapted to the unique needs of students...” Rabušicová and Rabušic (2006:1200) clarify the definition as “all types of taught learning activities that are not a part of formal education programmes”.

The original concept of non-formal education⁷ from the post-modern perspective has been introduced by Hubík (1997) who, using Levi- Strauss’ principles as a base, mentions the term ‘bricoleur’ in the sense of individual attaining the goals in an innovative way, having only limited resources in disposition but maximising the profit by creative use of given means, featuring divergent thinking and applying new, non-conservative methods. It is possible to assume that the entrepreneurs represent the use of ‘bricolage’ in practice (to certain extent) which makes their ways of getting knowledge more varied and intertwined with rather unintentional knowledge gathering. Hubík writes that “the communicative transformation of cultural values into economic values”(1997:58) has been established, pointing out at changed information value in favour of economic profit.

⁷ Conceived as being gained through the activities stemming originally from the particular TV program and activities originated within this program.

Similarly to Marsick and Watkins (1990 in Chivers, 2006), this concept indirectly promotes creativity and pro-activity as a key to perception of information resulting in integration of these into practice. However, although this concept seems to confirm the conclusions of foreign research regarding the entrepreneurial competencies (see chapter 5.1.1. for details), the non-formal education as such is rather connected with the efforts of getting a deeper insight into particular matters than coping with current limited knowledge and using this in an innovative way (Rabušicová and Rabušic, 2006, Chivers 2006).

Therefore, it is to be found out (mainly within Doc 3) whether Czech entrepreneurs' strategy in relation to use of their knowledge gained by formal/informal/non-formal education within their enterprise show the signs of 'bricolage' or whether the non-formal education is sought purposefully and what are the reasons for such a seeking.

Regarding non-formal education, Rabušicová and Rabušic (2006:1216) conclude that one third of [Czech] population participates in non-formal education which area is dominated by "younger and better educated people...motivated primarily by occupational reasons...fear of unemployment or of failing to support oneself through self-employment do not play any role" in lifelong learning. In an entrepreneurial context, this conclusion supports the presumption that non-formal strategies could be induced by the efforts to improve one's chances to succeed in the market environment, but only in case of the entrepreneurs already having some positions built within the market. The failure to run a business and the prospect of choosing the entrepreneurship instead of unemployment do not seem to be the motivational factors.

A clear direction of entrepreneurial education towards the non-formal strategies seems to be set by the outcomes of Johnson-Hunter's (2004) qualitative research- she states that "...formal education was not perceived as influential in the realm of entrepreneurial learning...entrepreneurs...claimed that formal education played a valuable supporting role because they gained pertinent information, experience and/or skills as a result of their participation in it" while the non-formal education has been evaluated as "transformational, lifelong and cross-disciplinary in nature" (Johnson-Hunter, 2004:107-108).

Considering the abovementioned theoretical background in relation to this work's objectives, non-formal education represents intentional and conscious activity

undertaken in order to improve one's functioning within the given market, plus the relevant information and knowledge to current entrepreneurial 'know-how' and enhance one's skills and competencies within their enterprise. It is the combination of intentionality and consciousness that makes it easier to capture non-formal education even by quantitative research, in my case planned for Doc 4.

However, the prior mapping of the field by using interpretative/qualitative methodology is being preferred for Doc 3. Subjective perspective of a particular entrepreneur should clarify the potential of non-formal education for an entrepreneurial career in the Czech Republic. The timing of eventual non-formal (but also formal and informal) activities will be looked into, both in order to link the findings to related objective research in the Czech Republic. Therefore, the interpretively conceived concept of non-formal education (as in previous paragraph) will be adopted in following work.

4.3 MBA programs within the context of adult education in the Czech Republic

MBA as a part of formal adult education has established a stable position in the Czech Republic. Association of MBA providers (CAMBAS) established in 1998 states that the objective of MBA education is to function as 'managerial carrier accelerator' (<http://www.cambas.cz/stranka.asp?id=2>). However, the managerial side of entrepreneurship (Hodgetts, Kuratko, 2006) could increase the possibility of Czech entrepreneurs' participation in these professional education programs. Practical consequences of management focused education for starting the business have been described by e.g. Wadwha (2005), Wellman, Gowan, White (2006), link the MBA education to career success outcomes.

The *National program for Educational Development* (2001) accentuates the need of extending life-long learning opportunities and dedicates a whole chapter to the area of integrating this education into the educational system. *Lifelong learning strategy for the Czech Republic* (2007:42-45) states that tertiary sphere of adult education in general is being "a marginal issue", primarily because of the restricted offer of part-time studies enabling to combine studies with a full-time job, and also, from the large population with college education only a small part tries to achieve a higher educational degree. However, the MBA title represents a different category

considering its accessibility unconditioned by the previous formal education degree but partial inaccessibility due to relatively high cost of MBA programs.

Rabušicová and Rabušic (2006:1196) emphasize the significance of life-long learning, of “permanent interaction between the worlds of learning, work, and living within or life trajectories” and mention three reasons for that:

- a) the rapidity of social change
- b) the continuous march by many adults towards occupational obsolescence
- c) change in value systems”.

All of the abovementioned factors are inseparably connected with entrepreneurship, possibly in more urgent way than with the population in general.

Ad a) The appropriate reaction in the time of social changes can mean start a successful enterprise. (see e.g. Křížková, 2007).

Ad b) As to avoiding of the individual unemployment threats, this reason is often being reported as a motivation for starting an entrepreneurial career (*Factors of Business Success*, 2004, Křížková⁸, 2007:97). However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, in relation to non-formal education, the threat of unemployment has not proved a reason for taking a part in some kind of educational activity and the participants of both formal and non-formal education “have a good level of education, are young and have already participated in some form of lifelong learning” (Rabušicová and Rabušic, *ibid.*:1206). This concurs with the foreign research conclusions (Tujinman, 1991, Cross, 1981 in Kreidl, 2008): “lifelong education participation reaches the highest levels among already relatively educated people, while people with really low volume of human capital and minimum formal qualification...participate much less” (Kreidl, 2008:252). With reference to the conclusions in previous sub-chapter, it seems, similarly, that the reasons to undertake further formal education relate to a professional improvement of those who have their positions within the market environment set and are determined to increase their potential.

Ad c) As to changed values, necessarily coming with the change of the regime, these have been discussed in detail in chapter 3.

⁸ Although Křížková connects this motivation rather with an effort to use the existing experience in particular branch of business

In relation to successful Czech entrepreneurs, the abovementioned conclusions imply that those undertaking such an education are educated already and do so after settling stably in the market and recognising the eventual gaps in their knowledge or the consequences of not having a reputable title. The potential contribution of social/human capital is elaborated in chapter 6.

Furthermore, despite the need of educated workforce being recognised within positivist/realist/functionalist studies (Porter, 1990, Keller, Tvrđý, 2008, Matějů, Straková, 2005, Rabušicová, Rabušic, 2006), the doubts regarding the appropriateness of current entrepreneurial education (commented on in chapter 5.3.), particularly MBA programs had been expressed, mainly in subjectively based papers and studies, although, probably due to a relatively short time since MBA courses establishment, not in the Czech Republic yet. To cite just a few main objections, Morato (no name, Asia, Inc., 2002) states that “[the entrepreneurs] are not superior in academic setting but they are...good at coming up with new ideas, finding opportunities, doing deals. They’re not the type to labour over schoolwork.” Also Werle (2008:63) states, referring to German managers: “[they] are able to manage big organisation in stable environment...but they are weak regarding the creative adjustments and changes...” and criticises the MBA programs for too much analyses-based approach lacking the “negotiations and confrontations with real people” (ibid.).

These opinions are often accompanied by an inclination to informal strategies incorporated into MBA programs in order to enable the participants to realize better the linkage of the theory and practice. Simon Bull, Institute of Directors head (in Nash, 2008:70) promotes “the ability to exchange views and experiences with directors from different backgrounds”. Stumpf, Dunbar and Mullen (1991) hold an opinion that behavioural simulation strategies should be the part of entrepreneurial education and Bender et al.⁹ (1990:41) recommend that “programs of entrepreneurship training should not be simply linked to a goal of starting new businesses, but should also focus on training of owners of existing businesses.

On the contrary, Wellman, Gowan, White (2006), Nash (2008) and Wadwha (2005), also state the positive consequences of MBA acquirement, among others especially

⁹ (Bender et al., 1990:41) practically realized a long-term program of teaching, advising and supporting the potential entrepreneurs in a small community (in order to encourage the economic activity in an underdeveloped area).

the increased competition abilities of small companies and the expansion of people with degree in business. Nash (2008:69-70) also believes that MBA is “ a strategic general management qualification positioned specifically for people in, or aspiring to, a leadership role” and “shows an ability to grasp the strategy”.

Apparently, the critique is coming mostly from subjectively conceived investigations and the main component criticised in current MBA programs abroad is the missing interconnection with entrepreneurial practice. With regard to unified form of MBA programmes, this might also be the case of the Czech Republic, however, the objective of this research is to find out when do the entrepreneurs opt for MBA programs and what are the main reasons this choice. The interconnection with the missing practical component of MBA is that their choice might be motivated more by a degree reputation and a chance to write prestigious three letters in front of their name than by the expectations of [practical] knowledge acquirement (as for the non-entrepreneurs, it has been bluntly put by Wellman, Gowan, White (2006:4), MBA might be supposed to bring “a higher salary and a greater likelihood of being promoted...”).

To deliver the abovementioned objectives of this work, i.e. find out the timing and reasons of entrepreneurial further education in the Czech Republic, the interpretive approach (as by Wellman, Gowan, White , 2006, Nash , 2008, Wadwha, 2005 and Bender et al., 1990 in different settings) seems to be the most suitable one, not only for its subjective predicative value missing in objective views on education but also with regard to different settings of the Czech Republic and the absence of similar interpretive study. Similar to previous chapters, the comparison with the results of objectively based studies ((Porter, 1990, Keller, Tvrđý, 2008, Matějů, Straková, 2005, Rabuřicová, Rabuřic, 2006) is expected afterwards.

Again, to frame this chapter on educational opportunities, based primarily on the Czech official documents and the Czech academic level books/papers/comments and journals (e.g. *Moderní řízení*, *Czech Sociological Review*), the current journal articles and papers from abroad (among others *Education and Training*, *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice* and *Management Dynamics*, *The Journal of Management Development*, *Journal of European Industrial Training*, *Training Journal*) together

with conference papers¹⁰ have been used in order to show the consistency of Czech critical documents with the research on the topic in other countries and in order to describe closer the actual challenges of the Czech Republic entrepreneurial/educational environment, inevitably related to potential development of entrepreneurial spirit as outlined in chapter 3.1 of Doc 1.

5 The Main Directions of Entrepreneurial Education Research

5.1 Purpose and aims of up to date entrepreneurial research

Presumably, the efforts to define an entrepreneur and the entrepreneurship are not being made just for the pleasure of academics to name the things in a right manner but for the purposes of further research, in this case the research of entrepreneurial education and its possible consequences both for micro-economic and macro-economic levels. Low (2001:20 in Mc Kenzie, 2007) states that “Providing insight into the link between micro-level entrepreneurial action and macro-level economic progress is a potentially huge intellectual contribution to our field.” This work intends to contribute more to the micro-level side and to foreshadow the impact/possible consequences of its findings in a broader economic and political perspective. However, regarding the entrepreneurial education, the micro-level in a sense of entrepreneurs as the individuals has not been an object of the research activity as often and the works focused on the impact of the existing educational system on the entrepreneurs as such are rather scarce (in the Czech Republic, Křížková, 2006, started the probe into the area by interviewing women entrepreneurs, Nešpor, 2006, cites a few entrepreneurs reflecting their experiences with the Czech entrepreneurial environment, Johnson-Hunter, 2004, has conducted a qualitative research focusing on habitual entrepreneurs in US).

Having mapped the existing literature related to entrepreneurs’ education, three main approaches have been traced that dominate the issue. The author considers useful to describe them in order to delimitate the scope of the current research more closely and

¹⁰ All the foreign journals and conference papers in English mentioned/cited in this work have been accessed through BIBS online library or through the websites

points out that these categories are not rigid, the topics often overlap and none would be sufficient for understanding the issue without the contextual frame created by the others:

5.2 Who are the entrepreneurs, what do they do, what qualities do they have and how do they learn: Literature focused on the entrepreneurial traits, competencies, knowledge and skills

5.2.1 Traits and competencies

The hardly tangible essence of the entrepreneurship, which naturally does not match any precise and detailed definition, causes considerable problems to the researchers trying to find some common base to start from and was aptly expressed by Cole (1969:17 in Gartner, 1989:47):

“My own personal experience was that for ten years we ran a research center in entrepreneurial history, for ten years we tried to define the entrepreneur. We never succeeded. Each of us had some notion of it- what he thought was, for his purposes a useful definition. And I don't think you're going to get further than that”

Despite the time gap, Cole's statement can be applied to current situation when the different ad hoc settings are being worked out for each research and the main concepts (entrepreneurship, entrepreneur) are being specified in a new, although not always innovative way, in each particular study. Various approaches and strategies have been applied in order to get a grip on the gist of entrepreneurship. In order to delimitate an appropriate operational concept of an entrepreneur for my work, it seems necessary and useful to map the approaches dominating entrepreneurial research.

As mentioned before, classical economy theorists (e.g. Smith, Cantillon, and later Hayek) have long time ago emphasized the component of uncertainty and the necessity of risk bearing by the entrepreneurs, but on academic grounds there has been an effort to specify an entrepreneur in more precise way which turned out to be a constant problematic area of entrepreneurial research.

The beginnings of entrepreneurial research are represented by the studies trying to define the characteristics, traits, competencies, behaviours and/or attitudes, distinguishing the entrepreneurs from the rest of population (Timmons, 1986, Whiting

1988, Solomon and Winslow 1988, Vries, 1977, Brockhaus, 1980, Lessem, 1986). As such they have been considered rather inborn than learnable qualities, with the exception of those which should have been better named as competencies (the distinction of these concepts will be elaborated below).

The gist of the discussion laid in personality-involvement in the entrepreneur's role with regard to the fact that the entrepreneurship career tends to be a result of individual's voluntary, conscious and considered decision (although it might be heavily influenced by external factors such as rate of unemployment etc.- see Reynolds, 2005, for details), it seems that in relation to entrepreneurial experience the involvement of the personality traits might be a significant factor in comparison with other occupational activities.

'Traits approach' is followed by e.g. Smith et al. (2003:48), who clearly realise the difference between entrepreneurs and managers, and observe "greater levels of self-efficacy, higher-order need strength, readiness to change interest in innovation, machiavellism (competitive aggression) and need for achievement than did managers [who] on the other hand showed higher control rejection (lower autonomy)". Kirby (2002) mentions studies of Lessem (1986) and Timmons (1985), Carland (1982) Gibb (1996) and specifies characteristics typical for the entrepreneurs as follows: risk-taking ability, need for achievement, locus of control, desire for autonomy, deviancy¹¹, creativity - opportunism and intuition.

Already in 1989, Gartner (1989:48-57) recommends abandoning of 'trait approach' studying as "inadequate to explain the phenomenon of entrepreneurship" and inclines to acceptance of "behavioural approach" pointing out that "the research on the entrepreneur should focus on what the entrepreneur does and not who the entrepreneur is". Gartner's opinion is that the most distinguishing component of the entrepreneurs, comparing to the rest of population, the creation of the enterprise/organisation is being somehow missed in up-to-date research.

In agreement with Gartner, Reynolds and Day (2006:584) had designated the trait theories as 'naïve', "not sufficiently reliable to act as a predictor of entrepreneurial capability and lacking a coherent theoretical underpinning", preferring the

¹¹ Derived from De Vries concept of entrepreneurial behaviour being driven by negative characteristics and childhood negative reminiscences

behavioural approaches as more elaborated but point at the difficulty separating the “valid traits from their behavioural counterparts”(op.cit.).

Mc Kenzie (2007) criticises Gartner’s approach for restricting the phenomena of entrepreneurship just to the business environment, but similarly, on the basis of Venkataraman’s (1997) domain definition¹², supported by Reynolds, Hay and Camp’s (1999) research strategy, proposes paying an attention to individual actions. “Entrepreneurship involves individuals and groups of individuals seeking and exploiting economic opportunity” (McKenzie, 2007:3). With regard to earlier described situation in the Czech Republic, McKenzie’s definition characterises especially aptly entrepreneur’s functioning in ‘coordinated market economy’ (Hall and Soskice, 2003) consisting mainly of discovering the new market opportunities which could not be the seized in former regime.

Gerber (2004:31) enlarges McKenzie’s definition and suggests that the entrepreneur is a person who a) sets up a business which meets the established criteria and b) on the basis of a business plan chooses a subject and form of their enterprise, but then, in order to define the entrepreneur in more detail, comes back to the trait approach saying that the entrepreneur should be a strong, single-minded personality, who possesses the ability to lead people towards the set goal.

It is apparent that the entrepreneurial research partly moves in a circle where the traits and competencies are the main concepts defining the entrepreneur and are used as supporting, explaining or as a base for each other.

Although the term competence/competency started to be used within entrepreneurial research and the discussion on competences/competencies occupies the widest scope of contemporary literature on entrepreneurial education, no united terminology had been commonly accepted regarding the meaning/content of the terms ‘competence’ and ‘competency’. These terms present a special linguistic issue in Czech language where the two expressions are translated in the same way. Similarly, the authors writing in English often do not discern between these terms and with the plurals being ‘competences’ or ‘competencies’ they are easy to get interchanged in the process of writing.

¹² Venkataraman’s (1997) characterizes an entrepreneurship as a field investigating the possible opportunities, describing the individuals taking an advantage of these and the consequences of such opportunity taking

Competence is often being used as ‘ability, appropriateness, and qualification’. Hroník (2007) recognises the need to specify these concepts in order to work practically on the competencies development and assumes that it is necessary to distinct the ‘competence’ and ‘competency’. In his view, by competence “we understand the formulation of work standards...where the qualification presumptions without which the work performance is substandard are formulated” while competency he defines as “the ways by which the performance is achieved” Hroník (2007:62-63). Clearly, the competence is an objective criterion, while the competency represents the subjective way of coping with defined standard.

Practically in accordance with Hroník’s approach Veteška and Tureckiová (2008:27) state that the people become ‘competent’ “in a moment when they manage to connect effectively ‘the source’ [information, knowledge] with the situation they find themselves in or with the tasks they are supposed to deal with, and perform appropriately”. They also distinguish different kinds of key competences¹³ which should be already developed within the basic education and rank “the orientation in basic activities needed to implement and realize the [entrepreneurial] prospectus, understanding of the gist, aim and risk of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial thinking development” among ‘work competences’ (Veteška and Tureckiová, 2008:145)

Slightly different and practically based approach to competences/competencies comes from Drucker, ‘the management guru’, who emphasises the individual self-discipline on the way to the main competence- effectiveness by saying that “No reason exists for anyone normally talented not to attain the capability in performing any practical procedure. The master level...can be unattainable...but for the attainment of effectiveness only the basic capability is needed” (Drucker, 2008:45). It is necessary to note that the focus of Drucker’s work was in the managerial area and not particularly in entrepreneurs and their ventures, but considering some authors’ conviction that the managers are at least partly the entrepreneurs (Kuratko and Montagno, 1989, Coulson-Thomas, 2000) and “entrepreneurial competencies are related to managerial competencies” (Man, Lau and Snape, 2008:258), Drucker’s

¹³ Ranking of competences according to Veteška and Tureckiová, 2008: 1) Learning competences, 2) Problems solving competences, 3) Communication competences, 4) Social and personal competences, 5) Civic competences, 6) Work competences

approach, similarly to Gartner's, implies that individual efforts and activities, rather than personal characteristics, should be noticed- and that the sufficient level can be attained by each individual.

The competencies in a sense the action-based qualities have been clustered by e.g. Florin, Karri and Rossiter (2007:15) in order to create an operational tool of 'entrepreneurial drive': "an individual perception of the desirability and feasibility to proactively pursue opportunities and creatively respond to challenges, tasks, needs and obstacles in innovative ways". Rauch and Frese (2000), studying the competencies leading to an entrepreneurial success, explicitly support the view of competencies (competency) expressed by individual actions and behaviour in particular situation. Approvingly to above cited Gartner's (1989) recommendation they concentrate on actions performed in particular situations, claiming that "there is no success without actions...determined by goals and strategies" (ibid:104). The relevant question arising from this claim with regard to the objectives of this study is whether the education could be the factor diverting the individual to right actions leading to an entrepreneurial success.

Man, Lau and Snape (2008:258) clustered competencies to create the base for the concept of competitiveness and to determine how it affects the long-term performance of small enterprises. On the grounds of the entrepreneurial competencies and competitiveness construct, they conceptualized "three principal entrepreneurial tasks...1) forming the competitive scope of the firm; 2) creating the organizational capabilities; and 3) setting goals and taking action."

In summary, the delimitation of difference between the terms competency/competence clearly sets 'competence' as a theoretical frame- a demanded standard, which is in reality presented by 'competency'- the concrete actions and behaviour directed to a closest approach to formulated standards.¹⁴ The competences (competence) relate to either to characteristics of personality/desired state of things while competencies (competency) are connected to action. Both competences and

¹⁴ These standards can be expressed as minimal or as optimal, depending on the level of accuracy required (see Hronik, 2007a, 2007b).

competencies have been used in entrepreneurial research to characterize an entrepreneur in the most precise way.

The former research area, focused solely on entrepreneurial competences (Timmons, 1986, Carland, 1982, Whiting 1988, Solomon and Winslow 1988, Vries, 1977, Brockhaus, 1980, Lessem, 1986) had been enlarged and the contemporary studies use the action component of competencies largely, partly following Gartner's recommendations and partly developing the other concepts (Florin, Karri and Rossiter, 2007, Man, Lau and Snape, 2008,). Therefore, the competencies (competency) logically tend to be more specific and to match one competence various competencies may be applied.

Therefore, the competencies seem to be a suitable concept for qualitative, interpretive research within Doc 3, where the separate actions can be commented on, explained and consequently eventually ranked as matching particular competence. If used within qualitative survey in Doc 4, their extent would have to be limited; however, they might be used as an additional or alternative component. Competences, if clearly defined as more general terms, are usable within qualitative research where the space for verifying the meaning of the answer is limited.

The operational definition of entrepreneur for the purposes of this research will be derived from abovementioned Man, Lau and Snape's (2008:258) framework where entrepreneurs' tasks, representing particular entrepreneurial competences- required standards, describe the gist of entrepreneurs functioning in a concise way. However, the objective criteria have been transformed into interpretive (subjective) descriptions of entrepreneurial competencies (competency as a real action) in accordance with the intended interpretive character of this work.

Therefore, the entrepreneur, in this work, will be the person who 1) establishes an enterprise within the market (forming the competitive scope of the firm), 2) provides and manages the sources for enterprise functioning (creating the organizational capabilities) and 3) schemes out the enterprise goals and actively pursues those (setting goals and taking action). By the way of these activities implementation the potential presence of entrepreneurial competences (competence) is being proved/ disproved.

Mainly because of Kirby's (2002) comprehensive analysis of approaches leading to entrepreneur's specification combined with the focus on educational programs and the initial suggestions for those, his paper is considered one of the most relevant regarding this work's objectives; and essential in order to create reference points for the participants to express their point of view (i.e. to evaluate the influence the particular type of education could have on them).

Kirby's (ibid.: unpagged conference paper) delimitation of "behaviours" that can be learned, determined on the base of works of Lessem (1986) and Timmons (1985), follows. Considering Hronik's (2007a, 2007b) approach, these would equate to the competences (competence) in the sense of standard/desired/presumed qualities:

- Total commitment, determination and perseverance
- Drive to achieve and grow
- Orientation to goals and opportunities
- Taking initiative and personal responsibility
- Veridical awareness and a sense of humour
- Seeking and using feed back
- Internal locus of control
- Tolerance of ambiguity, stress and uncertainty
- Calculated risk-taking and risk-sharing
- Low need for status and power
- Integrity and reliability
- Decisiveness, urgency and patience
- Learning from failure
- Team builder and hero maker

Contrary to Timmons (1986a), Hronik claims that some of those, closely connected with individual's personality- cannot be acquired by the process of learning/education/development easily. However, he adds that "based on the... various experiments we can claim that quite often the personal traits are being ascribed far bigger influence than they really have" (Hronik, 2008:124).

As said above, the subjective concept of competency will be central to following Doc 3 where the entrepreneurs will have a chance to describe and comment on their concrete actions. Later, these competencies mentioned within the interview will be

assigned to particular items of competences as by Kirby (2002) and possibly used as reference/example points in a questionnaire of Doc 4, where the transfer to objective items will be inevitable.

Not only current sources had been used in this chapter due to its effort to show the development of approaches applied in order to characterise the entrepreneur as precisely as possible since the second half of last century (especially Gartner's, Lessem's and Timmons' contribution (represented e.g. by the articles in *Journal of General Management* or *Industrial and Commercial Training*) which shifted both approving and disapproving authors to further activity in the field. The journal sources came from *Organizational Dynamics*, *Small Business Economics*, *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, *British Journal of Management*, *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*, *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* and together with conference paper by Kirby (2002) and the books by Czech authors' (Hronik, 2007a, 2007b, Veteška and Tureckiová, 2008) represented the key to coping with the terminology issues and specify the object of this work- the competency- with the most precision the character of term allows.

5.2.2 Knowledge

Probably due to the rather complicated and complex character of the 'knowledge' concept, the entrepreneurial research, with an exception of a few studies, rather avoids detailed elaboration of the term, and similarly to the traits, behaviour and competencies concepts many authors use the term in rather vague and abstract way when studying the influence of education on possible entrepreneur's success.

However, one of the exceptions is the work of Nonaka and Toyama (2003) who, on the basis of the works of Nelson, 1991, Leonard-Barton, 1992, 1995, Quinn, 1992, Drucker, 1993, Grant, 1996, and Sveiby, 1997, elaborated the knowledge in an original way using "dialectic thinking" to define the knowledge creation as a "transcending process through which entities...transcend the boundary of the old into a new self by acquiring new knowledge...in knowledge creation one tries to see the entire picture of reality by interacting with those who see the reality from other angles, that is sharing their context...knowledge is created through the synthesis of contradictions, instead of finding an optimal balance between contradictions" (Nonaka, Toyama, 2003:3). Writing this, the authors point out at the human ability to

compile the possible discrepancies coming out from the daily experience into the complex entity- the knowledge. They also distinguish between tacit knowledge bound to the common daily routine and explicit knowledge, coming from “discursive consciousness” which rationalises and drives individual actions (ibid). The distinction of ‘tacit’ and ‘distributed’ knowledge has also been mentioned by Kilpatrick (1997:264) explaining that the distribution of knowledge is proceeded through people, tools and technologies by learning- “the process of seeking, moulding and transmitting knowledge for a purpose”. Kilpatrick’s concept of knowledge represents the universal functional approach, concentrating on expressing the abstract character of knowledge in seizable manner while Nonaka and Toyama provide a more complex definition promoting flexible character of knowledge, absorbing the contradictions between daily episodes (explicit knowledge) and theory (tacit knowledge) in organisations.

Alvesson (2001), after the evaluation of existing knowledge concepts (Nonaka, 1994, Scarborough, 1995, Spender 1996) states that in general, “knowledge- at least in the context of the business world and of management studies- is normally treated as a functional resource, representing a ‘truth’ or at least something instrumentally useful on a subject matter and /or a set or principles or techniques for dealing with material or social phenomena” (Alvesson, 2001:865). Based on social constructivism, he brings knowledge concept closer to practical use in business environment where it apparently represents the ambiguous mean of reality presentation. In contrary to prevailing functionalist concepts of knowledge (Alvesson mentions Abbott in Sharma, 1997) he denies the prominent, positively perceived position of organisational knowledge, claiming that unobjectively presented and accepted knowledge leads to “ignorance and uncritical attitudes”. In fact, Alvesson goes further that Nonaka and Toyama (ibid.) pointing not only to contradictories individuals face to, but also to the consequences of perception intensively influenced in favour of explicit knowledge.

The knowledge gaining process involves both active involvement and passive reception- partial insight into this problematic offers Hubik (2007:58), in his essay on alternative non-formal education, concluding that we witness “the separation of knowledge or the known from the knower and education ...become literally an object of market exchange”. The post-modern knowledge concept therefore gains a new dimension being accepted as a commodity and traded with the aid of various

information channels. In the practical business/entrepreneurial environment the understanding of knowledge generally corresponds with this conclusion as can be assumed from the number of companies trading exclusively with knowledge (e.g. various advisory companies) and their rates which equal the value ascribed to getting the 'right' information.

Concurrently, although from the functionalist perspective, the concept of knowledge as a commodity had been indirectly expressed by Coulson-Thomas, writing that knowledge acquired by the means of "education, training and development" should be perceived...as a source of incremental external revenues...there is enormous potential for income generation, higher margins and knowledge entrepreneurship." (Coulson-Thomas, 2000:85).

Knowledge as an immaterially conceived commodity supports Ferrante (2005:170), finding the positive correlation between 'entrepreneurial ability' and formal education and mentioning education and training being a source of what 'entrepreneurial human capital', in other words, the specific human capital related to entrepreneurial experience (see chapter 6).

In summary, knowledge is a structure built gradually on previously created foundations. From the perspective of this work, the (formal/informal/non-formal) educational experience represents both the source and the facilitator of entrepreneurial career, i.e. the mean of enlargement in relation to knowledge. Even in case of improbable absence of formal and non-formal programmes, the informal education would always play the role as (see chapter 4.2.2.) "almost any activity can be seen to involve learning" (Gorard, Fevre, Rees, 1999:437). The links to entrepreneurial functioning (see previous chapter) bears especially Nonaka and Toyama's objective concept, emphasizing the synthesis of contradictions (ibid.). The ability to come to terms with the unlinked, contradictory and unbalanced systems is indirectly being expressed and the importance of innovative mental processes, so important for the entrepreneurs, is doubtlessly implied. The distinction of contradictory tacit and explicit knowledge gaining seems to be rooted in its (un)intentionality and (un)consciousness. In this context, the particular types of education have different qualities.

Referring to specifications in chapter 2 and 4 respectively, it is possible to assume that formal education can be both purposeful and non-purposeful, but is always

conscious, non-formal education is always conscious and purposeful and informal education can be both conscious and unconscious, purposeful (self-education) and non-purposeful.¹⁵ These facts have to be taken into account when constructing the research tools as the entrepreneurs, from the position of a research subject, may not realise and recognise their particular episodes as learning/knowledge gaining.

However, the chosen interpretative strategy in following work should enable the researcher to tackle the discrepancies in given evidence within the interview and make clear the issues potentially misunderstood by the respondents.

Having stated (chapter 2.4.) that education represents a potential facilitating or performance improving component, enabling the individual to base an existence on entrepreneurial activity, with regard to entrepreneurial success, in this work being connected with objective material criteria (chapter 5.2.4.), the operational concept of knowledge for following Doc 3 must reflect these concepts. Therefore, knowledge will be conceived as a commodity of complex nature possessing both immaterial (enlarging human capital) and material (enabling the achievement of entrepreneurial success) value gained through the process of formal/informal/non/formal education and consequently used in entrepreneurial practice.

The subjective perception of both material and immaterial components of knowledge identified within in Doc 3 will create a base for comparison with abovementioned objective views ((Nonaka, Toyama, 2003:3) and the creation of relevant reference points for quantitative research within Doc 4.

Given the character of knowledge concepts crossing the inter-fields boundaries, both the sources from economically and sociologically/psychologically oriented journals have been used, among others e.g. *Knowledge Management Research and Practice*, *Human Relations* and *Czech Sociological Review*.

¹⁵ Consequently, the difficult operationalization of informal education concept (chapter 2.2.2.) makes the research on informal education extremely demanding (see Gorard, Fever, Rees, 1999).

5.2.3 Skills

The dictionary defines skills as ‘a disposition acquired by learning, leading to appropriate, fast and effective performance of the particular activity’. The research into entrepreneurial field often starts with the initial effort to differentiate the skills from the concepts of traits and competence/competency.

Madsen, Neergard and Ulhoi (2003:427) mention Kiker’s “relevant distinction between skills and the person ... skills require prior experience and continuous maintenance” and conclude that the combination of education and work experience are the vital components of human capital.¹⁶ Authors assess the entrepreneur’s chance to succeed in the business concluding that previous employment experience and the rate of human capital gained from such experience constitutes the most profound ground to business success. Presumably, either the skills of employee do not differ that much from entrepreneurial ones or the employee’s skills do play a vital role in developing entrepreneurial skills.

However, the entrepreneurial skills are sometimes being commuted for competences - e.g. Carton, Hoffer and Meeks (1998: unpagged) define entrepreneurs as “individuals that have the skills to seek out and recognize opportunities in the environment and that have the propensity to act.” The study concentrates on the entrepreneur’s skills from the functional perspective of improving company’s performance; nevertheless, the description of entrepreneurial qualities clearly corresponds with the description of competences (competence) rather than advertised skills.

Interpretively grounded, Roodt’s (2005:18) paper underlines “technical skills, perseverance, communication skills, leadership, innovation, pro-activity, financial skills and information seeking skills” as the most important for self-employed individuals. However, while ranking the communication, financial and information seeking skills into the ‘skills’ category is rather apparent and the possibility to learn or develop these is usually not the point of argument, it is not exactly easy to decide whether for example perseverance, innovation or pro-activity should be ranked among the ‘skills’ or even the competences (competence- in the sense of expected behaviour to fit into particular role), especially when these terms are hardly ever clearly

¹⁶ See chapter 6 for more details on individual’s capital distinctions

conceptualized within the particular research.¹⁷ Basically, what Roodt designates as skills has been (in some cases) previously called ‘traits’ (perseverance in Rauch and Frese, 2000), competencies (pro-activity in Florin, Karri and Rossiter, 2007) or ‘characteristics’ and/or ‘behaviours’ in some studies (innovation and leadership in Kirby, 2002, Jo and Lee, 1996, respectively). Despite the undisputable contribution of abovementioned researches, involving extensive analyses of entrepreneurial qualities, these examples confirm the unclear and disunited terminology base within whole entrepreneurial education field.

From individual/employee’s point of view, Gordon, Morgan and Ponticell (1995:53) emphasize thinking skills as those leading to “employee success” (writing about workforce and productivity issues) and rank skills development among the ‘workforce education triad’ (besides consisting of education and training). However, by identifying the small-group tutorials and peer tutoring- the non-formal and informal education strategies- as the most effective ways of skills development and enhancement, they presume the conclusions of Johnson-Hunter (2004:109) for the entrepreneurial environment.

Based on Madsen, Neergard and Ulhoi’s (2003) clear and objective approach to skills distinction, it is possible to assume that skills are connected with repeated activities enabling the enhancement and development of particular ability. With a reference to competencies (competency) definition in chapter 5.1.1., the skills are, in fact, enhanced components of competencies- established ways of coping with the demands of entrepreneurial functioning/business running, enabling an individual to act and behave in an effective and appropriate way, based on the previous experience with the same/similar task or situation.

Therefore, considering the objectives of this work, the skills represent entrepreneur’s ability to perform concrete tasks related to enterprise running routinely, on the basis of previous experience and repeated performance of these. Individually identified and assessed skills will be lined up with competencies/competences within Doc 3 and possibly used in following quantitative research as the clarifying/reference items.

¹⁷ Nonaka and Toyama’s studies of knowledge or Hronik’s (2007a) studies based on clearly stated competence/competency definition are rather exceptional in this sense.

Based on the abovementioned sources mainly from *Journal of Small Business Development, Management Dynamics, Training & Development* and Hronik's (2007a) work, comparing various skills concepts outlined, it is possible to assume that, speaking of entrepreneurs, the skills can be perceived as a learned behaviour patterns which previously brought an expected result and whose using is desirable in order to attain the result in a faster and more effective way which is undeniably relevant issue in [not only] the entrepreneurial environment.

5.2.4 Information

The information is defined in four ways¹⁸ as a) a piece of news/message, b) differentiating stimulation, c) stimulus which enables discerning, respectively deciding between alternatives and d) reduction of the uncertainty caused by the transferred message. All the points indirectly imply that each piece of information means a contribution to knowledge base. The objective of this work is to find out the sources (in a form of formal/non-formal or informal education) of relevant information for the entrepreneurial functioning (at the first stage of the enterprise).

Information as such has not been used much in up to date relevant research/literature, with a few exceptions of qualitative studies (Johnson-Hunter, 2004, Křížková, 2007) when the entrepreneurs have been asked to identify the most valuable sources of information related to their enterprise activities. The conclusion of these were in favour of informal (closely followed by non-formal) education sources.

Seemingly contrary to abovementioned interpretive studies, Ucbasaran, Westhead and Wright (2008) objectively anchored findings are in support of formal information sources, predicating that “entrepreneurs reporting higher information search intensity identified significantly more business opportunities”, however, while publications as an information source increased the opportunities identification potential, the “personal, professional and business” sources did not show such ability.

The necessity to distinguish between the terms ‘formal/informal source’ and ‘formal/informal education source’ ensues from two paragraphs above. With regard to two forms of informal education (see chapter 4.2.2.) the research outcomes can be

¹⁸ Hartl, P., Hartlová, H. (2000) *Psychologický slovník*. Praha: Portál. ISBN: 80-7178-303-X

interpreted in very different ways. Although Ucbasaran, Westhead and Wright (2008) identified publications (formal information source) as an entrepreneur's potential increasing factor, the character of studying these might be informal (e.g. aimed self-education). In this sense, the formal information source as such can represent an informal education source. This illustrates that the identification of the entrepreneurially useful educational sources differs significantly in dependence on concepts and research tools used for the sources identification- seemingly contradictory conclusions might actually mean the compliance of research findings. Therefore, it follows that in this work it is not the sources that represent a category/an object of research by themselves, but the way (type of education) the sources are being perceived and noted.

As to information processing (i.e. knowledge building), the difference in a gained knowledge level achieved by recognising and using consciously your inborn strengths have been pointed out by Miller (1999:30), identifying the natural entrepreneur's way of thinking with "taking in factual, literal information...sort it quickly, editing as they go...", but lacking the assessment of social aspects of situation. This concurs with the opinions of Garravan and O' Cinneide (1994:10, see pg. 53) who recommend for the entrepreneurial education programs to concentrate on practical activities but "encourage [the engagement of] feelings, attitudes and values". However, lower level of entrepreneur's social sensitivity implied by these studies should not be taken for granted but considered in wider frame of entrepreneurially profitable decision-making process (see Baron and Markman, 2003).

In summary, in the context of this work, it seems appropriate to perceive the information as a basic building stone of knowledge (contribution to the knowledge base) gained through formal/informal/non-formal educational source, processed and (in compliance with interpretive approach to information- Křížková, 2007 and Johnson-Hunter, 2004), assessed as useful by particular entrepreneur on their way to entrepreneurial success.

Despite the limited scope of literature related to entrepreneurial education using the concept of information in a pronounced manner, the sources from business journals - e.g. *Small Business Economics* and *Strategy & Leadership*- have been used together with the framing documents in a form of abovementioned qualitative studies.

5.3 The Concepts of Entrepreneurial Success and their Usage in Current Entrepreneurial Research: Literature focused on entrepreneurial success/failure

The previous part mapped the approaches to defining the entrepreneur's main traits and competencies, which activity is often connected with the efforts to determine the factors for entrepreneur's successful functioning and respective possible failure. The most significant contribution to this field of research in the European area on a large scale has been made by Lussier (1995, Lussier and Pfeifer, 2001) who investigated the validity of success prediction model developed on the base of U.S. data in Central Eastern Europe, specifically Croatia.

Generally, there are two ways the success is perceived within the entrepreneurial research:

5.3.1 Success specified by the time the enterprise exists (i.e. is able to overcome certain problematic challenges connected with particular stage of the enterprise life)

The partial inevitability of such an approach had been confirmed by Rogoff, Lee and Suh (2004:368) who, studying the attributions of failure/success, stressed that "there is no single agreed-upon definition of 'business success' or 'business failure. Research...generally uses continued viability or longevity as a surrogate for success." In the managerial environment, the values of viability and longevity are often being substituted by position and salary achieved (see e.g. Simpson, Tuck, Bellamy, 2004, Gerber, 2004, Koontz, Weihrich, 1993) and within the entrepreneurial environment the financial success itself is the object of studies (e.g. in relation to social competencies in Baron and Markman, 2003, in relation to knowledge by Sun, 2004).

Taken from this perspective, there is an open field for the researcher to define the success according to the purpose of the research and set up the criteria related to economic situation of the enterprise and the number of years it is functioning on the market. This materially oriented approach to success prevails in former studies, at the beginning focused (especially in US) on differences in educational levels between social classes (Douglas, 1976), and these days is continued in works of Robinson

(1994), Penning (2005), Simpson, Tuck and Bellamy (2004) and in Czech Republic Korbel (2005), although the last two references relate to the managers.

The causes of entrepreneurial success evidently are the object of scientific scrutiny, but there is no united view on the issue. Some researchers see the main success factor in individual competencies (see also pg. 22), like Rogers (2008) emphasising the perseverance (although it is quite arguable whether this one is an inborn trait or whether it is 'learnable' - but according to Drucker, 1993, 2002, 2008, Kirby, 2002 it is), Ellis (2008), mentioning mental agility, common sense and creativity, some attribute success to cultural/social/human capital (see pg. 42 for more details) and/or other learnable skills (e.g. Gilligan, 2008 mentioning also business infrastructure and governance).

However, in connection with entrepreneurial success and with regard to entrepreneurial research objectives it should be noted that "there is a notable paucity of research that relates to failed nascent entrepreneur or to those who had abandoned their efforts of setting up a new business...asking similar questions from comparable samples of respondents often results in mutually supporting and reinforcing outcomes." (Matlay, 2006:709). Also Lussier and Pfeifer (2001) mention the difficulty in finding the appropriate sample of unsuccessful (in his case, bankrupt) entrepreneurs. Therefore, the current research findings mirror the entrepreneurs who are currently functioning on the market, but they can not be related to individuals who had given up their efforts- it is necessary to have this fact in mind when dealing with competencies as a basis for success.

5.3.1.1 First stage of the enterprise

How long does it last and which problems are mostly connected with this stage?

The first stage of the enterprise chapter has been intentionally placed here (under the success section) by reason of success concept, specified in sub-chapter 5.2.1., related to particular stage of enterprise.

Phelps, Adams and Bessant (2007:4-6) comment that "despite the considerable efforts, it is still unclear how many stages there are in organisation life- cycle and precisely what it is that constitutes a stage...overall, current thinking appears to have moved away from the idea of fixed linear sequence". The discussion is therefore open

to various concepts described below which have abandoned the thought of continual development, admitting the re-occurrence of some issues within various stages and, contrary to prevailing direction of former studies (see Phelps, Adams and Bessant, 2007, for comprehensive overview of enterprise life-cycle literature), specifying the particular stages through specific problems appearing at these stages of company development. Abetti (2000, in Phelps, Adams and Bessant, 2007) based his model of enterprise stages on the assumption that each stage is terminated by a crisis. He identifies crisis as a factor shifting the company to the next stage by the means of being dealt with and divides nine initial years of enterprise into three stages when each stage lasts about three years. Hronik (2007a) partly takes over this concept and classifies five stages of the enterprise characterised by a specific cause of growth and crisis in each stage. The growth due to the creativity and the crisis due to the informal leadership are the specifics of the first stage of the enterprise.

The first phase of a business establishment is undeniably the most crucial one for the company's further development and direction. The term 'nascent entrepreneur' is used by current researchers (Shaver et al., 2001, Kirby, 2002) for the individuals starting their business and the existing studies both from the Czech Republic (*Factors of Business Success, 2005*) and abroad (Shaver et al., 2001, Hoy, 2006) often focus on the motives for starting a business and the problems perceived as the most poignant. Shaver et al. (2001:unpaged, online source) explain that "new businesses are not created either instantly, or by accident", mentioning "a number of studies of the new venture creation process [that] describe individuals persisting at a variety of activities over a period of months or years, in order to achieve the creation of a new firm...in theoretical terms, new venture creation is an intentional act that involves repeated attempts to exercise control over the process, in order to achieve the desired outcome". However, the period that could be characterized as the first stage of the enterprise differs distinctly in particular studies.

Mehralizadech and Sajady (2005, unpaged conference paper) who gathered the information from Reynolds and Miller, 1992 Sullivan et al., 1998 and Lussier, 1996, write that "creating a new business is a process fraught with difficulty and failure in the first twelve months". In accordance with this prevailing opinion Shaver et al. (2001) used as the criterion for nascent entrepreneurs up to twelve months of various activities connected to business, but the entrepreneurs having the profit sufficient to cover the expenses and entrepreneur's wage in last three months had been disqualified

from the research as they have been considered behind the initial phase. This approach implies that the first stage of the enterprise is necessarily connected with the financial instability which is confirmed by various expert opinions and studies on the most problematic areas during the business set up (Sage, 1993, Terpstra and Olsen, 1993, *Factors of Business Success, 2005-2006*). Shim et al. (2000 in Phelps, Adams and Bessant, 2007) describe five stages of the enterprise and state that the problems of business resources, entrepreneurial talent, marketing and sales “diminish with the progression” through stages.

The first stage of the enterprise is, within the academic research, often related to motivations and reasons for business start up (Křížková, 2007, Shaver et al, 2001)¹⁹, however, this field is far too broad and deserves a separate literature review.

The desired direction of the future research related to the intended aim of this work has been expressed by Dobbs and Hamilton (2007:296) writing that “Empirical work should seek to explain the periodicity of growth and the role that learning plays in the idiosyncratic development of small businesses”. That implies that the shifts to the next stage are accompanied by learning and that new a) information, b) knowledge, c) skills and d) competencies acquired during the particular stage of the enterprise are substantial for the further growth of the company.

On the other hand, nascent entrepreneurs, in the process of market position building, might have limited view and access to relevant sources of information and therefore, the factor of social/cultural capital could be presumed to come into play during the initial stage when ‘learning by experience’ just starts to take place, although the experience from the potential previous occupational activities might appear similarly substantial- Madsen, Neergaard and Ulhøi (2003) consider the previous career

¹⁹ As for the reasons and motivation to start one’s own business, Shaver et al.(2001) point out that according to some experts (e.g. Malle, 1999), stressing the role of the individual responsibility in business starting process, the nascent entrepreneur’s activities should be “reason-based” not “cause based”. That indirectly implies that the entrepreneurs’ motivation for starting the business should source from internal motives (usually referred to as pull factors, e.g. by Krizkova, 2007:88) and external factors (push factors) should only have a supporting role at most. This presumption practically corresponds with the fact that among the reasons for business start-up stated by the entrepreneurs in the Czech Republic ‘being one’s own boss’, ‘make more money’ and ‘seeking a new challenge’ occupy the first places (*Factors of Business Success, 2005-2006*).

experience (combined with educational level) being more important than personal traits.

From the perspective of this work, the length of the first stage of the enterprise will be derived mainly from abovementioned interpretive study of Shaver et al. (2001) where the start-up period is determined to last for one year. This conclusion has been confirmed by Mehralizadech and Sajady (2005) overview of works identifying the company's phases. The intended phenomenological strategy in Doc 3 should help to identify further the specific problems of Czech entrepreneurs connected with this first stage of enterprise.

5.3.2 Success as a concept that accentuates the profit of material or immaterial value, usually in connection with internal individual feeling of contentment or appreciation of such a profit

Lubasová (2007:11) states that “We can consider successful a man who meets the expectations of given society with regards to external factors and at the same time attains the feeling of inner fulfilment which makes him/her feel content”.

It is apparent that this concept of success emphasises the momentary, unabiding and partly subjective character of entrepreneurial success and it is quite difficult to subject it as such to objective scientific investigation. However, the reference to external factors gives a researcher an opportunity to set some concrete criteria based on the perception of success prevailing in particular society. The subjective perspective mirroring this approach is also visible in papers of Wellman (2006), Higgs (1999), Rauch and Frese (2000), determining the influences of personality, human capital and environment as crucial.

In this connection, one should not miss the contribution of attribution theory used at first by Freedman (1984), followed most recently by Lee, Rogoff, and Suh, (2004) who in agreement with Reiss et al. (1981), Shaver et al. (2001) and Schinker, Pontari and Christopher (2001) confirmed the presence of self-serving bias- while success is mostly being attributed to internal factors and abilities, the causes of non-success the entrepreneurs usually see in external factors they could not influence. The authors make the recommendations for entrepreneurial educational curricula in order to point out at and prevent those attitudes saying that “education that moves the locus of control away from external factors and to the entrepreneur in fact may be empowering for entrepreneurs” (Lee, Rogoff, and Suh, 2004:374).

5.3.3 Success oriented entrepreneurial literature/research in the Czech Republic- Factors of Business Success

Being the part of large European Union project, The *Factors of Business Success* survey is valuable as the only one in the Czech Republic focused entirely and straight on the entrepreneurs- by the means of stratified sampling 3000 respondents were chosen and sent the questionnaire. Despite the title, its concern laid mainly in determining the relationship between the functioning/surviving of the entrepreneurs in the Czech Republic and the variables – age, educational level and prior entrepreneurship experience. Success had therefore been indirectly defined by the viability and the period of three years functioning on the market, in accordance with the first approach to defining success (see pg. 24, point a). The outcomes for the Czech Republic evaluated the achieved certified education with regard to entrepreneurial activity²⁰, perceived problems during the initial stage of the enterprise²¹ and the branch of business²². The most educated respondents also viewed their profitability in a better light and their plans for the future innovation of the business were braver than those of the remainder. These findings concur with Dobbs and Hamilton (2006:308) statement that “an owner who has attained a higher level of education is stated to be more motivated toward improving business performance due to their higher earnings expectation” and suggest the positive consequences of education for business profitability.

Disman (2000:291) writes aptly: while “qualitative survey helps us to understand the observed reality, quantitative survey tests the validity of this understanding”. In the light of the previous claim we can refer to the situation in the Czech Republic where the identification of the possible beneficial aspects of education stayed unexplored- we know to some extent what is happening in the entrepreneurial environment but [except for a ‘common sense’ explanations] do not have any closer indications why is it so.

²⁰ There was about 6 % more university educated individuals among the entrepreneurs than among the working population

²¹ The university graduates emphasised the problems connected with the customer’s relations establishment and dealing with the state institutions while the others accentuated the financial problems

²² There has been a prevalence of university graduates in real-estate business and the business that is not included in the Branch Classification of Economic Activities * OKEC according to Czech Statistical Office- it is necessary to notice that these excluded activities consist of professions like doctor, lawyer etc. and therefore the prevalence of university graduates is hardly any surprise

It is apparent that the chosen perspective of success gives the particular research the overall direction and that the first method of approach prevails in economy-focused studies while the second is typical for qualitative, partly psychologically oriented researches. Also, these two approaches do not necessarily overlap as a person who considers him/herself successful according to his/her internal perception does not have to meet the criteria set forth by/in accordance with the materially based approach.

5.3.4 Successful entrepreneur

It is crucial for each particular research study to define the success in a relevant and precise way in order to answer the research questions. The entrepreneur has been defined within chapter 5.1.1. as an individual who establishes an enterprise within the market, provides and manages the sources for enterprise functioning and schemes out the enterprise goals, actively pursuing those.

With regard to the objectives of this work, focusing on established entrepreneurs who have actually overcome the initial problems, not on the entrepreneur's success (or its perception) as such, it seems inevitable to accept the objective criteria even within the following interpretive frame of Doc 3. The interpretive concept of success based on individual assessment would not be sufficient at this point; the determination of clear and unified criteria for the respondents, i.e. the identification of the entrepreneurs who had overcome the first stage of enterprise problems, is not possible within an individually based perspective. Therefore, the author concentrates on the entrepreneur's current situation and the criteria set for the research participants mirror the objective, 'materially conceived' approach described in chapter 5.2.1.²³

The journal sources, inevitably mirroring the criticised homogeneity of research samples missing the unsuccessful entrepreneurs, served for outlining the entrepreneurial success concept, among others *Journal of Small Business Management, Education + Training, Entrepreneurship: Theory and practice* and *Journal of Business Venturing*. The debatable contribution of social capital to entrepreneurial success will be discussed later, as well as the educational influences which are the major topic of this work.

²³ The criteria have been set forth in Doc1 (pg. 10) which is an integral part of doctoral thesis.

5.4 Current educational programs and strategies- literature evaluating existing opportunities

The evaluation of educational programs and strategies are being conducted within one institution or one segment of educational system- e.g. universities, high schools, vocational education. By defining the areas where the lack of appropriate strategies is felt most, the authors are able to suggest the recommendations for the educational institutions and tutors. Nurmi and Passio's report on the entrepreneurship education at Finnish universities represents subjectively oriented qualitative research, concluding: "Teaching in universities is theoretical by nature and as entrepreneurship has been interpreted as more concrete; combining the two has been seen rather inappropriate" Nurmi and Passio (2007:57). This attitude, not exceptional in academic environment, can be regarded as a source of incompatibility between rather practical demands of entrepreneurial education (Johnson-Hunter, 2004, Sage, 1993, Mehralizadech, Sajady, (2005) and the current educational possibilities.

Academic stress on theoretical knowledge, often regarded as excessive and irrelevant regarding the actual entrepreneur's needs, is frequently cited as an example of unsuitability of current entrepreneurial education attitudes and programs, e.g. Matlay (2006), the expert substantially engaged in entrepreneurial education research, quoting Cox at al. (2002): "much of the entrepreneurship research to date has not provided empirical support for the claim that completion of formal courses in entrepreneurship and small business management increases the likelihood that an individual will start a business".

In contrast, referring to Webb et al.'s study, Garravan and O'Conneide (1994:17) claim that "there is evidence of a positive relationship between education and training programmes and the number of venture start-ups" but point out that "education and training activities have little to do with producing entrepreneurs in the strict sense...the terms 'entrepreneurship' and 'small business' are used interchangeably..." (ibid.).

The concrete absence of important activity had been expressed by Sage (1993:67) writing: "Education is a generally agreed upon correlate for success in business. More of it, and not necessarily in business specialities, tends to encourage success. Given the nature of the entrepreneurship as a problem solving activity, you would expect that more education would aid in the discipline of problem solving." Similarly,

Penning (2005:45) claims that “notwithstanding our belief in business education as a major contributing factor to business success we regard as its two cornerstones product knowledge and an understanding of consumers and customer service” and McLarty (2003), on the ground of research conducted among the English graduates, mentions marketing and finance as two most poignant areas where the formal knowledge base is being insufficient and must be corrected and improved by different strategies during the enterprise development.

In support of these opinions, Harris and Gibson (2008), Murdock (2008) and Huso (2007), focus mainly on additional entrepreneurship/business courses and their contribution to adding the knowledge which did not come through as a part of formal education.

Also, previously cited Lee, Rogoff, and Suh (2004) suggest an inclination of entrepreneurial education from ‘external’ theory to entrepreneurs themselves which should result in individuals taking the responsibility for their own entrepreneurial ventures.

All these opinions express some level of insufficiency of current formal education approaches. Generally, the critics of current entrepreneurship educational practices stress the following:

5.4.1 Prevailing theoretical preparation and insufficient connection of the education with the ‘real life’ situations resulting in graduates’ non-readiness for carrying their own business in practical way

This argument relates to abovementioned lack of focus on practical activities (Sage, 1993, Penning, 2005) connected with entrepreneurial activities. There is a range of them determined by various researchers- Murdock (2008) mentions the art of developing the skills and social network, Penning (2005) emphasises the communication, joint planning, joint appointments and resource sharing are designated missing by Thomas- Coulson’s (2000) in relation to managerial training, practical issues and steps connected with business start-up have been analysed by Bender et al. (1990) in order to conduct an adult training, Garravan (1994b) points out at communication, team-work and problem finding/solving and Griffiths (2008) emphasises leadership skills and/or social awareness.

Nash (2008:69) makes the things clearer by noting that “it is useful to make some distinction between training and education”. From this perspective, it is possible to regard training as belonging to non-formal, respectively informal, educational practices, while education should be perceived as formal, and therefore more theoretically focused.

Garravan and O’ Cinneide (1994:10), using Gibb’s (1987) work as a crucial document, are suggesting following components to be involved in business education in order to support flexibility and dealing with real-life situations:

- learning by doing
- encouraging the participants to find and explore wider concepts relating to a problem from a multi-disciplinary viewpoint
- helping participants to develop more independence from external sources of information and expert advice, and to think for themselves- thus giving ownership of learning
- encouraging use of feelings, attitudes and values outside of information, this, in general, will place greater emphasis on experience-based learning
- providing greater opportunity for building up of networks and contacts in the outside world linked with their learning focus
- helping participants to develop emotional responses when dealing with conflict situations, and encouraging them to make choices and commitments to actions in conditions of stress and uncertainty

Accordingly, Griffiths (2008) mentions students’ positive feedback to practice based exercises (training).

Casebow (2006:108) confirms that “the best learning takes place in real life, with real problems a real, people, and not in the classroom”, however, that is not the reason to give up trying to adjust the entrepreneurial education as much as possible to a needed practical activities - while the contribution of theoretical preparation gained by formal educational approaches should be admitted (Johnson-Hunter, 2004).

5.4.2 Lack of focus on development of innovative and creative thinking

This argument is inseparable from previous one- basically all the abovementioned authors pay attention to the lack of practical activities resulting in dealing with problems in practical, but innovative way. In this respect, Florin, Karri and Rossiter (2007) mention Seibert et al.'s (2001) finding that "challenging the status quo without offering innovative alternatives was detrimental to career success" and suggest that the education should be directed to support "socially desirable nonconformity" (Florin, Karri and Rossiter, 2007), in other words, innovation.

Kirby (2002, unpagged conference paper) states that "MBA students...underscore somewhat in terms of...their creativity" and recommends not only the change of curricula content but also the change of the teaching strategies, supporting the stimulation of "entrepreneurial imagination".

Shackleton- Jones (2008) recommends the new teaching strategies based on real-life situations simulation and, based on a psychological findings about the memory functioning, emphasizes the creation of emotional traces in memory which are supposed to make the events remarkable and memorable.

5.4.3 Indirect leading of the students into the position of employees rather than individual businessmen

This point has been mentioned in the Czech Republic in connection with the critique of educational programs in general- particularly Straková (in Nešpor and Večerník, 2006) mentions the graduates' lacking ability of flexible and innovative thinking and approaches.

The employee position is represented by the position of a manager in a business education context. In this context, Garravan and O' Cinneide (1994:6) point out the fact that "traditionally, entrepreneurship and management were treated as two very distinct disciplines", with managerial education comprising of more sophisticated and detailed programmes and entrepreneurial offering mainly "quick fix programmes" focused on e.g. budgeting and accountancy, giving a rather restricted and restricting view on the subjects. They also mention Gibb's (1987) and Gibb and Davies's (1981) conclusions that values promoted by educational system are "inimical to an entrepreneurial spirit" (ibid.). Roodt (1995) emphasises the creation of employment

for others as one of the entrepreneur's significant roles (in accordance with e.g. Lenko, 1995, Hisrich, Langam-Fox and Grant, 2007, Masurel et al., 2002) and points out 'growth-oriented' dispositions of entrepreneurs and the need to develop those with the aid of government and training institutions creating 'conducive' environment and enabling the necessary working experience already in schools, prior to starting own business.

Considering that the direction, i.e. perception of entrepreneurship as a future possibility, given to a particular individual by the educational institutions, might play a vital role in their decision on future professional activities, the abovementioned conclusions are not encouraging with regard to a country's possible competitive advantage, closely connected with entrepreneurship, as elaborated by Porter, 1990.

5.4.4 Entrepreneurship principles being taught just as a part of business courses while they should be a part of wider educational frame

This item had been initially determined by Knight (1987) and confirmed as an persistent problem these days by Nurmi and Passio (2007), Matlay (2006) and Ngwenya, (2007:305) who writes that "it is regrettable that, after leaving the academic arena, most graduates are unable to create employment on their own...".

Matlay (2006) points out at the interconnection of entrepreneurial education with the country's economic activity and "as an effective way to facilitate the transition of a growing graduate population from education and into work" (Matlay, 2006:705). Therefore the significance of promoting the entrepreneurial principles on some level as a part of common curricula seems to be implied, as well as the need to enable graduates to function as efficiently as possible in a given market conditions, both as self-employed individuals or paid employees.

Florin, Karri and Rossiter (2007:15) created the concept of "entrepreneurial drive defined the main 'attitude' of an entrepreneur as "an individual perception of the desirability and feasibility to proactively pursue opportunities and creatively respond to challenges, tasks, needs and obstacles in innovative ways" and point out that these cannot be taught in the classical way. "To develop initiatives throughout the business program to...foster entrepreneurial drive" (ibid. p.15) is apparently the way how to

acquire this attitude but unfortunately the authors do not suggest any particular initiatives.

In this regard, Nurmi and Passio (2007:56) comment “nowadays certain entrepreneurial features are recognised and desired also in salaried employment...it may not be advisable to marginalise entrepreneurship...to one, specific discipline only or make it a responsibility of a few people in a university”.

The issue is also connected with the intrapreneurial theme- Montagno and Kuratko’s (1989) study of intrapreneurial features required from managers accentuates the importance of innovative and creative behaviour within the organisation management (salaried position).

The main source of information for this chapter have been the journal articles summarising the related research outcomes published e.g. in *Education and Training*, *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management*, *The Business Review*, *Organizational Dynamics*, because these reflect the current situation and practices used in [entrepreneurial] education and the lacking qualities of it in an academic, critical but constructive manner, showing the possibilities for improvement in given field. Due to the lack of literature sources related to the Czech Republic environment in this particular area the author refers to chapter 4 for overall summary of available documents and current issues.

6 The Arguable Role of Social and Cultural Capital in Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneur’s Success Context

6.1 Are the entrepreneurs born or made?

Basically, to be born as an entrepreneur is an expression too wide for a detailed consideration- does it mean to possess the inborn skills which other people lack or just to be born to an entrepreneurship supporting family- ascribed personality traits or social and cultural capital?

The probe into the area of entrepreneurial education inevitably means to take some kind of stand to abovementioned questions. Firstly, the difference between closely

related and mostly used terms of cultural and social capital consists in the fact that social capital is being connected with membership (ascribed or acquired) in a particular social group while cultural capital relates more to the knowledge and skills an individual possesses (Bourdieu²⁴,1998).

Bourdieu's distinction sufficiently depicts the gist of these concepts for the purposes of this work, although the relativism of these concepts is often pointed at and other more complex ideas are being suggested- e.g. Waldstrom and Svendsen (2008) point out that the current definition of social capital includes both present and potential benefits induced by the existence of certain conditions and propose to unify various kinds of capital into one new concept of neo-capital. However, the efforts to express the complexity of abstract concepts of social/cultural capital in a new way are not offering clearer definitions or delimitations, more to the contrary. In my opinion, the dimensions of social and cultural capital as by Bourdieu (ibid.) - in a sense of ascribed or acquired capital- offer exact space for distinguishing between 'undeserved' assets/merits gained without entrepreneur's effort and the acquired assets, presumably, in the context of this work, connected with education (see Putnam's quote on pg. 56).

The term of human capital, used predominately in managerial research, refers more to the personal characteristics and skills, but unlike before mentioned entrepreneurial traits approaches (see chapter 5.1.1.) starts with clustering and assessment of these disregard their initial significance for entrepreneurship as such. After that an eventual entrepreneurial potential is being evaluated within the entrepreneurial, subjectively conceived, research (Caliendo, Kritikos, 2008, Ucbasaran, Westhead, Wright, 2008, Madsen, Neergaard, Ulhoi, 2003). However, by admitting the acquirement and potential development of human capital through education and work experience and due to its unclear delimitation, the human capital concept closely resembles the concept of acquired cultural capital. In my understanding, the difference lies in human capital connection with practical/professional skills and knowledge while cultural capital spans from professional to all the other fields of individual activities. Human capital, if described as characteristics, knowledge and skills potentially

²⁴ In fact, Bourdieu recognises three kinds of capital- social capital, cultural capital and economical capital (disposable economic resources).

gained/developed by an educational or working/professional process (Madsen, Neergard, Ulhoi, 2003), becomes, in fact, the object of this work. As an asset potentially gained by formal/non-formal/informal education (being further divided into operational concepts of competencies, knowledge, skills and information- see chapter 5) it represents the opposite of ascribed social/cultural capital as meant by Bourdieu (1998).

Madsen, Neergaard, Ulhoi (2003) do distinguish between general and specific human capital, however, there are differences in ranking the education into one of these categories- they mention e.g. Becker (1975) who regarded education as a part of general human capital in case it was not directly related to entrepreneurial activity, on the other hand, Cressy (1999, also mentioned by Madsen, Neergard, Ulhoi, 2003) sees educational and professional experiences as a specific human capital. Generally, human capital seems to bring under one roof the concepts of social capital, knowledge and experience and specific human capital in entrepreneurial context recognises the value of all these components for the entrepreneurs.

Landstrom (2008) designates gained knowledge as an integral part of human capital; however, taking an objective stance, he concentrates on the fact that knowledge/human capital are being fully accepted as a source of economic growth but the entrepreneurship as a mean of knowledge/human capital use in practice and for the benefit of economy is hardly recognised and therefore not listed as an cogent argument in knowledge economy/society development considerations. To give the entrepreneurship a deserved credit he suggests directing the research effort to entrepreneurial performance instead of perpetual focusing on motivation. The relation to the political issues described in chapter 1 is apparent and in the Czech Republic, the recommendation regarding the research direction should be listened to particularly, considering its intended orientation to knowledge society (Keller, Tvrđý, 2008, Matějů, Straková, 2005) while the entrepreneurial issues are currently far from being considered within educational frame (see pg. 19-20 for detailed discussion).

From the objective perspective of Bourdieu (1998), education seems to maintain and support current and expected positions, not to encourage the unequipped individuals to discover new horizons and opportunities related to knowledge acquirement. Accentuating the prevalence of the social/cultural capital contribution and implying that people are rather born to their occupations and social status, the significance of

cultural capital in relation to the education mirrors in conclusion that family/parental cultural capital dispositions play crucial role in the educational aspirations, respectively educational level, of an individual (Bourdieu, 1998). In the previously mentioned Czech study, Tuček et al. (2006) refer to Bourdieu in agreement, when commenting on the Czech elites' bases for success concluding that cultural capital gained (or lacked) in family environment is a starting point which closely corresponds with their parents' education. The education therefore seems to be deeply intertwined with cultural capital already existing in individual's family background.

Also consistently with Bourdieu's conclusions, The Economist (1998:61) article referred to the survey that "found that those who went on to become entrepreneurs were no more persistent, self-motivated or risk-taking than the rest...the only common factor noted was that those who had received an inheritance or gift of money were more likely to set up in business" and Garravan (1994a:3) also refers to literature which says that it takes "two learned, successful entrepreneurial parents; it is also beneficial to gain work experience a get adequate education" to become an entrepreneur. In this context, the education represents just added value to an already established, family based entrepreneurial spirit.

Similarly, the significance of culture capital for an access to higher education in US has been elaborated in detail by Stampnitzky's (2006:462) interpretive study setting that "the particular characteristics valued and highlighted in educational selection can vary greatly", being based, especially in US, beside the tests and grades on the "extracurricular activities...and personal characteristics" (ibid.)

Not exactly in contrast to the 'position enhancing' role of social/cultural capital, but with a view to the possibility of upgrading one's score in this field, Townsend (2006) writes supporting his objective arguments by Putnam's quote: "to increase social capital and social cohesion, the educational process is the single most important and effective policy lever (Putnam, 2004:6 in Townsend, 2006:164). The difference between ascribed and acquired social capital is foreshadowed by this statement, giving some hope to unequipped individuals trying to improve their ascribed positions through education.

In agreement with a fundamental role of education in the process of social capital 'plus points' acquirement and emphasising a positive correlation of cultural/social

capital with educational level, the authors concerned with unprivileged groups, e.g. Mills (2008), write on subjective level, emphasizing the transformative potential of acquired cultural capital in relation to marginalised students or Santovec (2009) emphasising the creation of professional social bonds to female organization leadership students.

However, there is one issue deserving attention in the Czech Republic in this context, and that is that the older generation of current entrepreneurs practically couldn't gain any relevant formal business education due to its non-existence in communist era educational system. Taking into account the previous regime restrictions regarding the access to the higher education, the question arises whether the education could be/is such a determining factor in Czech specific conditions (Tuček, 2006:20). A supporting view, although rather anecdotal and related to managerial environment, is offered by Lussier (2001:235) when commenting on the situation in Croatia, a country similar to the Czech Republic considering the cultural parameters and historical settings: "...it is still commonly believed that to be successful you have to be born an entrepreneur and that economics and managerial skill has little to do with business success...".

These reflections make the investigations into the area of usefulness of formal/certified education even more interesting considering that according to Factors of Business Success survey (2006:4) there is a significant participation of the this generation [grew up in communism] on developing an entrepreneurial environment in the Czech Republic and the motivation for starting the business does not differ within the age groups of the entrepreneurs according to the recent survey.

Indirectly implied is therefore the considerable role of social/cultural capital's (ascribed and/or acquired) within entrepreneurial success, especially in the age group over 40.

This corresponds with Kuratko's (1995) and Hodgetts and Kuratko's (2006) claims that "entrepreneurs are made...not born" and also with others like e.g. Ngwenya (2007), Man(2007), Bakar (2007), Lobler (2006), Kirby (2002), who are expressing the view that entrepreneurship or at least some of the entrepreneurial competencies can be learned and summarize the perspective or recommend suitable strategies for entrepreneurial education (see chapter 5.3).

Partly or completely against attributing the ascribed social capital a leading role, Lussier's survey outcomes show that "the overall effect of education, staffing, professional advice and planning in fact predicts business success and failure in Central Eastern Europe" (ibid.: 236). Also Madsen, Neergaard and Ulhoi came to the conclusion that working experience had been far more influential in connection with venture growth than inherent personal traits.

In summary, thinking about entrepreneurial success based on knowledge gained through an educational process as a counterpart of a success gained through (mainly ascribed) social or cultural capital dominates the scientific speculations on entrepreneurial field. The combined influence of both education and social/cultural capital, although being admitted, is within the positivist/functionalist paradigm investigated in terms of prevalence (see following pgs. 55-56). However, despite Black et al.'s (2005:12) conclusion that "entrepreneurs believe that traits that entrepreneurs are born with make up 75% of the factors that contribute to entrepreneurial success" and other rather pessimistic tunes depreciating the influence of education and ranking the ascribed social capital 'equipment' above the educational gains, the author concludes that at least the influence of the informal learning, contained in taking over the parental exemplary patterns of behaviour, is admitted in the opinions identifying the social capital as a main contribution to nascent entrepreneurs. Consequently, at least the role of informal education is considered an appropriate object of this study even should the prevalence of social/cultural capital influence on entrepreneurial success be accepted.

Taking into account my research questions (Doc 1) and the delimitation of education in chapter 2.4. (education seen as a potential facilitating or performance improving component enabling an individual to base an existence on entrepreneurial activity) it is apparent that the positivist approach to education and social/cultural capital in terms of prevalence (Bourdieu, 1998, Garravan, 1994a, Black et al., 2005, Man, 2007, Bakar, 2007, Lobler 2006) does not reflect the gist of my research questions. Without a priori disputing ascribed social/cultural capital influence, this work concentrates on possible strengthening role of education in entrepreneurial activities of the Czech entrepreneurs. The interpretive views of Caliendo, Kritikos, 2008, Ucbasaran, Westhead, Wright, 2008, Madsen, Neergaard, Ulhoi, 2003, Stampnitzky's , 2006,

promoting the social/cultural capital is rather another important component of entrepreneurs functioning than an antipole of educational gains, are leaving the space for thinking of education in terms of possibilities and chances instead of a taken for granted item. Instead of comparing the significance of ascribed social/cultural capital with the educational gains, my research will be focused on education potential to bring up the successful entrepreneurs. In terms of Madsen, Neergaard and Ulhoi (2003) this work aims to find out whether the human capital*²⁵ gained by the educational process represents a component underlying the successful functioning of the entrepreneur. Presumably (in compliance with foreign research outcomes- see chapter 5.3.1) the lack of practical component of human capital gained through professional and working experience will also come into play when talking about the current education drawbacks.

Supportively, Townsend's (2006), Mills' (2008) and Santovec's (2008) admittance of gaining social/cultural capital through the process of education mentioned above supports the view of education and ascribed social/cultural capital as complementary issues.

On that account my following work within Doc 3 will take up an interpretive stance as a theoretical base and the assessment of the social/cultural capital importance will be derived from the outcomes of phenomenologically oriented qualitative research in Doc 3.

Up to date literature sources for this chapter had been found in business, management and training oriented journals, namely *The Business Review*, *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, *Journal of Small Business Management*, *Organizational Dynamics*, *Small Business Economics*, *Journal of European Industrial Training*, *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, with the outline by Bourdieu's work *Raisons pratiques: sur la theorie de l'action* (1994), in Czech translation *Teorie jednání* (1998) and reference to Czech author Tuček's (2006) critical description of Czech [elites] environment.

²⁵ According to Madsen, Neergaard, Ulhoi, 2003 the characteristics, knowledge and skills potentially gained/developed by an educational or working/professional process

7 Conclusion

To conduct the deeper investigation about the situation in the Czech Republic regarding the educational influence on entrepreneur's success seems to be a challenging task indeed. The complicated and unprecedented capitalism development within twenty-year post-communist period combined with the remains of centralized planning social and economic features (see e.g. Soulsby and Clark, 1998, 2007) on both micro and macro-economic levels creates quite an uneasy ground for a survey of the entrepreneurial environment and any influences on entrepreneurial success might be doubted ipso facto. However, this piece of work does not intend to be a radical critique and “end with an aporia... [which] means being in a state where everything is so complex and ambiguous that you are at a loss about what to do” as Fisher (2007:109) recommends to radical critics. The preferred strategy for this study is to outline the existing research situation and to deduce the most feasible approach in order to answer the research questions.

7.1 Conceptual framework and research strategy outline

The phenomenological approach (Aspers, 2004) combined with grounded theory is envisaged for Doc 3. Interpretive strategies seem appropriate for the topic which, although widely scrutinised abroad, has almost zero preceding research history in the Czech Republic. Therefore, allowing “the research problem to be specified at the start of the project” (Fisher, 2007:123 on Strauss and Corbin research approach), the author sees a great potential in using the interpretative approaches in entrepreneur-related research as the distinction from the classical ‘empirical’ model gives the researcher new opportunities for seeking the possible explanations, not omitting the clearly individual issues related to better understanding of the world we live in.

Inspiration by the qualitatively focused works (e.g. by Grotkowski, 2008, Křížková, 2007, and Hunter-Johnson, 2004), highlighting the unique understanding of each entrepreneur about the value of education in relation to his activities, should help the author to create a base for conceptual framework specification, related to the Czech Republic entrepreneurial environment.

In compliance with phenomenological approaches²⁶, the use of ‘reflexive interpretation method’ pioneered by Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) presuming that “the interpretation always precedes data...mostly...we are interested in certain social phenomenon and [we are] getting acknowledged with the theories and relevant current research findings...we compare this knowledge with our own experience about the social reality...and create the concepts and interpretations formatting our further research activities.” (Alvesson a Skoldberg, 2000, in Křížková, 2007:15), expresses the intended strategy for this work in the best way.²⁷

Fisher remarks on two possibilities regarding the timing for conceptual frame draft saying that should take place either “early on in the process...[structured approach] or towards the end of the research process (using what is commonly called a grounded approach” (Fisher, 2007:123).

This process is envisaged within the following part of the research, where, by the means of interviewing the respondents and analysing their evidence, the conceptual frame work will be outlined. Therefore, the next step will subsist in finding the appropriate sample of respondents in order to conduct the qualitative research by the means of asking mainly the ‘biographical’ questions²⁸ (Strauss, Corbin, 1999:25) within the interview and interpret the answers using as much ‘theoretical sensitivity’ (see *ibid.*, pg. 53) as possible, i.e. to respect the efforts to “consciously...lay away our presumptions, preconceptions...expectations” (Miovsky, 2006:147) in order to influence the research as little as possible by any subjective beliefs.

Later, much more difficult process of addressing the sample of respondents consisting of entrepreneurs with/without MBA title and getting their evidence with the aid of

²⁶ Lyotard (1954, 1995:6) comments on Husserl’s thoughts that “the knowledge materialises in concrete ‘empirical’ science “and emphasises the importance of identifying the base of the scientific knowledge. The phenomenological efforts are directed to uncovering the relation between the particular object and the human consciousness, the process of gathering ‘the reality’ by human mind- ‘the reflexivity’- one of the main terms of phenomenology suggesting that reality is created by our ‘reflections’ on the experienced events.

²⁷ Admittedly, the preference of such an approach might be given by the gender position of female authors whose life experience differs from male perspective considerably- “gender norms differentially structure the social spaces to which men and women are admitted, as well as the presentation of self to others” (Stanford encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-epistemology/>, Accessed: 13 March 2009). Therefore the preference of interpretative standpoint in sciences could be considered by some as closer to women’s perception of the world as exemplified e.g. by Grotkowski, 2008, Křížková, 2007, and Hunter-Johnson, 2004.

²⁸ Strauss and Corbin (1999:25), discerned three types of questions: 1) interactional- focused on mutual acting, organisational- focused on problem formal structures and biographical- focused on experience and memories connected with the problem under study.

questionnaire will follow, using the B.I.B.S. database and possibly also paid services supplying the contact details for individuals with MBA title.

Fisher (ibid.) also mentions the instability of conceptual frameworks and possible necessity to modify them during the research process. That will probably be a case of this work where the quantitative research is supposed to follow in order to confirm the qualitative part findings and/or bring a new insight into a problem.

7.2 Research questions within the literature review context

After assessing the relevant literature, firstly according to the thematic scope and secondly with reference to theoretical and methodological criteria, it is possible to make conclusions regarding the research questions. Basically, the main research questions, foreshadowed in Doc 1, remain unchanged, only with the emphasis on the Czech Republic conditions, where the correspondence with the results of current research of positive educational influence (Kuratko,1995, Hodgetts and Kuratko, 2006, Ngwenya, 2007, Man, 2007, Bakar 2007, Lobler, 2006, Kirby, 2002) may be expected only in the younger generation of entrepreneurs, but in the entrepreneurial generation who grew up in the communist setting is presumably ambiguous and arguable. The focus on microeconomic level stems from the fact that except for *Factors of Business Success* (2005) there are no data on entrepreneurs themselves and their education available²⁹, let alone any details of individual evaluation of practical use of gained education.

The literature review foreshadowed the issues that are coming into play while talking about the educational influence on entrepreneurial activities. Hart writes that “a key element that makes for good scholarship is integration...making connections between ideas, theories and experience” (Hart, 1998:8). The point of integration, within the context of this work, lies in comparing the existing knowledge with the Czech conditions, adjusting the approaches to specific initial conditions, conduct a research with regard to differences and contextualize the outcomes of such a research within

²⁹ On the subject of entrepreneurs, Czech Statistical Office further offers general data related to business branch, number of employees, entrepreneurial services prices, ICT use and the expenses on research and science. Some general data about the entrepreneurs education could probably be extracted from population census outcomes, but they would not bring more information than *Factors of Business Success* (2005-2006) did.

the broader social/educational/political frame. The integration in this case should not be seen as unification, but in a sense of gaining comprehensive perspective comprising of diverse opinions, approaches, ideas and comments on the issue.

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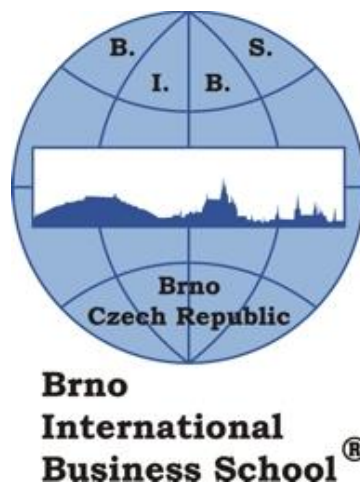
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The Nottingham Trent University

B.I.B.S., a.s.



DBA in Business Administration

**The influence of entrepreneurs' education
upon their success at the first stage of business life cycle
of their enterprise**

Research Methodology and Non-survey Based Research

Document Three

Author: Bc.Bohdana Hošková, MBA

Study cohort: DBA_11_2007/2008

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1. Introduction

The objective of this part of dissertation work is to map the views of limited number of Czech entrepreneurs regarding the influential factors of their entrepreneurial success in the Czech Republic “coordinated market economy” (Hall, Soskice, 2003:242) environment. This part of the research- the qualitative *study*- seeks to foreshadow the perception of Czech entrepreneurs and elicit their opinions regarding the following key areas:

- 1) Which factors do the Czech entrepreneurs perceive as beneficial and facilitating in context of their entrepreneurial success?
- 2) Do these factors concern any form of education? Which?
- 3) How significant has the education been in the process of initiation of their entrepreneurial career and coping with the problems of the first stage of their enterprise?

1.1. Conceptual framework

Taking into account the fact that the topic of influential factors related to entrepreneurial success is, in fact, untouched by the research in the Czech Republic and the conditions of ‘coordinated market economy’ (see Hall and Soskice, 2003) are different from those of the countries where the related research has a long tradition, my work intends to make the most of phenomenology principles emphasizing the essence of the objects under examination through their reflexions on lived experience. As described further, the phenomenological approach should also enable to identify the eventual specifics of local entrepreneurial environment and the values appreciated within entrepreneurial field.

Fisher remarks that there are two possibilities regarding the timing of conceptual frame draft- it should take place either “early on in the process...[structured approach] or towards the end of the research process (using what is commonly called a grounded approach)” (Fisher, 2007:123).

Structured approach comes with predefined categories used as a basis for following research. Phenomenological paradigm, accentuating the concepts of “reflexivity” and “understanding”, requires an unprepossessed approach to research subjects (the entrepreneurs) whose perceptions are determining for the interpretation of reality. Using the structured approach within

phenomenological paradigm would cause a direct discrepancy consisting in a priori presumed perspectives and determined “input” factors.

By contrast, grounded approach to conceptual framework allows the researcher to conduct the qualitative research and, on the basis of the research finding, construct a relevant conceptual framework. In this work, the grounded approach will be adopted by following steps: Firstly, the relevant factors of entrepreneurial success as identified on the ground of actual research outcomes will be summarised as a basis for later comparison. Secondly, phenomenologically oriented qualitative research will be conducted in accordance with empirical phenomenology design by Aspens (2004). Finally, after the evaluation of research outcomes, the conceptual framework will be outlined as a basis for following qualitative research. It is presumed that the conceptual framework will be amended and completed in accord with the findings made during the later stages of this dissertation work

The factors, delimited in up to date foreign research, fall into both macroeconomic and microeconomic field and are depicted on pg. 6. Mutually interconnected, these factors should not substitute the conceptual framework at the moment, but create a base for later comparison of the research outcomes.

The following factors, ranked into 3 levels, had been identified on the basis of investigating into the field of entrepreneurial education and had been summarised within literature review (Doc 2) as influencing the entrepreneur’s success:

On the macroeconomic level (Level 1):

1) Country’s historical and political background including

a) Country’s economic situation and

b) Political measures introduced (incentives or obstacles to entrepreneur’s activities).

These factors had been identified as significant for entrepreneurial activities mainly within positivist research involving conflict (Cox, 1990, Gordon, Morgan and Ponticell, 1995) or consensual views (Porter, 1990, Keller, Tvrdý, 2008, Soulsby, Clark, 1998).

On the microeconomic level, related closer to individual’s perspectives (Level 2):

1) Educational system creating entrepreneur’s educational opportunities as a base of the formal/informal/non-formal educational experience,

2) Individual work opportunities as a base of the work experience

3) Family background as a base of ascribed social, cultural and ascribed status

The microeconomic factors are connected mainly with realistically conceived research on entrepreneurs' opportunities within the given environment/ environment formed by the factors of Level 1 (Garravan, 1994, Dobbs, Hamilton, 2007, Cheetham and Chivers, 2001).

On individual level, connected directly with individual actions (Level 3):

1) Competencies, skills, information, knowledge

2) Acquired social and cultural capital, acquired status (human capital)

These factors are mostly the object of interpretatively conceived studies focused on definition of the entrepreneur, the delimitation of entrepreneurial competences and skills and the efficiency of current entrepreneurial curricula (Johnson-Hunter, 2005, Sage, 1993, Mehralizadech, Sajady, 2005, Nurmi and Passio, 2007, Kirby, 2002, Gartner, 1994).

The combination of all the abovementioned factors represents a constellation of the input components indicated as significant in actual foreign research for entrepreneur's start of the business, potential problems connected with the first stage of the enterprise and coping with these problems resulting in success or failure at the first stage of entrepreneur's activity.

As mentioned above, their outline at this stage of work serves as a base for later comparison of research outcomes and also, with regard to chosen phenomenological paradigm and its central concept of reflexivity (described in chapter...) as a depiction of author's current 'preconceptions' stemming from her investigation into the topic.

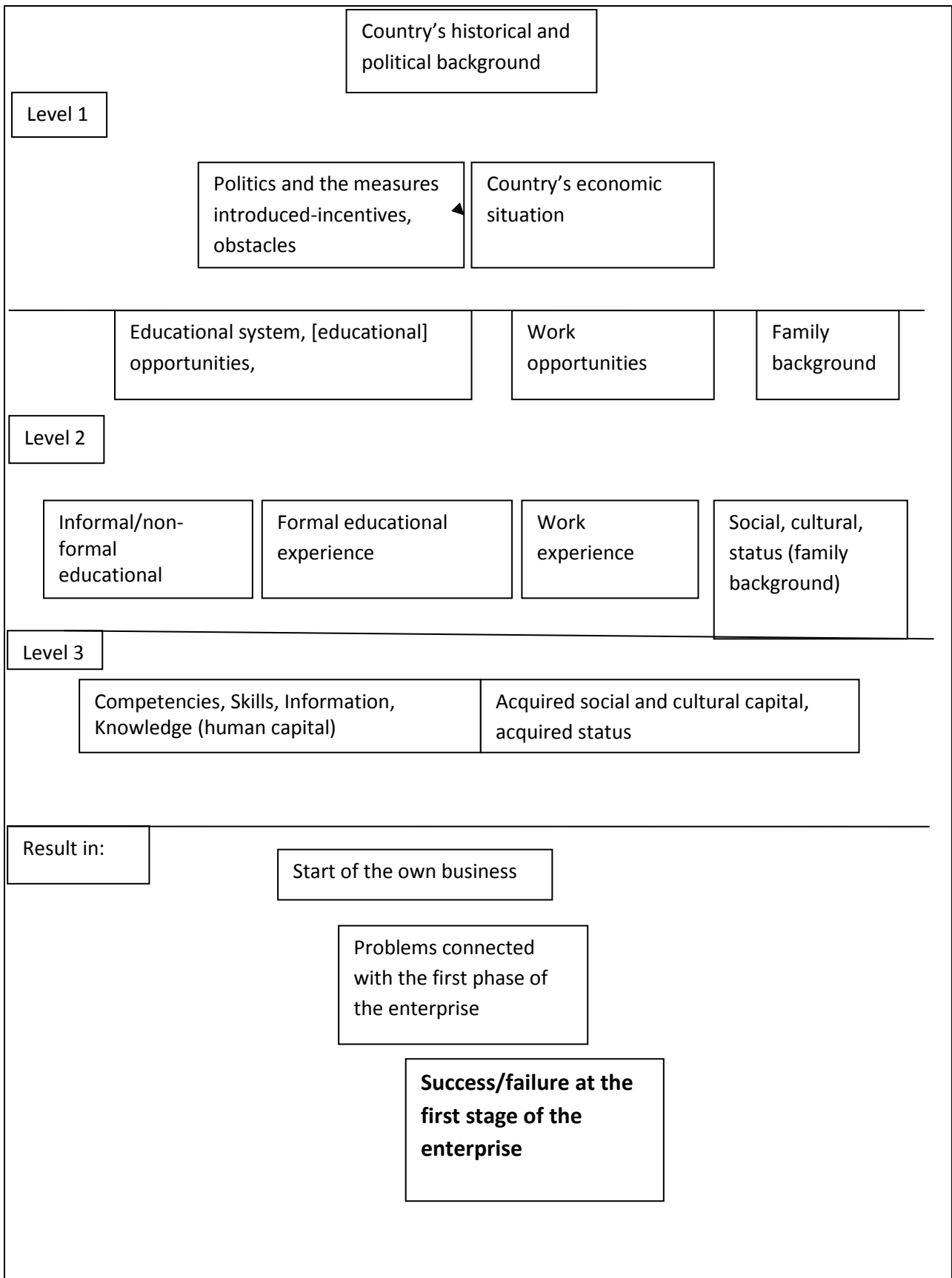


Fig. 1: Current conceptual framework

2. Phenomenology- paradigm, central concepts and chosen method

As written before, the investigations into the relation of entrepreneurship and education has no background of academic research in the Czech Republic. In order to understand the Czech entrepreneurs and their choices of relevant factors influencing their business success, the phenomenological paradigm had been found as the most satisfactory, grasping the reality as individually-made and enabling the subjective evidence to become the main source of information.

The central term of this part of research, in accordance with phenomenological paradigm, will be '**reflexivity**'. In a phenomenological sense of word, reflexivity suggests that reality is created by our 'reflections' on the experienced events. Lyotard (1954, 1995:6) emphasises the importance of identifying the base of the scientific knowledge; phenomenological efforts are directed to uncovering the relation between the particular object (in this case represented by education and other influential factors respectively) and the human consciousness (entrepreneur's perception of significant factors of their business success).

The aim of phenomenological effort is the **understanding**, gained by the grasping of meaning structure delivered through language. Verbal communication, "both meaning and obstacle to accessing the meaning structure of others" (Lyotard, 1954:4), is an essential condition of phenomenological research, a mean to an understanding achievement.

The reflexivity, as a more concrete concept, is also represented by "methodological reflexivity...[when] researcher engages in methodological self-consciousness and possibly self-criticism" (Bryman, Cassell, 2006:45). Lynch's term for the same kind of self-conscious research process is "cultivated reflexivity produced by the interviewer's questions...because the researcher is being enticed to lay bare such things as the decision-making process and rationales for some of the choices made" (in Bryman and Cassell, 2006:45). Both 'methodological' and 'cultivated' **reflexivity** in fact mean that the researcher not only asks and tries to make sense of the information gained through the process of verbal communication, but also must take into account their 'additional' contribution caused by the chosen method, way of interview conduct, timing etc. Shortly, they must assess the influence these could have on the content of gained messages/information and recognise the limitations of the chosen strategy. By observing this

reflexivity concept, my research should lead to a form of ‘**understanding**’ within which the possible bias factors are mentioned and commented on.

2.1. Methodological considerations

The nature of qualitative research should be “open and exploratory...[the researchers]should not anticipate what they find” (Fisher, 2007:157). In this sense, the new factors/different factors (than those outlined on pg.6) influencing entrepreneurs’ success at the first stage of the enterprise are expected to be identified. However, to some measure, determined by the previous author’s investigation into the topic, the anticipations admittedly exist. From author’s perspective, the most difficult methodological issue to deal with represents coping with the fact that foreign research findings are making the idea of ‘open and exploratory’ approach sound rather inappropriate- no one can pretend that the factors found out as relevant abroad will have no significance in the Czech Republic- while the Czech conditions make such an approach much more legitimate.

Two main directions sheltered by phenomenological paradigm, **constructivist** (Lincoln, Guba, 1985, more recently followed e.g. by Berger, Luckman) and **participative** (Heron, Reason, 1997), the later one, created as a critical reaction to a merely constructivist approach, had been considered as primary approach for this work. Their shared points- self-reflexivity and non-existence of final and undoubtedly valid accounts of reality (Heron, reason, 1997:275-277) express the essence of phenomenological, non-positivist thinking. However, Heron nad Reason (1997, and Heron, 1996) see the constructivism as limited by the emphasis on solely individual perception of world and point at its limiting factor- the danger of solipsism¹. As an alternative, they offer the participative view of reality which does not, in fact, deny the creation of constructs and concepts in human mind, accentuating the “creative shaping of world” (Heron, 1996:10): “...there is a given cosmos in which the mind creatively participates, and which it can only know in terms of its constructs, whether affective, imaginal, conceptual or practical...”.

¹ Heron (1996:10): “There is an immediate difficulty with the idea that reality is a construction within an individual mind. It raises the problem of solipsism...no warrant can be given for supposing that the other people being studied actually exists, let alone for supposing that the researcher’s view of them adequately represents their own view of their situation... Guba and Lincoln...say that he mental constructions are related to ‘tangible entities’ which would thus appear to have some reality independent of the constructions (Schwandt, 1994:134). So their explicit idealist stance seems to rest on an implicit realism, and leaves the paradigm in a state of wobble.”

(ibid.) It is possible to conclude that participative paradigm shares the idea of individual reality construction but differs in acceptance of objective reality as a base for these constructions. The participatory paradigm, practically being realised in the form of cooperative inquiry, determines the character of this part of research.

However, the starting point in participative worldview is not verbally expressed, purely individual perception, but the participation of humans in social encounters and their following “articulation” of the world as experimental, presentational, propositional and practical knowing. For the advocates of participative worldview, the reality is always subjective-objective (see Heron, 1996, Heron and Reason, 1997) which means that we participate in what is objectively present and after that we “shape the world by our own terms of reference”(ibid.). Heron and Reason (ibid) call their stance “radical empiricism” which confirms the privileged position of individual experience in ‘lived-through-world’ (Merleau-Ponty’s term). Methodological consequence ensues regarding the researcher’s role in the research- while the conceptualist consider the researcher’s input as a bias which needs to be controlled and critically assessed in the process of data interpretation, in participative paradigm the world is interpreted as a complex of mutually understood shared meanings, based on common experience, where the input of both the respondent and the researcher is of the same predicative value. The bias is surrogated by mutual perspective of the researcher and the respondent as a legitimate form of interpretation.

In the context of this work, the particular types of ‘knowing’ the objectively existing world can be clearly traced in the terms of information, skills, knowledge and competences, used in this work as reference points of educational gains. Experiential knowing (characterised as “direct encounter, face-to-face meeting: feeling and imaging the presence...perceptually and in other ways” (Heron, Reason, 1997:280) represents the information gathering, presentational knowing (“grounded on experiential knowing...evident in an intuitive grasp...of our world...”) expressed in art-forms represents the pre-stage of knowledge formation. Propositional knowing (“knowing in conceptual terms that something is the case”, i.e. the description of the experience ”is expressed in statements and theories that comes with the mastery of concepts and classes that language bestows”), in connection with practical knowing, i.e. “knowing how to do something, demonstrated in a skill or competence” characterises directly the other reference points, i.e. skills and competences.

For this reason, the participative paradigm seems to offer the most suitable methodological anchorage. In combination with practical approach to particular research procedures of phenomenological inquiries- an empirical phenomenology by Aspens, 2004, the participative paradigm creates the methodological base for this work. Aspens' empirical phenomenology, represents, in contrast with some unsystematic qualitative approaches, organised, yet not bounded, strategy as regards the ability to express the essence of meaning creation and, consequently, as regards the research procedures. "Empirical phenomenology states that a scientific explanation must be grounded in the meaning structure of those studied...actor's subjective perspective is the starting point of the analysis...acknowledges the central role of theory in research, as well as the role of unintended consequences." (Aspens, 2004:2-3)

In order to avoid the result criticised e.g. by Goulding (2002:294) who characterises some "phenomenological accounts which are free from any guiding philosophy and described in terms of content analysis and even statistics". ...applying just a 'rich description of phenomenon'(ibid.) whose credibility could be easily doubted, Aspens (2004:5-6) elaborated seven steps enabling the conduction of research and meeting the phenomenological demands by not delivering "simply the descriptions of states of minds...[but] understand why and how things happen...refer to the way people think about the phenomena." (see pg. 14 for details) This approach conforms to abovementioned radical empiricism promoted by Heron and Reason (1997), accentuating the significance of individual "shaping" of objectively existing world.

2.2. Chosen method:

The possible methods of qualitative research² had been contemplated with regard to phenomenologically-oriented research on entrepreneurial success factors. The considerations of suitable research method within phenomenological paradigm are limited by the fact that they are supposed to stem from verbal communication (see Lyotard, 1954, Reason, 1996, Aspens, 2004, Merleau-Ponty, 2008). Although e.g. Aspens (2004) or Groenwald (2004) mention the participants' observation as a tool used in pre-study stage (see point 2 above), the substantial part of the phenomenological research concentrates on verbal evidence, obtained mostly by an unstructured interview with research participants (Goulding, 2005, Creswell, 1998, Aspens, 2004, Groenwald, 2004). Regarding the observation, it is necessary to note its ambiguous role

² The methods of qualitative research include the observation, the study of texts or documents, the interview and the audio and video records analysis (Silverman, 2005:102)

within phenomenological research. The possible contribution to getting an insight into a field might be negatively compensated by the biased conclusions of the researcher, stemming from his/her own considerations unless there is an opportunity to clarify the real sense of individual actions by getting the direct participant's evidence (i.e. unless the observation is the integral part of interview conduct). As Aspens (2004:10) points, "one must speak to people; the researcher cannot remain trapped in her own preconceptions about what people are doing, and cannot simply assume that she sees the same thing as those studied." Also Heron and Reason (1997) point at the importance of mutual dialogue led in order to understand the objective world in terms of subjective individual perceptions and find the mutually understandable expressions characterising the nature of this world. Within the research focused on entrepreneur's perception of the factors contributing to their success, the observation as a separate method would be potentially usable for better understanding of entrepreneurial world from researcher's perspective, but can not explain the meaning structures of research subjects. The same applies, in my case, to study of texts and documents connected with entrepreneurial activities, unless they included the detailed written evidence about the influential factors related to business success by the entrepreneurs themselves. However, being an entrepreneur herself, the author excludes the possible use of these methods; written evidence or biographies due to their time and content demandingness which would most certainly deter the potential respondents from the voluntary participation in research, and observation as a separate method because of being acknowledged with entrepreneurial environment as a concerned professional and therefore having an insight into the field mediated by her participation in entrepreneurial sphere.

Only an interview meets the requirement of research anchorage in verbal communication, enabling to follow the objectives of reflexivity' and 'understanding' "which calls for verbal communications...both a means and obstacle³ to accessing the meaning structure of others" (Aspens, 2004:4). However, the structured approach and the delimitation of main interview spheres would negate the principles of qualitative research requiring the researcher's unprepossessed approach and deliberation in relation to prior research outcomes. In compliance with unprepossessed approach to qualitative research and interviewing, it is necessary to make allowance for the possibility that the respondent does not recognise the education as a significant beneficial factor at the first stage of the enterprise. Therefore, the questions

³ The obstacle in phenomenological sense consists in the fact, that language is being constituted on social, not individual, level (see Petříček, 1997).

suggesting (or mentioning) education as relevant factor would not comply with qualitative research criteria.

As regards the form, an unstructured or loosely structured form of interview, i.e. qualitative interviewing (see pg. 14), seems to be the most compatible with the requirements of unprejudiced approach, grounding the explanations in meaning structures of those studied and perceiving the world as socially constructed. I use the term of loosely structured interview for the approach where the researcher comes only with the domains which the interview evidence might be related to (elaborated on pg.6 in accordance with Aspers, 2004) but otherwise leaves the determination of prior themes to the respondent (see chapter 4.1). The audio-recording of the interviews and subsequent transcription will be used in order to ensure the thorough elaboration of the evidence; however, the interview will represent the main source of evidence in this case.

The main characteristics of qualitative research approach (not to be mistaken for qualitative research technique/method) is the fact that the source data are represented by the emic evidences, i.e. culturally influenced evidences given in terms meaningful to the respondents who are creating their own logical-empirical systems (see Hubík 2006:68). These are consequently analysed with the aid of suitable method in order to find the answers to identified research questions.

The initial research technique/method used in my research had been partly inspired by grounded theory as by Strauss, Corbin, 1999. The use of the method had been reduced to basic level in order to find so called open codes which enabled further analytical elaboration.

Further, the method of Aspers' empirical phenomenology had been used, as it clearly structures the steps that should be made during the research (see chapter 3) and therefore enables to align the terms of the first level of coding (i.e. first order constructs, see chapter 5 for details) with theoretical background (see chapter 6).

Finally, forming of hypotheses had been enabled by overall analytical elaboration described in detail in chapters 5 and 6.

2.3. How to grasp the evidence

Silverman (2000:48) states that “the important methodological question is whether the interview answers should be considered as direct approach to ‘experience’ or as an actively constructed ‘narrations’, including the activities demanding the analysis as such...Both the positions are legitimate but you have to reason and explain the one you have chosen”.

Bearing in mind that “phenomenology...is a critical reflection on conscious experience, rather than subconscious motivation, and is designed to uncover the essential invariant features of that experience (Jopling, 1996 in Goulding, 2005), I understand that in order to achieve the phenomenological ‘understanding’, the language is a vital component enabling the individuals to deliver the meaning of their internal experience. On the other hand, phenomenological enquiry, however grounded on a language as a mean of ‘meaning transmission’, should be “a direct description of our experience without taking account of its psychological origin (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 in Goulding, 2005). Goulding (2005:299) states that within phenomenological context the “participant’s view is taken as ‘fact”.

The abovementioned statements maintain and support the perception of the evidence obtained through the interviews as factual individual reflection on the issue. The aim of qualitative interviewing is to realize the respondent’s ‘theory’ and modify the interview with regard to respondent’s theories/structures (see Fig.1). For phenomenological interview applies that while the interviewee expresses and explains the sense of his/her actions (Hendl, 1998, Goulding, 2005, Aspens, 2004), the role of researcher is to analyse the reasoning of their actions and the way they understand their experience, both expressed by verbal communication. This reasoning and individual understanding delivered in verbal form represents the individual meaning structure and as such, mutually understood by both the respondent and the researcher, is the object of research. The cited academic opinions confirm that considering the evidence as direct approach to (entrepreneurs’) experience should be the case in phenomenologically-oriented research. Consequently, as regards the factors the Czech entrepreneurs perceive as significant in relation to their business success (without the ambition to clarify the internal processes of their minds when coming to the conclusions

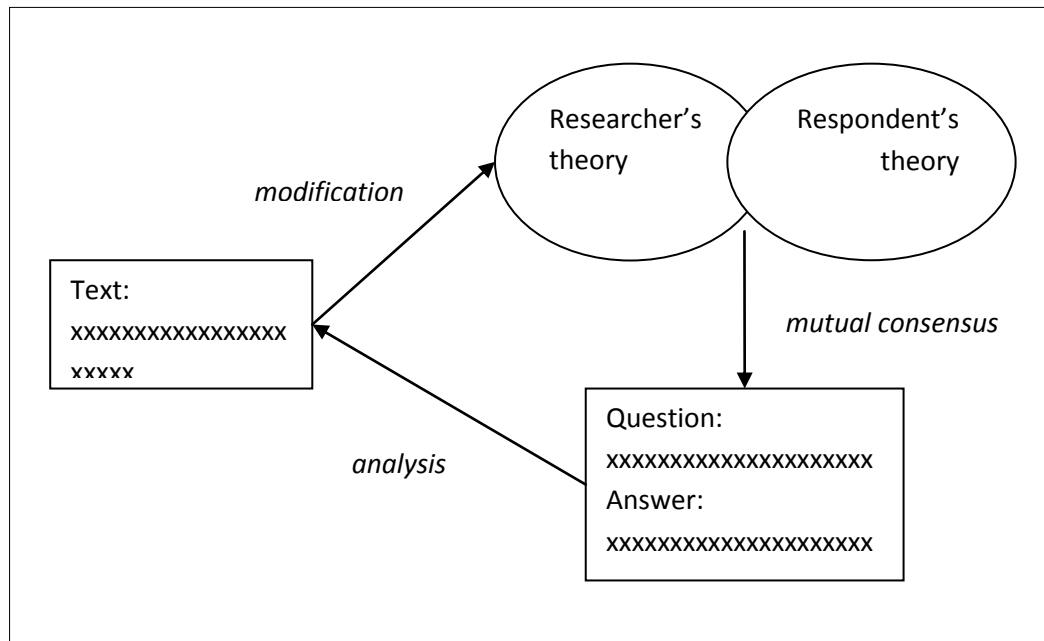


Fig. 2 The scheme of qualitative non-standardised interview (Hendl, 2008,pg. 165)

expressed by their statements during the interview), entrepreneurs' reasoning related to their business success will be the object of analysis, resulting in description of invariant features of their evidence.

Therefore, in context of my research that means the concentration on contextual meaning of messages related to the factors of entrepreneurial success and working with them directly as they are delivered in the interview, without analysing why have they been delivered in such a form and investigating into the linguistic level of messages. The application of direct approach to gained evidence is also supported by the fact that the focus of my research does not lie in internal processes of human mind but in individual evaluation of certain experience, expressed by the statements delivered during the interview.

2.3.1. Sampling- Reliability and Validity Limitations

In order to comply with academic rules and requirements for research conduct, the most suitable and feasible approach regarding the number of respondents had been sought for. Finally, after the thorough consideration, five entrepreneurs had been addressed to provide the key evidence

for this part of research in order to describe their entrepreneurial experience and significant factors leading to their successful coping with the problems related with the first stage of their enterprise.

Hendl (2008:152) states sixteen options of qualitative research sampling. ‘Purposive sampling’ based on the choice of “informationally rich” sources where “the number of cases and their choice depend on the study purpose” describes aptly the strategy chosen for this work- i.e. an “appropriate experience on the scene is usually the key consideration in selecting respondents” (Lindlof, Taylor, 2002:179). In this context, an objection could be raised that such an approach means just an avoidance of more demanding probability sampling by which the greater level of reliability could be achieved.

In comparison with probability sampling, it is apparent that the lack of reliability (enabling further generalisation), common in some way to each piece of [not only] qualitative research, should be compensated by the high validity consisting in a large amount and relevance of information obtained from the respondents- entrepreneurs (Fisher, 2007, Disman, 2000).

Generally, except for using random sampling strategies to enhance the reliability, the recommendations to qualitative researchers aim rather to the validity enforcing measures (see e.g. Creswell and Miller, 2000) in order to make the qualitative methods more respected despite their focus on validity at the cost of reliability.

Kelle (2006:304) mentions Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) opinion that “the acknowledgement of context-boundedness of social phenomena and processes must lead to an overall rejection of the idea of generalization in social research” but mentions the necessity of at least some “reference to an idea of generalization” in all studies. It is apparent that the discussion on ‘generalization potential’ of qualitative research (summarized in e.g. Miles and Huberman, 1994, Lindlof and Taylor, 2002) stems from the question of qualitative research legitimacy as such and the discussion is, in fact, endless.

In relation to this work, the primary aim of this part is not to obtain the data that could be widely generalised but to gain a meaningful insight into the field from subjective perspective of the Czech entrepreneurs. Disman (2000:304) qualifies that within qualitative research “the aim of sample construction...is to represent the population of problems, population of its relevant dimensions” [while within quantitative research it should represent the population of

individuals] and the theoretical saturation relates to gathered data instead of set of individuals (ibid.).

Having acknowledged herself and being inspired by similarly focused studies where the number of respondents did not exceed five and whose findings had been accepted and published (Johnson-Hunter, 2004, Krizkova, 2008, Grotkowski, 2008.), the author regards her approach as acceptable within academic rules/regulations. In accordance with phenomenological thesis inspiring this study, “the participants are selected only if they have lived the experience under study. Sampling is therefore purposive...” (Golding, 2005:300). The ‘purposive manner’ of phenomenological studies has been also applied by Camp (2007), promoted by Aspers (2004) and its acceptability claimed by Miles and Huberman (1994).

Therefore, aware of the limitations of predicative value of obtained data regarding the population and following the recommendations of e.g. Hendl (2008), Bryman and Bell (2003), Miles and Huberman (1994) who all mention the time and cost as significant matters of sampling size considerations, the number of respondents had been chosen with regard to research feasibility, involving the matters of time, equipment and financial possibilities, but in accordance with chosen research strategy rules.

The second reason supporting the chosen ‘purposive sampling’ strategy remains the small number of respondents expected to participate/participating in qualitative part of research- the probability sampling would not be of significant contribution to neither reliability nor validity in this case. Pope et al. (2000:115) confirm this reasoning by writing that “qualitative studies are not designed to be representative in terms of statistical generalisability and they may gain little from an expanded sample size except a more cumbersome dataset”. Bryman (2008:198) suggests that such an approach (called by him a ‘convenience sampling’) results in having “acceptable though not ideal” sample.

It is necessary to state that the choice will be influenced by author’s entrepreneurial practice- the respondents are known to her due to her business activities. Such an approach is acceptable when the researcher complies with the criteria of reliability. Reliability in qualitative research, not rooted in the use of statistical methods, lies and is enforced by detailed description of research process and thorough recording of researcher’s reflections, speculations and reasoning (Kirk and Miller, 1986 in Silverman, 2000:22). This work is being written in an effort to deliver on this statement.

Also, the biggest validity risk in qualitative research, represented by an ‘anecdotal’ approach (Silverman, 2000, Fisher, 2007, Bryman and Bell, 2007) should be partly avoided by adopting the measures described in previous paragraph.

3. Research phases

In compliance with Aspers’ (2004:5-6) approach, the research will be conducted in seven steps as follows:

1) Define the research question

The research questions had been defined in preceding Doc 1 and specified in Doc 2, with the emphasis on specific conditions in the Czech Republic as follows:

1) What kind of education (formal, non-formal and informal) concerning his entrepreneurial a) information, b) knowledge, c) skills, d) competencies did the entrepreneur acquire and in what stage of the enterprise life cycle did it happen?

2) What led the entrepreneurs to the need to educate themselves? Was the need of (further) education⁴ initiated by the enterprise development? Or did the entrepreneur intend to develop further the enterprise?

3) Did the received education meet entrepreneur’s expectations? What kind of a) information, b) knowledge, c) skills, d) competencies did the entrepreneur need most in the first stage of the enterprise?

4) Which competencies did they need to strengthen via education?

5) How and where did the entrepreneur obtain a) information, b) knowledge, c) skills, d) competencies needed in the first stage of their enterprise?

6) What changes did the education (formal, informal or non-formal) cause in a) information base⁵, b) knowledge base, c) skills base, d) competencies base?

⁴ Education in this chapter is meant as being comprised of three components: Formal education, non-formal education and informal education-each of them is specified in chapter 3.4 of this work and will be dealt with separately within this research.

⁵ By the base is meant a set of a) information, b) knowledge, c) skills, d) competencies the individual had at the particular moment of his/her life.

7) Did the attained education (formal, informal or non-formal) have any influence upon entrepreneur's success? What role did an education (formal, informal or non-formal) play in connection with business success?

8) Can we specify the most appropriate a) information, b) knowledge, c) skills, d) competencies for the entrepreneurs in the first stage of the enterprise life cycle?

9) Does the entrepreneur's education (formal, informal or non-formal) limit him/her or her when learning informally?

10) Which competencies had been strengthened by formal education?

2) Conduct a pre- study

Commentary: Within this stage the researcher is supposed to "come to grips with the field" (Aspers, 2004:6). The suggested methods are visit of the research field and interaction with its members and extensive reading of texts. Being myself a member of an 'entrepreneurial field' and having done the extensive reading and investigation into the field within the literature review, I consider this stage accomplished. The factors of entrepreneur's success/failure depicted on pg. 6 serve both as an illustration of my current preconceptions and as the components to which the research outcomes will be later related to.

3) Chose a theory and use it as a scheme of reference

As reasoned thoroughly within the literature review, I relate my research to the contributive theories where the combination of formal, informal and non-formal education represents potential factor which enables and facilitates individual entrepreneurial success (Nurmi, Passio, 2007, Johnson-Hunter, 2004, Wadhwa, 2005, Grotkowski, 2008, Bender et al., 1990, Robinson, 1994), not as an antipole to social capital but as a significant component of entrepreneur's development.

More concretely, Kirby (2002) says that one can learn to act in entrepreneurial way. The education in Kirby's theory represents the factor that enlarges or eliminates the possibilities and chances to acquire the entrepreneurial competencies. Kirby's theory of creating the entrepreneurs by rightly set and aimed education represents an essential theoretical (comparative) background to this work.

After comprehensive analysis of approaches to entrepreneur's specification focused on current educational programs, delimited the set of entrepreneurial competences (in the sense of standard/desired/presumed entrepreneurial qualities) that can be learned, acquired or developed as follows:

- Total commitment, determination and perseverance
- Drive to achieve and grow
- Orientation to goals and opportunities
- Taking initiative and personal responsibility
- Veridical awareness and a sense of humour
- Seeking and using feed back
- Internal locus of control
- Tolerance of ambiguity, stress and uncertainty
- Calculated risk-taking and risk-sharing
- Low need for status and power
- Integrity and reliability
- Decisiveness, urgency and patience
- Learning from failure
- Team builder and hero maker

These items will serve as a reference points when analysing the evidence gathered by the interview. My aim is to realise whether the entrepreneurs relate their initial entrepreneurial activities to these competencies, how and when did they appear to gain them (i.e. whether through formal, informal or non-formal education) and note if they accentuate any other components of entrepreneurial experience. The realisation of following four points which create the core of empirical phenomenology research is subject to obtaining evidence and its subsequent analysis:

- 4) Study first-order constructs (and bracket the theories)**
- 5) Construct second-order constructs**
- 6) Check for unintended effects**
- 7) Relate the evidence to the scientific literature and the empirical field of study**

These four steps will be elaborated after the interview is performed. The next chapter is dedicated to interview design.

4. Interview

4.1. Process of realisation

Aspers (2004) recommends to approach the interview with the “set of themes for discussion” (ibid., pg. 10), depicted roughly in a scheme, which the respondent’s evidence can be potentially related to in researcher’s notes. Such an approach corresponds with the opinions of Goulding (2005) and Lindlof and Taylor (2002) who both bring forward the factual impossibility of the researcher to keep his/her mind untouched by the existing scientific knowledge about the phenomenon.⁶ In my case, these themes will be represented by the issues depicted on pg. 6, found as relevant within literature review.

Running my own business, I could dedicate only a limited time to the research. Due to this fact I had decided to create my own research team and employed specialised research agency in order to conduct the interviews and transcribe them manually in accordance with my instructions. Concerned agency employees (research team) had been acknowledged in detail with the aim of research, its methodological ground and given the instructions regarding the interview conduct. The respondents had been unknown to any member of research team and the interviews had been coordinated by myself as regards the terms and location.

The targeted group had consisted of successful entrepreneurs running their business in Olomouc region. In accordance with previous theoretical assumptions, the successful entrepreneur had been classified as the one whose monthly income is at least triple of average monthly salary in the Czech Republic, realising his entrepreneurial activities as a legal entity in the business fields

⁶ Goulding (2005:295) states: “A common misconception is that the researcher is expected to enter the field ignorant of any theory or associated literature relating to the phenomenon and wait for the theory to emerge purely from the data”. She supports her claim by citing Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 253, in Goulding, 2005: 295): “The core categories can emerge in the sociologist’s mind from his reading, life experiences, research and scholarship; [furthermore] no sociologist can possibly erase from his mind all the theory he knows before he begins his research. Indeed the trick is to line up what one takes as theoretically possible or probable with what one is finding in the field.”

of trade, industry or services for longer than one year period. Five non-structured interviews had been realised, four men and one woman had participated.

At the initial phase of the interview, the respondents had been asked to express and describe in their own words how they saw the beginning of their entrepreneurial career and mention the influential factors of their successful career.

All the interviews were supposed to be initialised by following an introductory sequence: “Can you describe how you became a successful entrepreneur? What influenced your successful entrepreneurial career? Can you name the influential factors?” All the interviews had followed this routine. The interviewer had been instructed not to interrupt the speakers and not to direct the interview to education expediently. However, they had been acknowledged with research questions and instructed to hint the issue of education at the point of

For the purposes of this research, numbers 1-5 had been assigned to the respondents in order to keep their anonymity and protect their personal data. Each interview had been recorded and transcribed afterwards (see the Appendices), the sensitive personal data had been excluded from the written records. The pleasant environment had been secured for each interview, including the decent refreshment. In one case, the respondent determined the location of interview conduct, the other four interviews had been realised in the office prepared by the researcher’s team. No interview had been unexpectedly interrupted or postponed and there had been no significant social events influencing general conditions for the entrepreneurs in the Czech Republic.

Also, a basic logical sequence of questions had been maintained during the non-structured interviews. The summary of questions and commentaries made by the interviewer has been attached in Appendix 2. All the questions and commentaries fall into one of the following three categories: a) introductory general questions (“What...”, “When did that happen”, “What influences...”) that made the respondent talk about the most influential factors, b) explicating set of questions and commentaries when the respondents had been directed to state clearly and in more detail why they find those important by (“So do I understand right that...”, “What else...”, “What was next...”). The choice of topics to discuss had been left entirely on respondents’ will – the interviewer interfered in their speech as little as possible.

The other factors, not mentioned at the beginning of the interview had been hinted by these questions, giving the respondents some space for adding the important information to their prior statements. Finally, c) the conclusive assessments and statements had been required and made (“All right, so...”, “Thank you”). At the end of the session, the respondents had been asked to draw the curve of their entrepreneurial life (entrepreneurial biography) and mark the important points of their entrepreneurial time-line. Four graphs create Appendix 3 of this work, Respondent 3 (Thomas) had refused to participate in this additional part of interview.

The respondent also been asked to place the predefined items/factors on concentric circles according to their importance for entrepreneurial activities (see chapter 6.2).

All the interviews had been recorded with the aid of dictaphone, after the prior agreement given by researcher in writing (by signing the Informed consent, see Appendix 4) and also verbally, before the first question had been asked. No respondent had expressed any objections to interview recording.

4.2. Transcription

The core part of the qualitative research is to record the data obtained by various means (interviewing, observation, personal/internal evaluation) in writing (Fisher, 2007, Lindlof, Taylor, 2000, Straus, Corbin , 1999, Bryman and Bell, 2007). Fisher (2007) points out that some researchers prefer their own notes taken during re-listening of interviews instead of extremely time-consuming interviews transcription.

However, the interviews within this research had been recorded and transcribed manually by researcher’s team afterwards. This allowed the researcher to rely on verbatim transcription instead of the vague and inexplicit notes and made possible the further investigation of respondent’s statements.

4.3. Respondents

Five respondents took a part in this part of research and agreed to and dedicate about two hours of their time to researcher’s team and provide evidence. Generally, the respondents did not have any special requirements regarding the interview accept for the limited time they could spend participating in research. One respondent also asked to be visited directly at the place of the enterprise so that she could flexibly stop her work when the interviewer comes and continue afterwards.

First respondent, Michal⁷, is running his business based on trading with various kinds of property and his daily life consists of sales, purchases, rents, leases and dealing about the conditions connected with such a business. His company has got five employees and he works closely with other two company owners. He is in his forties.

Second respondent, Jakub, is running his business activities partly in development field, partly in other activities connected with properties. He is self-employed, having no employees or associates. Similarly to Michal, he is in his forties and they have been starting the business in similar conditions with the enthusiasm typical for the period following communist regime fall.

Third respondent, Jaroslav, is self-employed, carrying various business activities connected with trade in goods. The second area of his entrepreneurial activities lies in liquidation of waste and scrap metal. Being the oldest from the respondents, he started some rather clandestine business activities even during the communist regime, having a difficulty to apply his entrepreneurial thinking at that time. Although older than the other respondents he managed to start very successful business, having more than 50 employees. He is in retirement age now, but does not plan to stop participating in his family business.

Fourth respondent, Tomáš, is self-employed authorised expert in constructions and his business consist in providing the expert reports needed for litigations, property sales and mortgages negotiations. Being in his fifties, he managed to start his own business in middle age, after working in building construction field and getting the necessary experience as an employee before the communist regime fall. His business goes well at the moment, according to his own expression.

Fifth respondent, Jana, the only women in the small sample, is in her late thirties. Having decided to start her business activities after graduating from university, she started with international fuel trade but due to the time demandingness and necessary travelling connected with this kind of business she had decided to focus on different business field. Today, she is carrying her business activities both in fashion and in hospitality. She is assessing her current activities as more suitable because she is a mother of a 10-year old girl at the moment and wants to save some of her energy and time for the family.

⁷ In order to keep the anonymity the respondents had been given 'cover' names for the presentation in this document. Also, the researcher had found it more suitable to identify the respondents by using 'cover' names instead of 'labelling' them as Respondent 1- Respondent 5.

5. Studying the first-order constructs

At first, it is necessary to note that the term ‘construct’ is not used in constructivist sense. First-order constructs in empirical sense represent the concrete terms, worlds and concepts people think in, use in a verbal form to express their considerations, way of thinking and in which they explain their way of acting- in accordance with participative paradigm they describe the world in subjective terms of particular individual.

Regarding the phenomenological interpretation process Thompson (1997 in Goulding, 2005:300) recommends “reading texts (interview transcripts) in full in order to first gain a sense of the whole picture” followed by the stage of “intertextuality...whereby patterns and differences are sought across transcripts...[in order to] broaden the analysis to include a wider range of considerations that helps the researcher arrive at a holistic interpretation...final explanation represents a fusion of horizons between the interpreter’s frame of reference and the texts being interpreted”.

As reasoned in chapter 2 dedicated to methodology, the initial coding process had been conducted with the aid of grounded theory principles (Strauss and Corbin, 1999) in order to sort primary data in a systematic way. The main purpose of initial coding had been to capture the ‘first order constructs’ (see Aspers, 2004, common sense based constructs as conveyed by the respondents, practically identical to Glaser and Strauss’ ‘in vivo’ codes⁸) as by Aspers (2004:7) “explicate the actors’ meaning structure” and create a map of respondent’s reasoning. The registering of first order constructs has to be done without referencing to current theoretical background because “the empirical evidence may reformulate the theory, alter it, or add dimensions to it” (ibid.) The material has to be considered original evidence from which the conclusions will be made. It is necessary to mention that the finding of open codes by the researcher during this stage usually represents only one of the possibilities of coding- that is why the interview recordings had been transcribed literally and why they create essential source, stemming from research fieldwork (see Hubík 2006:65).

⁸ The expressions as used by respondents themselves.

Therefore, the interview transcripts had been studied and consequently coded (by using open coding, i.e. the creating the first level of codes by noting all the concepts respondent might use). At the first phase 36 codes had been created, later, in relation to coding of other transcripts, 24 codes had been used based on the similarities in gained evidence.

The abovementioned open coding can be considered the “lowest level” of the theory created from the data (written records) in the inductive way. The open codes had been used in order to find a common name for the specific parts of respondent’s evidence connected by the content proximity and interconnection of the issues mentioned by respondents. Open codes had been repeated within the interview. Eventually, they had been sought for in interview records of other respondents.

At his stage, the criterion of theoretical sensitivity had been used which, according to Strauss and Corbin, 1999:31, means “to recognise what is important in data and give a meaning to it” and is created by getting acknowledged with relevant literature sources and by keeping a distance from the gathered data by maintaining the constant level of scepticism to seemingly clear categories or persuasive hypotheses. The process included sorting the codes according to their coherency, connotations and relation to other terms used by the respondent- some codes/categories had been merged and some excluded. After that only 20 codes had been left for further research considerations. These are depicted in a form of table in Appendix 1.

In the last phase, six codes had been distinguished as the most important according to their occurrence (in this sense according to the quantity of statements related to given code and their significance expressed by the respondent). The process of recording the particular codes intensity (in case they appeared in written records) had been used in order to reduce data for the interpretation in a meaningful way (see chapter 5.1 for the description of most significant codes).

Finally, with regard to research goals the additional research methods had been used, partly the biographical records of the respondents/entrepreneurs and partly their statements of values hierarchy.

5.1. Significant codes

The items mentioned by the entrepreneurs most often in connection with their entrepreneurship career are depicted below:

	Michal	Jakub	Jaroslav	Tomáš	Jana
Self-management	4x	4x	3x		1x
School, education, self-study	1x	1x		3x	2x
Colleagues, employees	2x	1x	2x	1x	1x
Family		1x	2x	1x	1x
Practice and managerial practice	2x	3x	2x	1x	2x
Money, investments	2x		1x	2x	

Fig. 3 The most significant codes assessed consequently to their occurrence in entrepreneurs' statements

From this ranking of top-themes mentioned within the interviews, it would seem that in total scores the characteristics connected with entrepreneurs' personality do have similar value as formal education. However, as this is not a quantitative research, it is necessary to look deeper into the particular evidence.

5.1.1. The need of self-management

Under this code, a few types of statements had been clustered, starting with entrepreneur's statements about the need of self-development, self-discipline, determination and decisiveness and ending with the comments of necessary discomfort and hard daily work.

Asked to summarize the important factors of initial phase of the enterprise beside the certain knowledge he mentioned before, Michal reacted: "...*personal determination. It is not sufficient to have the knowledge but you have to have something like self-discipline...clearly, the*

determination and that differs person by person...What's important, that you can be successful in a specific field but that unwinds from the knowledge of broader context, because this context doesn't change, what changes is the entrepreneurship...". Michal had also been mentioning the advantage and the need of working for himself instead of being an employee, the opportunity to manage and make the things one's own way, the chance to be one's own boss and choose the associates. In the same way, Jana commented that after the 'Velvet revolution' (the fall of communist regime) she had felt that *"rather than as an employee, it would be suit me if I worked for myself"*.

Jaroslav emphasized the aimed self-discipline regarding the time management and pro-active life attitude. *"...but your have to get up early in the morning. That means that the day begins when the birds start to sing, in the morning the ideas are there, you see everything in different light than after the heavy lunch..."*.

The self-discipline regarding the time dedicated to the enterprise development, knowledge gaining, entrepreneurial behaviour and behaviour to people around had been mentioned in some form in each interview. As Jaroslav puts it: *"I've stopped using the word coincidence. All you need is the common counting, common sense, in order to understand it, in order to follow something...but you have to have the respect for the family and people around...wake up early...enjoy your work"*. Also the second respondent, Jakub, comments: *"If I know that someone needs something from me I'm trying to do it even at the cost of some personal loss or discomfort, because the person will owe that to me. In case I never need their services it's all right, because it's like saved in the bank..."*.

The ways of maintaining the self-discipline contained some form of regular self-tasking and following formal or less formal self-control of meeting the delimited targets. Asked what he has been doing for being successful within his work Jaroslav answered: *"Pencil, paper, points. I'm getting back even to the last point, even if that should be half a year later and I want it ticked. I have an exact schedule of my tasks and I'm conducting the assessments, when I did get up, when I did come late...eventually where I have done the mistake..."*

Tomáš mentions the need of self-discipline when dealing with clients: *"We need to be strict, independent, can not get influenced by anyone, but nowhere is stated that we should be a nuisance or that we should annoy people with out attitude"*.

The independence on one's parents at the beginning of their working life had been mentioned by Jaroslav.

5.1.2. School, education, self-educating initiatives

The statements related to school, MBA education and self-education had occurred quite often; in general they had been expressed by all but one the respondent. The respondents had been independently relating entrepreneurial practice to knowledge gathered from different sources.

Michal underlined that it was not the scholar knowledge what get him through the difficult beginnings and emphasized the practice and knowledge gathered through practical activities. The formal education is respected in terms of expertise and admitted as being beneficial but not essential for entrepreneurial practice. He comments on his entrepreneurial experience: *“It wasn’t the school knowledge [what had influenced me] but the experiences that I had gathered...not that it was sufficient, those with university degree in Civil engineering are much further regarding the expertise, but they have no experience regarding the auction proceedings...”*

Jakub also assessed the post-gradual studies as influential but in a sense that he recognised, by talking to other students, what does it feel like to be an employee and wouldn’t like to be in this position. To him, the MBA studies seemed useful for top management in the companies but in relation to his practice he stated that *“a large part of these studies had not been beneficial to me, that’s just my opinion. I don’t know how beneficial it was. ..I could see how the connections between things, that helped me”* but continues by stating that during the studies he had just realised that the name had been given to the activities he performed intuitively, without knowing that there are special terms for them: *“I’ve been applying something, someone there gave it the name and said why it works like this, why it leads to success, what the difficulties are and what’s the other way of doing it...”*

Jakub implied an inclination to different methods of learning in general. Speaking about the proportion between the practical experience and knowledge, he emphasized his own initiative to gather the business knowledge and information by reading, browsing the internet and absorbing all kind of information he might use for his entrepreneurial activities. In relation to this he stated that even the information seemingly unrelated to his business had brought him further in his considerations of his enterprise future direction, forced him to start thinking about the macro-economic relations, linkages. He purposefully tries to improve and keep up his knowledge from the other business fields like international trade, property market and finance in order to be informed about the business environment from different angles, which he ingeniously described as an effort to become *“a pseudo-expert”*.

Further, his strategy involved thinking thoroughly about the entrepreneurs he considered successful in order to find by himself the secret of their business success. He admitted that he was trying to “*reproduce and imitate*” the business behaviour and methods of entrepreneurs he considered to be successful, to take over the patterns which seemed to work in entrepreneurial environment. To this, he added: “*I’m trying to understand why are they good at it, whether they chose right thing or whether they do it in a right way or whether they have got right people around which I should acquaint myself with...these examples are the important factor to me*”.

Personal interest in entrepreneur’s business field events, gathering the information from various sources, i.e. professional magazines, business indexes, stock market etc. had also been mentioned by Tomáš as an important part of his entrepreneurial development.

Otherwise, Tomáš evaluated the self-education rather as an absolute necessity and condition for being able to deliver the services required by the clients. For him, the university degree and obligatory further professional education represent a necessary qualification for his job. Despite this fact he admitted that however educated the entrepreneur in his business field is, the failure occurs in case they are not able to behave with respect and to satisfy the customer, or if their attitude is far from helpful. He also mentioned the need of constant update of his professional knowledge by self-studying and getting acknowledged with the latest legislative and regulations. Also, he is taking an advantage of some training courses held within the professional body associating the authorized experts in the Czech Republic. These are being organised and paid by members as a mean of updating general professional knowledge updated and maintaining the status of experts of all the members.

When asked for naming the other factors than obligatory conditions required by law, he reacted immediately: “*The years of practice, definitely the practice, when you want to be successful...get the practice*”.

Jana mentioned the obligatory managerial courses she had to complete before being allowed to open her franchised business. Commenting on university education she appreciated the general perspective the higher education gave her and the ability to organise the work she had learned while studying, as well as the ability to assess the economic figures, indicators and outcomes of her business. She stated that the higher education “*makes the starting position easier*”.

5.1.3. Colleagues and employees

The respondents seemed to reflect the vital role of their associates, colleagues and employees for the entrepreneurship development. Michal commented on difficult initial situation when he, due to the lack of finance, not only could not realise his plans but also has not been able to choose his associates. He also mentions the importance of having the qualified colleagues who think in similar way they entrepreneur does, who are the contribution to each other. He adds that *“the one who manages to cope [with entrepreneurial activities] by himself has to specialise in some narrowly profiled business field because one can not embrace it all”*.

Personal/professional contacts are the priority in Jakub’s professional life. Jakub puts a special effort in taking every opportunity to build the social net of important ‘contacts’, i.e. people whom he might need later within his entrepreneurial activities. He clearly states that *“the cause of entrepreneurial success is huge database of contacts. I’m saying at this moment that contacts are 50 % and the rest are other things...”*.

His strategy creating the value not in money but in services done for the other people prior to the moment the entrepreneur needs them, in creating the binding relationships and leaving good impression. To have these prior services ‘saved for later use’ he considers much more effective than just paying the people he needs at the moment.

Jaroslav mentions the importance of people willing to work disregard their qualifications or education degree and the necessity to be interested in their needs while they work for the entrepreneur. Citing one of his former employees: *“You came, bought a snack for us, explained to us what to do and today our boss doesn’t come, the other one charges us with errors and says that we had done it wrong...and we are in a peeve when coming to work...”*.

Tomáš stated that he had started his business together with his friend working in the same business field but didn’t mention any other consequences of such an arrangement at the beginning of an entrepreneurial career.

Jana mentions the polite and friendly communication style between the employees as essential part of her company’s (i.e. organisation) culture: *“All the system is based on communication because there is lot of employees, so, in order to function as it should be, the employees have to address each other somehow, they have to communicate in some way...we teach [the employees] how to communicate, communication essentials, how should the people communicate between themselves...”*.

5.1.4. Family

Family as an influential factor had been mentioned in two ways. Firstly, the respondents reminisced about their parents, i.e. Michal mentioned helping his parents with house building activities during the childhood as a subconscious basis for his current entrepreneurial activities. He also mentions the stress from family issues a negative factor for the entrepreneurial field: “*...it is much better when the ideas are coming at the time when one is relaxed, doesn't have to feel the stress in their family...*”.

Jakub interestingly mentioned the relative ‘poverty’ of his family and the content attitude of his non-entrepreneurial parents regarding their unchanging, stable salaries as a stimulating factor which had made him recognise that he wanted a different life style. “*No one in my family had been running a business, I was completely on the other side, maybe the certain poverty of my family had been the thing that led me to the entrepreneurship, firstly, secondly, my parents had always had the same, stable salaries without any prospects of change in the future and, for me, that was frustrating, that is an unsatisfying life attitude to me.*” Entrepreneur’s own family, supporting his way of life had also been mentioned but only as a reaction to the direct question, not by the respondent himself.

For Jaroslav the family represented a different issue as his activities had been realised within the family enterprise. Therefore, he was mentioning the stronger linkages between the family members who would not that easily behave in unexpected ways to each other. Later, in the other phase of the interview he ranked the family and good relationship with the employees among the main factors of entrepreneurship but family without further comments.

Tomáš was speaking about the hard work at the beginning of his entrepreneurial career when he had could only spend the time with his family at the period of major festivals while later he could afford much more time-demanding and costly holidays which he spends partly with his family and partly with his friends.

Jana, the only woman from the small sample, had said that when she began to realise it was the time to start her own family, she changed her original business (international trade with chemical goods) for restaurants and fashion business which she had erroneously considered to be less time-demanding. But her expectations about travelling less, being more locally bound had been met and she can dedicate that saved time to her daughter in accordance with her planned life path. She had efficiently combined the entrepreneurial career- work life with her family plans and seems to manage both in the way that makes her satisfied.

5.1.5. Practice, Managerial practice

Managerial practice had been mentioned repeatedly by two respondents. Jakub commented that he unconsciously and intuitively practiced some managerial ways of acting which he recognised when studying MBA- within the MBA courses his prior ways of entrepreneurial acting had been described, given a name and reasoned in theoretical way. He also gave two examples: “...*firstly, it is the day-to-day practice when I’m occupied with various different activities, for example the project financing, and various entrepreneurial or crisis management when I’m taking over the enterprise divisions, when I’m trying to save the situation...*” Further in the interview, he used the words strategy and tactics when describing in general the functioning of enterprise.

Jana expressed herself in managerial jargon saying that “*the most important [factor of business success], probably, is the balanced proportion of managerial skills, there belong marketing, communication, human resources and operations...*” After that, she gave a short account of the regulations regarding these business strategies that are the integral part of her franchised enterprise. Clearly, the managerial thinking had been rooted deeply in her daily entrepreneurial life.

The other respondents had been mentioning managerial issues rather marginally, speaking more about entrepreneurial practice as such. Michael accentuated the importance of experience and dealing with people: “*...dealing with people...the business partners can be involved, the competition can be involved, so one manages to put himself in that in the process of dealing with someone, into the strategy of his partner...*”.

Jaroslav commented on his entrepreneurial beginnings saying that “*it had been about experience and hard work...*” and Tomáš had emphasised his contribution to son’s professional career by enabling him to work for his business and “*acquire the practice*”. Finally, Jakub emphasized the privileged role of real-life practice by saying: “I saw the classmates who have specific jobs in the company...a big part of the studies had not been of benefit to me...it is of large benefit to top management I reckon...such an education ...without practice...is absolutely useless”.

5.1.6. Money and investments

Quite predictably, money represents an important component of entrepreneurial life; however, the respondents seemed to mention it rather as a facilitating matter instead of a major benefit or problem of entrepreneurial life. Two respondents did not even touch the matter of money

directly during the interview. Michal connects the beginnings of his entrepreneurial activities with a lack of money. Together with lack of experience, these represent the drawbacks of enterprise initial phase for him: *“...at first, I couldn’t carry out anything, there was no money...”* and *“...so, we assessed the pros and cons, the lack of finance...”*

Jaroslav clearly stated that his first entrepreneurial activities started with the investment to new car and other second-hand, discarded mechanical equipment he managed to make operable again by himself or with the aid of family co-workers.

Tomáš had been speaking rather about the following phase when he needed to invest into professional educational activities: *“there had been some training organised by private agency...it was for our money, it had been based on voluntariness...”* and also in connection with the cost of one’s services: *“And, it is necessary to have the price policy so that you don’t put the people off by high prices, also, it is not the best strategy to underquote...”*.

6.Second-order constructs

It is necessary to note that in this chapter the terminology is shifted to ‘second-order constructs’, i.e. the researcher transmitted the concepts the entrepreneurs think in and express by speech into the language of theory- terms accepted by academic audience but understood by the respondents/ entrepreneurs.

As Malterund (2001:486) comments, “knowledge never emerges from data alone, but from the relation between empirical substance and theoretical models and notions”. This should be done in a well-founded, critical and credible way. Within empirical phenomenology approach the connection between empirical data and theories is provided by the construction of second-order constructs.

Researcher’s second-order constructs are based on the constructions of the actors in the field...In this way, the researcher connects the ‘common sense world’ with the scientific world of theories... Second order constructs are created by “developing or using a theory” (Aspers, 2004:4, 7]. While the subjective dimension must be maintained, the second-order constructs must reflect the theoretical knowledge and be understandable both for the respondents and scientific community.

6.1. Summary of interviews in the context of theoretical grounds

This sub-chapter summarise the views of particular entrepreneur with regard to the theoretical grounds and research questions. Having identified the most significant factors in respondents' evidence in previous chapter, I have tried to specify the subjective participant's views on following issues linked directly to research questions:

1. To identify the subjective motives of entrepreneur's educational activities and specify the reasons for entrepreneur's need of self-education, to identify whether the need of further education had been initiated by enterprise development.
2. To find out whether the education gained in different ways had met entrepreneur's expectations and specify what kind of information, knowledge, skills and competences do the entrepreneurs need in the first stage of their enterprise.
3. To identify the role of particular type of education (formal, non-formal, informal) in acquiring entrepreneurial information, knowledge, skills and competences.
4. To characterize the influence of particular type of education on business success, i.e. to identify the role of education in connection with business success
5. To find out whether there exist any limitations of particular type of education for further education.

6.1.1. Michal

During the interview he expressed that due to the changing market conditions the knowledge of given business field is necessary; however, the other personal dispositions and practical skills are needed.

As for the information, knowledge, skills or competences needed at the first stage of the enterprise, he mentioned the self-discipline as significant factor.

Regarding the education or specialisation in given business field, Michal considers it an advantage but not the necessary condition. Formal education represents the factor directing the other activities (*"firstly the school, it influenced me that much that I wanted to continue studies at the university...but I had to choose something else"*). The formal specialisation can contribute to better entrepreneurial results; however, the knowledge gained informally through the practical

and actual entrepreneurial activities can be the condition of business success. By contrast, the formal education does not have to be essential influence of business success.

The possible limitation could not be founded from given evidence.

6.1.2. Jakub

The need to get oneself educated is motivated by the “*necessity to do a lot of things*”, the education enriches one’s life. Also, the independence given by running one’s own business has to be maintained through self-developing activities.

The expectations as regards the education had been met in clarifying way- MBA studies had linked the practice with theory. Jakub had recognised his intuitively conducted activities in theoretical concepts and started to understand the gist of theoretical background within entrepreneurial activities. However, he designated MBA studies as really useful for managers working within the companies. It seems that Jakub admits that to him the MBA studies meant the enlarging of knowledge horizons but does not really consider it essential for his entrepreneurial career.

He evaluated formal education as an enriching element of entrepreneurial practice. Informal education seemingly does not have a connection with entrepreneurial activities but it is assessed as positive and important for general educational progress (“*...some people read magazines, I’m following up the business world information...*”).

The education as such can lead to entrepreneurial progress in case he is able to choose the suitable program, suitable kind of information- this is connected with the ability to consider and choose the right type of education.

The possible limitations represents the insufficient support of entrepreneur’s family which, however, was not Jakub’s case- his family had always been supportive of his activities.

6.1.3. Jaroslav

Jaroslav’s subjective motives in educational area are connected mainly with self-discipline, will to self-progress and zest for work. Except for these, he did not mention any other factors needed at the first stage of the enterprise.

It can not really be specified whether the education met his expectations, partly because he did not really have any chance to get any kind of entrepreneurially focused education previously during the period of communist regime and later on he did not seem to considerate any formal

educational ways of self-progress. Instead, the informal and practical ways of information acquirement and personal self-discipline seem to play an important role in his entrepreneurial life.

Jaroslav's propensity to practical entrepreneurial activities is apparent and permeates through all the interview evidence. Therefore, the role of education in his perception can be understood as expressed necessity to get an informal education through entrepreneurial practice.

The informal knowledge acquirement is the important factor not only for entrepreneurial success but also for getting the general insight into various issues the individual faces through his life: *"...in past, people used to wander the world, today they call it training... to have a look around..."*.

For Jaroslav, the limitations of self-educational activities are represented only by the lack of individual self-discipline and will; they are not connected with external factors.

Having shortly summarised Jaroslav's attitude to entrepreneurial life, he seems to prioritise the individual responsibility and independence as the main components.

6.1.4. Tomáš

The need for education is invoked by character of the profession. In order to legitimate the professional knowledge as such this has to be certified and maintained updated. Also, the external professional system associating the experts who are running the similar kind of business and provide the expertises puts the pressure on the members regarding their educational activities. The entrepreneurs are the part of this system and need to meet certain criteria. Therefore, the education represents inevitable condition for running this kind of business.

With regard to entrepreneur's expectations, the attained education does not have to be the grounds for successful enterprise.

Formal education in this case represents the condition of becoming a certified expert.

The informal (self-education) and non-formal (courses organised for experts by an external agency) education help to maintain the required level of professional knowledge (e.g. new law, law promulgations etc.).

Tomáš sees the limitation of self-education in individual lack of will to participate in certain types of education (collective forms of education).

6.1.5. Jana

For Jana, the need of education is induced by the requirements of entrepreneurial environment. Running a hospitality business under franchise, she needed to undergo compulsory training focused on various aspects of the enterprise and the same applies to her current employees. This kind of training represents non-formal education organised by the superior body/employer in order to keep the required standard of services. Such an education is therefore an important factor for running the particular kind of business.

Her training had been focused on marketing, communication, human resources and operational issues. As it had direct connection to her business activities, she found it useful and in a way essential for running her business in accordance with superior company/franchisor requirements. To Jana, the education is connected with practical entrepreneurial life and vice versa. She emphasizes the link between the non-formal training and day-to-day business activities.

As for the influence on entrepreneurial success, formal education is assessed as a factor that improves entrepreneur's starting position because of better entrepreneur's ability to assess the market conditions. Further, non-formal training relates to managerial practice and communication within the organisation. Its influence consists in improved ability to control the work results, to meet the objectives and, from managerial point of view, to formulate the tasks in a precise way.

The only limitation for further educational activities Jana sees in lack of time.

6.2. Hierarchy of values

In order to determine more precisely what value do the particular entrepreneurs attribute to education, the additional research activity consisting in the evaluation of predefined items had been conducted. The additional research question "Which actual values are significant for particular entrepreneurs and how do the entrepreneurs evaluate their significance? Which position (compared to other predefined items) is subjectively assigned to education within such an evaluation?"

Value as a scientific term has various different connotations. For the purposes of this research the value is understood as an individual 'conception' which mental content represents potentially possible and desired mental interaction, i.e. the behaviour ways, means and aims. The values as complex concepts determine and express the significance of different objects,

activities, individual possibilities and create the bases for behaviour orientation. On one hand, the values represent the person and connotatively determine the context of mental interaction; on the other hand (considering the event itself) this context is determined by the world structure (see Loučková, 2010:131).

The respondents have been asked to locate the predefined items within the concentric circles. They have been instructed to place the most significant value to the centre and locate the others around with regard to their importance for their life. There could be more than one value placed within particular concentric circle. The further from the centre the item had been placed the less significant it had been for the respondent.

In compliance with their location on the set of concentric circles, the values had been ascribed the symbolic label- number 1-5 (1= the most important, 5= not important at all). These symbolic numbers had been used:

- 1) To evaluate the individual importance of values
- 2) To create an overall map depicting the importance of values (see Fig.4)
- 3) To create value gradient in order to express the overall significance of the value

The respective symbols (expressed in a form of numbers 1-5 which corresponds with number of concentric circles/rings, see Appendix 5) can, on no account, be understood as traditional numbers. In this case they signify very important conceptions (1) or completely unimportant conceptions (5). This process corresponds with axial coding in grounded theory (see Strauss and Corbin, 1999, Hubík, 2006).

Position	Values according to their significance for the respondents	Significance evaluation
1.	1. Stable and (relatively) good health	1
2.	3. To have the content people around (children, family members, friends, multi-generation co-existence etc.)	1,2
2.	6. Good job, to be successful in what one does	1,2

3.	7. Success or zest of work (including the leisure time activities)	1,4
3.	10. To educate oneself, to train oneself (through the acquirement of various kind of information)	1,4
4.	2. Good friends	1,6
4.	16. To feel safe at one's home	1,6
4.	17. To feel safe outside one's home	1,6
5.	4. Happy partnership, happy marriage	1,8
6.	9. Zest for work or success in work for the closest environment	2
7.	15. Sufficiency of money	2,2
8.	5. Comfortable life (sufficient life standard)	2,4
8.	8. Own property	2,4
9.	11. To work for community (clubs and various organisations membership, etc.)	2,8
9.	12. To live spiritually oriented life, mental development	2,8
9.	18. To be interested in social problems (to cope with social tasks)	2,8
10.	13. To be interested in politics (e.g. the success in political work)	3,8
10.	14. To live a religious life (join the church etc.)	3,8

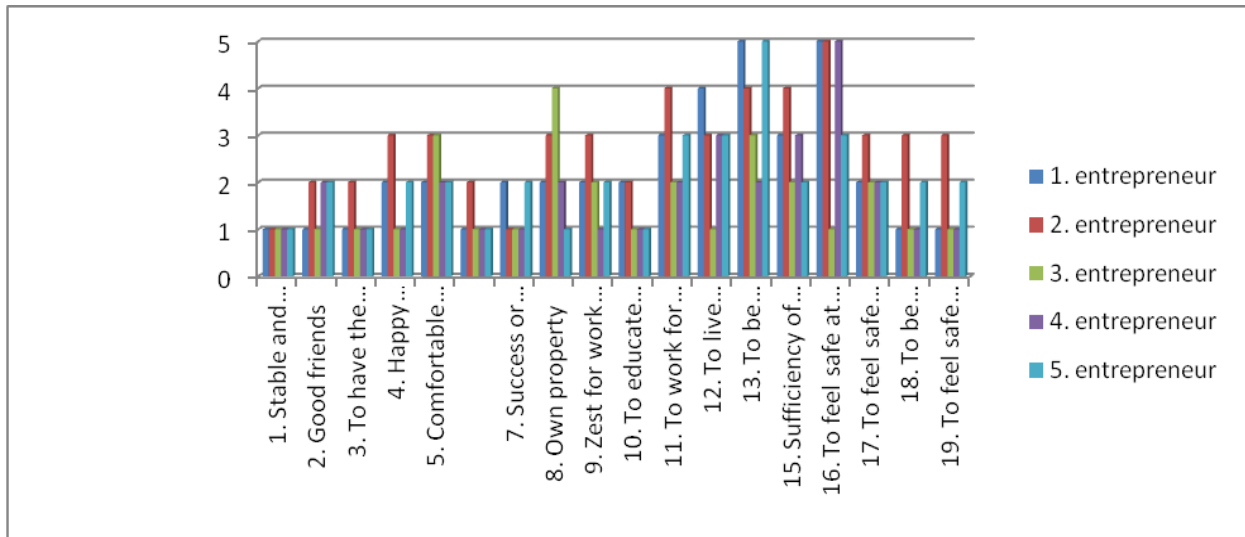
Fig.4 Terminal values according to their significance for the respondents/entrepreneurs

6.2.1. Individual evaluation

The list of so called 'terminal values' had been taken over from Frýba (1975). In Graph 1 (see below), the particular values had been depicted in a form of coloured columns. The lower the coloured column, the more significant is the particular value for the respondent.

As stated above, the aim of this comparison had been to find out the position of education in the hierarchy of predefined values. Traditionally, *health* had been identified as the most important value. However, the *education* (item 10) had been perceived by three entrepreneurs as very

important (symbolically marked as 1) and as important by two entrepreneurs (symbolically marked as 2).



Graph 1: Individual assessment of terminal values

7. Relation of the evidence to the scientific literature and the empirical field of study

As stated at the beginning, the theoretical presumption reasoned by Kirby (2002) that certain competences characterising the entrepreneurs can be learned creates the background for the interpretation of research outcomes. Kirby states, that “what is important is the recognition of the sort of *behaviours/attributes that characterise the entrepreneur and the fact that these characteristics can be acquired and/or developed*” (2002: unpagged). Concretely, he states that among these belong: 1) Total commitment, determination and perseverance, 2) Drive to achieve and grow, 3) Orientation to goals and opportunities, 4) Taking initiative and personal responsibility, 5) Veridical awareness and a sense of humour, 6) Seeking and using feed back, 7) Internal locus of control, 8) Tolerance of ambiguity, stress and uncertainty, 9) Calculated risk-taking and risk-sharing, 10) Low need for status and power, 11) Integrity and reliability, 12) Decisiveness, urgency and patience, 13) Learning from failure, 14) Team builder and hero maker.

Compared to the codes gathered as significant from respondents' evidence (see chapter 5.1), it is possible to observe that some of the competences (above) and significant factors bear similarities.

The following competences might be designated as falling within the ambit of *Self-management* code:

- 1) Total commitment, determination and perseverance**
- 4) Taking initiative and personal responsibility**
- 7) Internal locus of control**
- 8) Tolerance of ambiguity, stress and uncertainty**
- 11) Integrity and reliability**
- 12) Decisiveness, urgency and patience**

It appears that these predefined competences had all been mentioned by the respondents. However, half-contradicting Kirby's statement (above), the entrepreneurs seemed to perceive those as ascribed personal characteristics or as the competences developed by the informal learning/learning by practice, especially those connected to *commitment, determination, decisiveness and responsibility*. No respondent actually stated that he had learned to be self-disciplined, initiative or determined; instead, they have been claiming that these competences are something "you must have...so there is some personal disposition and then there is the way you are willing to accept when running your business", "I wanted to be my own boss" (Michal), "...I wanted to work for myself" (Jana), "[to have stable salary without any change] is an unacceptable life attitude...I'm ambitious" (Jakub),. Also, the respondents have been emphasizing their own initiative and self-control rather a personal characteristics, not as something they have acquired due to their entrepreneurship:"...no one in my family had been running the business, I was absolutely the other kind..."(Jakub, own initiative), "...and I had a good mind to assert myself somewhere...because no one else cared for me..." (Jaroslav, own initiative), "I have to evaluate for myself what I have been doing and when..."(Jaroslav, self-control), "...for first ten years I didn't dare to take a holiday..."(Tomáš, self-control).

As for the statements coded under *Managerial practice and practice* in general, this code might be classified as involving the indications of following competences:

- 2) Drive to achieve and grow,**
- 3) Orientation to goals and opportunities**
- 6) Seeking and using feed back and**
- 13) Learning from failure.**

“Drive to achieve and grow” has not been, in fact, mentioned specifically, however, the *“orientation to goals and opportunities”* is apparent- especially Jakub tends to emphasize the opportunities and both Jaroslav and Jana have been framing their entrepreneurial experience with pointing out to goals achievement and taking the advantage of the opportunities.

From Jakub’s and Tomáš’s evidence ensues that *“seeking and using feedback”* is a common component of their entrepreneurial practice which they have learned to be a good strategy for maintaining the quality of their services: “... I’m building a contact network...it is natural for me to leave a good impression...” (Jakub), “.....it is necessary to be able to reach the agreement with client...[some professionals] had deterred their clients because of their behaviour...”(Tomáš).

As regards the *“learning from failure”*, the tendency to overcome the failure and start again appears in entrepreneur’s graphical chronological depiction of their career (see Appendix 3) in significant way- all the respondents (except for Jaroslav who had decided not to participate in this additional activity) had depicted the decline related to earlier phase of their career.

Three of them marked as ‘deepest’ the period coming between second and fifth year after starting their enterprise. Therefore, it seems that the failure usually appeared later than at first stage of the enterprise as defined in theoretical concepts, i.e. later than during the first year, but still in the earlier stages. Compared with Hronik’s (2007, see Figure 5) concept of company growth, the occurrence of this failure falls somewhere between second and third stage of company growth where the crisis is caused by lack of autonomy (second stage) or by insufficient control (third stage). On the other hand, the growth at these stages is attributed to directive leading and the delegation of tasks respectively. Following this theoretical line it seems that to overcome the failure at these stages the entrepreneurs would have to use their decisive and controlling competences. As stated above, the self-management competences have been perceived by the entrepreneurs rather as their inner and personal characteristics than as competences learned in any way by performing the entrepreneurial activities. The ascribed personal characteristics (inborn human capital, see Madsen, Neergaard, Ulhøi, 2003) seem to play a vital role in overcoming the most profound difficulties connected with running the enterprise.

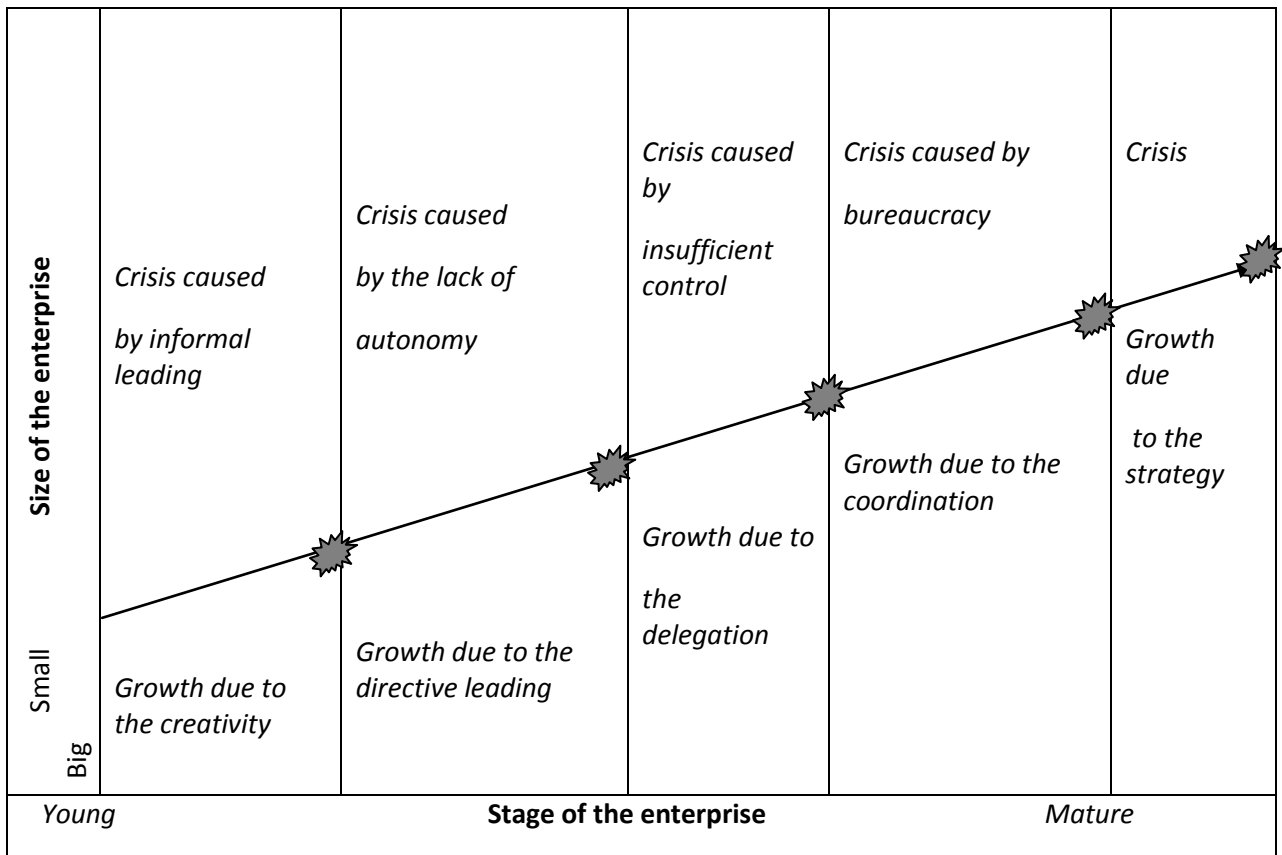


Fig. 5 Concept of company growth as by Hronik (2007)

The competences of “veridical awareness and sense of humour” and “calculated risk-taking and risk-sharing” had not been outspoken within the interviews nor have they been indicated by some of respondents’ statements.

“*Low need for status and power*” also had not been stated expressively but the entrepreneurs did not emphasize the status or power as important factor at all. In this regard, entrepreneur’s independence and one’s own decision making seemed to be perceived as a main advantage in connection with individual ego. Also, the gained opportunity to realise financially demanding hobbies like travelling and sports had been valued as a benefit coming from successful entrepreneurial path (Michal, Tomáš). Although expensive holidays and sport activities are undeniably the signs of higher status position, no indication of having these hobbies as a mean of maintaining the social status could be noted. The inclination to “low need for status and power” has not been clearly stated by the respondents but remains in play when talking about entrepreneurs’ competences.

In conclusion, Kirby's concept of "learnable" competences does not, in fact, seem to be compatible with the reality of the Czech entrepreneurs. Except for "*seeking and using feedback*" where the connection with practical entrepreneurial life/informal 'learning by practice' is apparent, the entrepreneurs have been assigning the presence of these competences, in case they have mentioned them at all, to their inborn human capital⁹. By learning by practice in entrepreneurial environment those competences might have been given a chance to show up and strengthen, but it can hardly be stated that they had been learned. It can not be assumed that they can not be purposely taught and learned but the chosen entrepreneurs have not been learning them, they have been using them.

Also, Jakub unconsciously confirmed the opinions of some experts (see e.g. Garravan and O' Cinneide, 1994, Gibb and Davies, 1981, Nešpor and Večerník, 2006) who point out at the fact that the universities are indirectly leading their students into the position of employees rather than individual businessmen. Also, the prevailing theoretical preparation and insufficient connection with real entrepreneurial life criticised e.g. by Sage, 1993, Penning, 2005, Griffiths, 2008 or Casebow, 2006, is clearly expressed in following statement: "I saw the classmates who have specific jobs in the company...a big part of the studies had not been of benefit to me...it is of large benefit to top management I reckon...such an education ...without practice...is absolutely useless". Also Tomáš when asked for necessary conditions [beside the formal certified education] of successful entrepreneurship had, without hesitation, determined the "*years of practice*".

It is not without interest that in relation to Bourdieu's (1998) concept of social capital where the education represents a mean of maintaining the privileged social positions, the influence of past regime (where instead of education the loyalty and obedience to the regime had been maintaining the social status) had been revealed. No respondent had grown up in entrepreneurial family- to four of them applies that there were no legally functioning entrepreneurs during the communist regime in which they have been brought up. A different phenomenon is being implied by respondents' evidence – the unsatisfying way of living in the family where they had grown up had mobilised their inner potential and made them apply different strategies in their lives when the opportunity appeared. In this relation, country's historical and political

⁹ Concretely to their inborn skills and competences (Madsen, Neergaard, Ulhøi, 2003)

background seems to be limiting but also evoking factor of entrepreneurial activities. The respondents have been trying to abandon their original social position instead of maintaining status quo. Especially in Jakub and Jaroslav's case (see pg. 30), the way their families had been gaining their income seemed unacceptable and made them try some other ways of making their livelihood and increasing their living standards. An informal education and "learning by practice" seemed to take a part in this process.

As for the formal education, the credit had been given to its demandingness (e.g. Jana mention that it taught her to organise her time), the theoretical knowledge which is either the condition (Tomáš) or facilitates and clarifies the gist of the entrepreneurial practice (mostly apparent in the evidence of Jana and Jakub). The formal education seems to provide the entrepreneurs with general skills and competences (organisational and analyzing skills and competences) and the necessary certification for certain types of work.

These findings actually correspond with the outcomes of qualitative research made on entrepreneurs in USA by Johnson-Hunter (2004). She states that "...formal education was not perceived as influential in the realm of entrepreneurial learning...entrepreneurs...claimed that formal education played a valuable supporting role because they gained pertinent information, experience and/or skills as a result of their participation in it" while the informal and non-formal education has been evaluated as "transformational, lifelong and cross-disciplinary in nature" (Johnson- Hunter, 2004:107-108).

Quite interesting, with regard to previous statement, is the absence of non-formal¹⁰ educational activities in Czech entrepreneurs' routine, like language courses or similar (with the exception of the courses organised by professional bodies). Instead, the informal education¹¹, mainly in

¹⁰ Non-formal education is purposeful and structured activity outside the formal school system which can be provided within the workplace or as a complementary program to formal education. It is usually organized in small classes. (Rabusicova and Rabusic, 2006)

¹¹ Informal education comprises any kind of learning or acquiring knowledge, both intentional and unintentional and it covers everyday situations and experience that can serve the purpose of learning, including reading books, TV and radio broadcasting and computer use. Also the aimed self- education belongs to this category. (Rabusicova and Rabusic, 2006)

form of aimed self-education, it seems to be widely-used strategy for the respondents in order to attain the knowledge necessary for running their business and meet the demands of their clients.

8. Check for unintended effects/consequences

Aspers, whose recommendations regarding the research structure had been adopted in this work points that “a consequence, which the actors see as uninteresting, may be very interesting to the researcher, because actors and researchers have different horizons of interest...”.

When operating within the participative paradigm, the reality is perceived as subjective-objective (see Heron, 1996, Heron and Reason, 1997), i.e. we “shape the world by our own terms of reference” (ibid.) which applies to both the respondent and the researcher. The mutual perspective of the researcher and the respondent becomes a legitimate form of interpretation. Heron (1996, unpagged) comments on the difficulty to capture the truthful account of existing world: “Truth and validity degenerate in meaning when they are defined in objectivist terms...they are to do with human reason, and other ways of knowing...cannot be reduced without remainder to central terms within any one particular realm of discourse”.

Because in participative paradigm the world is interpreted as a complex of mutually understood shared meanings, based on common experience, where the input of both the respondent and the researcher is of the same predicative value, the check for unintended consequences within this paradigm had been surrogated by critical subjectivity, “...a state of consciousness different from either the naive subjectivity of ‘primary process’ awareness and the attempted objectivity of egoic ‘secondary process’ awareness”(Heron, Reason, 1997:281).

“Critical subjectivity involves a self-reflexive attention to the ground on which one is standing...” (Heron, Reason, 1997:281).

I understand this statement as an instruction to be critical to my own ways of research conduction and reasoning and to assess the limitations of chosen paradigm and methods which had been thoroughly done in chapter 2. However, certain limitations are the case of each research and researcher’s task is to go through the research work aware of these limitations, not hiding their consequences for the research. By commenting on all the steps I have done through

this part of doctoral thesis, I have been trying to retain an informed and structured approach consistent with phenomenological- participative paradigm.

9. Conclusions

The claims, derived by the researcher from all source data, have the character of ethic evidence, which represent the outcome of the investigation and can serve as hypotheses for other research activities within this doctoral thesis (see Hubík, 2006:65). Therefore, the conclusions below, named under the points 1-5, can be conceived the hypotheses that might be verified by using quantitative research approach.

With regard to the evidence gained in the process of qualitative investigation described in previous chapters, it is possible to state that among the subjective motives for entrepreneurs' education belong the positive experiences with educational system, the emphasis on linking the practical entrepreneurial life with gained education, self-initiative (voluntariness). Also, the responsibility for the development of their human capital manifests itself in entrepreneur's lives by the self-education efforts.

Further, the education lowers the entrepreneurial risk by providing the entrepreneurs with general organising, analysing and assessment skills and competencies, Last but not least, formal education represents a significant factor of creating the social contacts.

The following conclusions had been made with regard to conducted research:

1. At the first stage of their entrepreneurial career the entrepreneurs need the maximum self-discipline, self-management and self-assessment. Further, they need a greater level of openness to the things and certain zest of work, satisfaction from their work results. They have to have at least slightly above-average information about their business field, above-average level of competences/abilities connected with decisiveness, determination, responsibility and self-management, and communication skills. They also need to listen to the others' needs and be open to changes.

2. The high value seems to be being ascribed to formal education. Formal education is being assessed as an advantage for entrepreneurial beginnings but not as an unconditional factor. Formal education is connected with general competences and certified knowledge while informal education has an importance for entrepreneurial practice as such and helps to enlarge the scope of knowledge in various areas.

3. Formal education can be understood as a condition for some fields of business/entrepreneurship, however, even in this case the emphasis lies on the balance between the formal and informal/non-formal education. With regard to changing market situation, the informal and non-formal education seems to be advantageous, mainly for its flexible character and the adjustability to individual needs.

4. The entrepreneurial success goes together with better ability to choose from the available programs of formal and informal/non-formal education the most suitable for one's needs.

5. The obstacles of formal and non-formal education include mainly the unexpected family and health issues. Among formal education obstacles, the common obligations connected with its formality also appear (e.g. the regularity, the necessity to meet some conditions).

The hypothesis within the qualitative phenomenological research is „inductively created interpretation of certain phenomenon whose confirmation consists in interactive acceptance of its interpretation function- both by the researcher and research subject” (Hubík, 2006:65). At this moment, it is possible to create the hypothesis on the grounds of conducted research and abovementioned conclusions.

Having summarised the conclusions above, it is possible to formulate initial hypothesis:

Among the subjective motives of entrepreneur's education belongs:

- Positive experience with formal educational system
- The emphasis on the connection between practice and education being gained
- The participation in (voluntary) educational activities contributes to entrepreneurial risk elimination
- The opportunity to create and maintain social connections

The other possible hypotheses represent the findings formulated as follows:

1. In the earlier stages of the enterprise life-cycle (2-5 years after the initiation of entrepreneurial career), the successful entrepreneur is confronted with personal (entrepreneurial) failure. However, this failure is conceived a challenge which should be taken up.
2. As a value, the education occupies a prominent position in successful entrepreneurs' subjectively perceived value hierarchies.

The purpose of this work had been to recognise the possible influence of education on entrepreneurial career of Czech entrepreneurs by conducting a qualitative research and derive the hypotheses which can be further verified within Doc 4. The whole research had been directed to this goal which had been successfully reached by delimitating the field of gained knowledge- in accordance with academic principles- in the form of conclusions and hypotheses contained in this chapter.

The plan for Doc 4 involves the change of conceptual framework in accordance with the conclusions of this part of research, the elaboration of essential concepts and their use in a form of questionnaire.

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11. Appendices

Appendix 1: Table of codes

Name of codes (entrepreneurs symbols)	Repeated occurrence of codes				
	1. interview	2. interview	3. interview	4. interview	5. interview
1. success		1x			1x
2. the need of self-management (self-development, discipline, determinedness, decisiveness, discomfort, hard work)		3x	3x		1x
3. formal education	1x	1x		3x	2x
4. non-formal, informal education	1x	2x		1x	
5. psychosocial intelligence	1x				
6. personal dispositions, effort	1x				
7. colleagues, employees	1x	1x	2x	1x	1x
8. to establish contacts	1x	2x			
9. travelling		1x			
10. leisure time activities		1x	1x	1x	
11. family		1x	2x	1x	1x
12. obstacles overcoming		1x			1x
13. managerial practice		2x	1x	1x	
14. failure in entrepreneurial activities		1x	1x		
15. investments			1x		

16. institutions			1x		
17. zest for entrepreneurship/work		1x	1x		
18. managerial skills		1x	1x		1x
19. the cancellation of prior working position	1x				
20. competition	1x				
21. "Poverty „of family in which one had been brought up		1x			
22. understanding		2x			
23. money				1x	
24. customer, client					1x

Appendix 2: List of questions

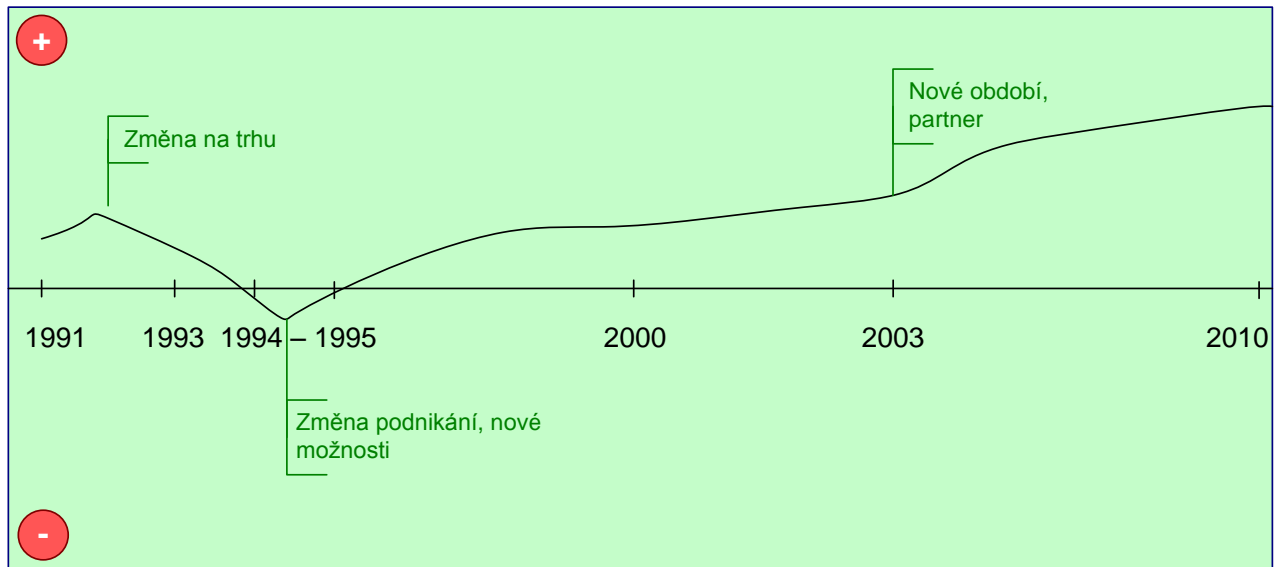
1. interview
With regard to the entrepreneurship we are trying to find out the various factors that influence the entrepreneurship. What influences the entrepreneurship, namely the successful entrepreneurship? So, if I can ask, how long do you run your business?
And what had been that reason of your starting your own business?
So you have had some opportunity to attain self-realisation, hadn't you? Did you perceive that transition as an opportunity to start with your own things?
And any other reason?
So you've started to run your own business?
You mean the entrepreneurs you work with like affiliates or business partners?
That beginning of entrepreneurship probably has not been easy. What was the turning point, when did you say to yourself Yes, I'm successful now, now it's the way it should be? In 1991 you've started and since then you've had the feeling that everything works, everything is fine?
So you've started again...
So finances, the lack of experience, anything else?
Understand what he/she wants?
When talking about various influences, conditions of successful entrepreneurship, can we say that during the childhood your prospects of future career had been influenced? By any hobbies, activities, family, friends or has there been anything else?
So that had influenced you a lot, you've had some overall view, knowledge...
When you've mentioned the orientation in psychology, is it really just the issue of the experience you have got within the dealing with people?
So, can you summarize it all, the main things?
Well, a lot of issues have been mentioned, do you relax somehow, does the relaxation help you to cope better with entrepreneurship?
Try, please, to clarify what is your favourite way of relaxation...
I have another question regarding the influences on entrepreneurship, had there been anything more important at the beginning or is the "mix" staying the same?
Thank you for your time.
2. interview
The first question is what influences, what factors had influenced your becoming the successful entrepreneur? And another question, when did you start to think you're successful entrepreneur, about when did that success start, when a how did you feel it?
You've mentioned that you wanted to have your own business since the childhood, did you have any examples, for example in your family?
At this time, a lot of people started to run the business, what do you reckon had been the <u>reason for someone's success, someone's failure, for example, you've been successful.</u>
Try to specify once again that wrong way, how do you recognise that you're already on the wrong track?

I'll just ask, those skills and knowledge, how do you work with them?
What kind of studies?
So you've interconnected it with the practice.
What else is important for successful entrepreneurship?
When mentioning the contacts, the e-mails and electronic contacts are often used...
What else influences your work? To establish the contacts, as you said, that probably goes together with travelling?
So, it's certain kind of relaxation?
What is another important factor of successful entrepreneurship? Is it, for example, the support from the family?
Is there anything else you would mention in connection with this, something we didn't speak about yet?
Thank you for your time.
3. interview
First question, what factors influenced the fact that you've become successful entrepreneur? And when did you start to run your business? How did you start your business?
As it went further...
That means that, from your point of view, the education is not as important as personal qualities, character?
How was it, running the business after revolution?
What else can influence the entrepreneurship so much as that bank?
What do you do to maintain the right attitude while running the business, it no definitely not easy to deal with people, as you've mentioned.
What do you do to be as successful at your work?
Aren't you tired from that self-tasking?
So, with your family?
All right, thank you for your time.
4. interview
First question, what are the factors that had influenced your becoming a successful entrepreneur? Is it possible, in your business, to distinguish successful or unsuccessful entrepreneur, I mean with regard to the specifics of your profession?
So these are the negatives, and what, on the contrary, contributes to success in your profession?
I'll ask, except for these influences as personal attitude, to be able to deal with the client, to be able to reach some agreement- you've mentioned that the important issue is to meet the conditions given by law, pass the exams, I'll just ask regarding some other kind of education, if that happens, in what way does it happen?
Do you reckon that not everyone is so concerned as you are and that could have the influence on entrepreneur's success?
What else can influence the success, except these, let's say, formal factors?
Do you think that in order to be successful in your work you need anything else? What about family,

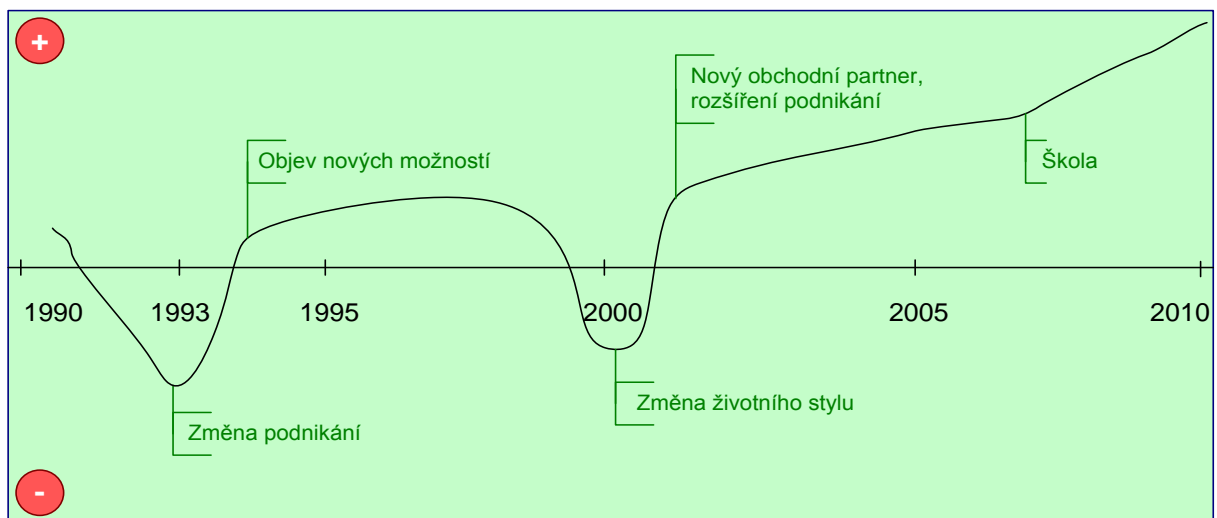
leisure time, etc., is that an influence?
Thank you for your time.
5. interview
First question, what were the factors that influenced your becoming a successful entrepreneur? And when did you start to run your business?
So you've started to be successful in this current business?
What seems to be important is that in your business there is a strong emphasis on order, organisation and management. Is it difficult to meet the standards created outside, by an international organisation? Certainly these are your experience, skills and education.
Is it important that you've got university degree? For your business?
Then, what's important for entrepreneur's success?
What does it mean a great level of control?
Regarding the human resources, maybe the issue is interlinked with that communication?
Next thing, we've mentioned the practice of the trade... Thank you for your time.

Appendix 3: Biographical graphs

Graph 1

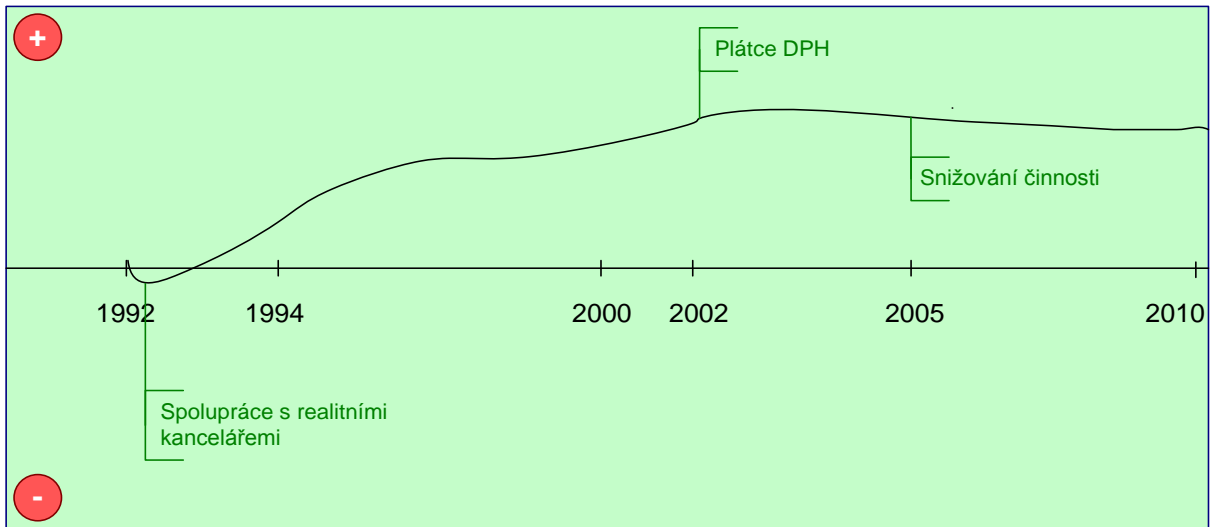


Graph2

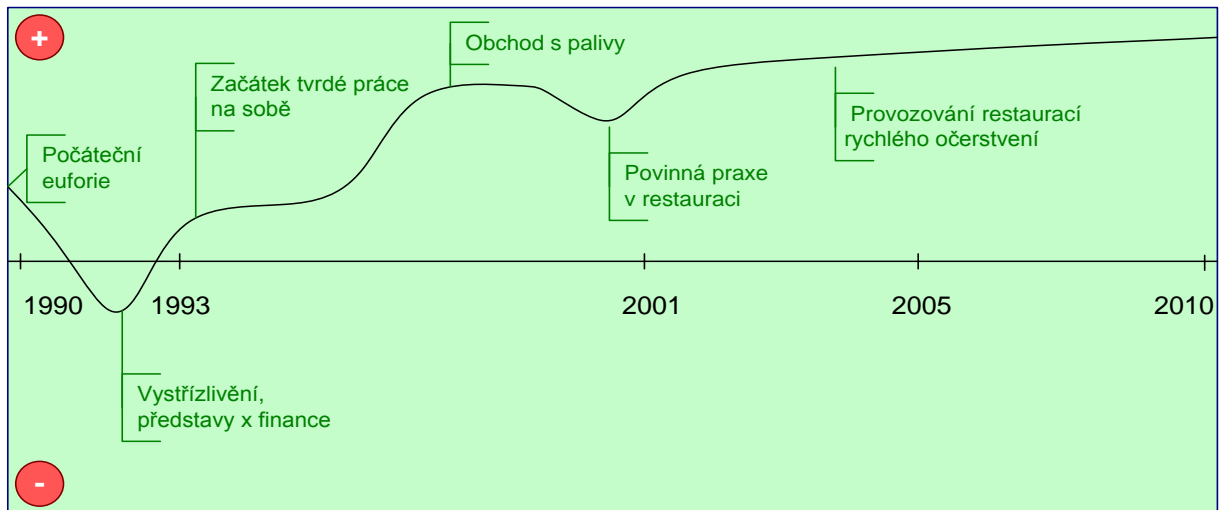


Graph 3: Respondent refused to participate

Graph 4



Graph 5



Appendix 4: Informed consent form

The influence of entrepreneurs' education upon their success at the first stage of business life cycle of their enterprise.

The project is conducted as an academic dissertation by:

Bc. Bohdana Hošková, MBA

Nešverova 2

779 00 Olomouc

e-mail: hoskova@hoprgroup.cz

tel.: +420 585 750 424

The invitation to participate in the survey:

By sending this letter I would like to invite you to participate in the research conducted within the DBA study program on Brno International Business Institute. The research participation is completely voluntary. Please find more information about this research, including the description of your possible participation, in following lines. Please, read them carefully. Should you have any queries regarding the research or your possible participation, please do not hesitate to contact Bc. Bohdana Hoskova, MBA. Thank you for your time, your participation is greatly appreciated.

Research purpose:

Considering the fact that similar study focused directly on education influence upon the entrepreneur's success has never been done in the Czech Republic, I see the topic as an important one for potential educational strategy planning both for business schools and other educational institutions.

Why have you been chosen to participate?

As an entrepreneur functioning within the Czech market several years you have managed to deal with the problems inevitably connected with the start of business activities and therefore your experience is more than valuable for this research.

What does your participation involve?

The research participation consists of the interview lasting about 60 minutes during which both your experience with Czech educational system and non-formal/informal educational experience will be discussed with regard to their possible use and efficiency at the first stage of your enterprise. You have the right to terminate the interview at any stage without giving a reason. Only your above-mentioned educational experiences related to the start of the business and connected issues will be the subject of the discussion, unless you wish otherwise.

It is only your decision whether you participate. Before the interview realisation, you will be asked to sign the participation Consent form.

In case you agree to an interview, you will be asked for the approval of dictaphone use and recording of your answers which would be a great help for the researcher considering the following data processing, sorting and coding. However, even if you approve of audio-recording, you have the right to ask the researcher to stop the recording at any time. In case you don't agree to audio-recording, the written notes will be taken by the researcher.

You will be asked only the questions related to research object and you have the right to withdraw your consent and discontinue the participation in the research without giving a reason at any point before the data will have been analysed, i.e. one month after the last interview session. Should you decide to withdraw from the research at that stage, all the data obtained from you will be deleted and the physical evidence of them (transcriptions, notes) will be shredded and disposed of in no recoverable way.

Confidentiality:

All the data gathered during the research are deemed confidential. Your name will not be mentioned and will only be the subject of administrative evidence of interviews/ questionnaires. All such an evidence will be kept in safe storage on the researcher's premises and will be used only for the above described research purposes. There will not be any mention of your name or the name of your company in the interview records, unless you state otherwise. All the notes and audio records will be kept separately from the documents presented as an academic dissertation and will be kept in a safe place on the researcher's premises.

Research outcomes:

This research is being conducted as an academic dissertation within the DBA program at Brno International Business School whose key partner is Nottingham Trent University. The completed work will be kept in B.I.B.S. archive and it will be provided on request. In case you are interested, the summary of research outcomes will be provided on your request.

Again, I would like to thank you for your time,

Bc. Bohdana Hořková, MBA

I hereby agree to participate in research. I understand the purpose of the research and I have been given all the information about the possibilities of my consent withdrawal.

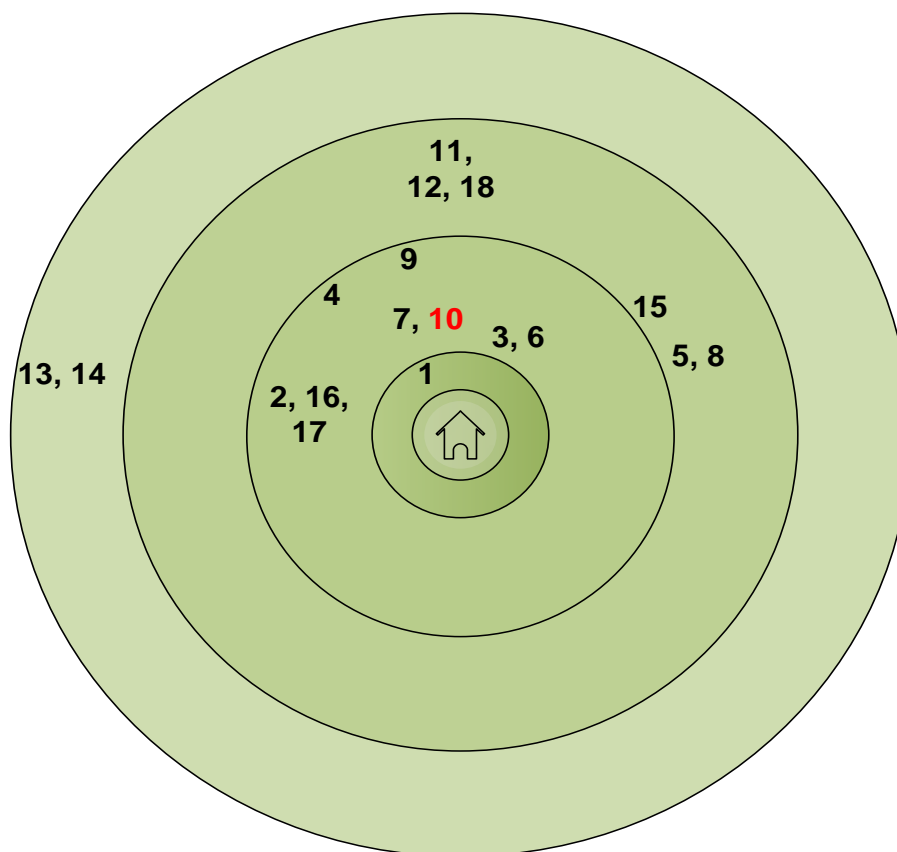
In.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Appendix 5: Values gradient*

Hodnotový gradient



1. Stabilní a (relativně) dobré zdraví (1)
3. Mít okolo sebe spokojené lidi (děti, členy rodiny, přátele, vícegenerační soužití apod.) (1,2)
6. Dobré zaměstnání, být v něm úspěšný (1,2)
7. Úspěch nebo radost z práce pro sebe (včetně volnočasových aktivit) (1,4)
10. **Vzdělávat se, vychovávat sebe (prostřednictvím získávání nejrůznějších informací) (1,4)**
2. Dobří přátelé (1,6)
16. Pocit bezpečí ve svém domově (1,6)
17. Pocit bezpečí mimo domov (1,6)
4. Spokojený partnerský vztah, dobré manželství (1,8)
9. Radost nebo úspěch z práce pro nejbližší okolí (2)
15. Dostatek peněz (2,2)
5. Příjemný život v dostatku (uspokojivý životní standard) (2,4)
8. Vlastní majetek (2,4)
11. Pracovat pro druhé ve smyslu pro společnost (členství v klubech, organizacích apod.) (2,8)
12. Žít duchovně orientovaným životem, duchovní rozvoj (2,8)
18. Zajímat se o sociální problémy (plnit sociální úkoly) (2,8)
13. Zajímat se o politiku (např. úspěch v politické práci) (3,8)
14. Žít náboženským životem (v církvi apod.) (3,8)

*For the description of numbered values in English see pg. 40.

Appendix 6: Transcription of 5 interviews in Czech language