

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**Self-determination and Entrepreneurship:  
Personal Values as intrinsic motivators of  
Entrepreneurial Behaviour.**

**WILLIAM WALTON KIRKLEY**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Of Massey University, Auckland**

**New Zealand**

**2010**

## ABSTRACT

The study of entrepreneurs has often led to conflicting views about what motivates an individual to engage in entrepreneurship. The historic focus on the traits and characteristics of specific individuals perceived by others to be entrepreneurs, has yielded results that are, at best, speculative and difficult to substantiate. This study has taken a different approach by isolating entrepreneurial behaviour and examining its antecedent components. Specifically, the study sought to discover the internal loci of causality that motivate an individual to engage in entrepreneurial behaviour.

The study was based on an inductive and interpretive research design within a constructivist paradigm. A small quantitative survey was conducted initially to screen an appropriate sample, the results of which were later used as an aide memoire during in-depth interviews, with thirty New Zealand entrepreneurs. The bulk of the data sourced in this study originated through the interview process. These focused specifically on the meaning individuals attributed to certain fundamental values associated with entrepreneurial behaviour. The resulting narrative was subjected to discourse analysis and categorised into relevant themes.

Four fundamental values are believed to be critical to entrepreneurial behaviour, namely, independence, creativity, ambition and daring. These values were expressed as psychological needs and act as intrinsic motivation for entrepreneurial behaviour. Only twenty three percent of the sample (7 out of 30), however, could demonstrate consistent motivation through these four principles. The balance of the participants acknowledged the importance of these four principles to entrepreneurial behaviour. However, the majority admitted that there had been a shift in their behaviour toward management, which placed more emphasis on independence and ambition in the value-set. Creativity and daring were accorded much lesser attention as the individual focused on growing their business. This shift in emphasis in the value-set is perceived to be one cause for the episodic and inconsistent occurrence of entrepreneurial behaviour amongst New Zealand business people.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

My heartfelt and sincere thanks go to the members of the Department of Management and International Business on the Albany campus (now the School of Management), both past and present, for their encouraging words and support throughout this process. I can still hear the words 'GET IT DONE!' ringing in my ears and which will no doubt haunt me for some time to come!

In particular I'd like to thank my supervisors, Associate Professor John Monin who provided the 'big picture' detail of the project and then left me alone to get on with it; and Dr Andrew Cardow, a long standing colleague, whose keen eye for detail proved invaluable during research and the writing of this thesis.

I'd also like to thank the participants to this study who gave up several hours of their valuable time to explain their life philosophies, their beliefs and the events that influenced their thinking and behaviour. You are all part of an important network and I thank you for having provided me with the opportunity to share your experiences.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **Self-determination and Entrepreneurship:**

#### **Personal Values as intrinsic motivators of Entrepreneurial Behaviour.**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>CHAPTER ONE: Introduction and Overview</b>                                | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>1.1. In search of the research gap</b>                                    | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>1.2. Concepts, Definitions and Scope</b>                                  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>1.3. Research contribution and Strategy</b>                               | <b>13</b> |
| <b>1.4. Thesis outline</b>   | <b>15</b> |
| <b>1.5. Summary</b>  | <b>15</b> |
| <b>CHAPTER TWO: Building a contextual model of Entrepreneurial Behaviour</b> | <b>17</b> |
| <b>2.1. Entrepreneurial Behaviour</b>  | <b>19</b> |
| <b>2.2. Opportunity Identification</b>                                       | <b>21</b> |
| <b>2.3. Self-determination, Self-identity and Self-efficacy</b>              | <b>24</b> |
| <b>2.4. Values</b>   | <b>41</b> |
| <b>2.5. Thesis overview</b>  | <b>47</b> |
| <b>CHAPTER THREE: Research Design and Methodology</b>                        | <b>49</b> |
| <b>3.1. The Worldview supporting this study</b>                              | <b>50</b> |
| <b>3.2. Theoretical perspective</b>  | <b>52</b> |
| <b>3.3. Methodology</b>  | <b>54</b> |
| <b>3.4. Overview of the Research Process &amp; Methods</b>                   | <b>55</b> |
| <b>3.5. Ethical considerations</b>   | <b>65</b> |
| <b>3.6. Summary</b>  | <b>66</b> |
| <b>CHAPTER FOUR: Discovering Values and their Interpretation</b>             | <b>67</b> |
| <b>4.1. Biographic data</b>  | <b>68</b> |
| <b>4.2. Values associated with Entrepreneurial Behaviour</b>                 | <b>69</b> |
| <b>4.3. Meaning and Themes</b>   | <b>72</b> |
| <b>4.4. Summary</b>  | <b>87</b> |
| <b>CHAPTER FIVE: Values content and what they mean</b>                       | <b>89</b> |
| <b>5.1. Values and value-sets</b>  | <b>90</b> |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| 5.2. Values and the valuing process  | 92         |
| 5.3. Values as psychological needs   | 95         |
| 5.4. Values as extrinsic and intrinsic motivation  | 97         |
| 5.5. Assessing Values Content and Meaning  | 104        |
| 5.6. Summary   | 130        |
| <b>CHAPTER SIX: Values and Entrepreneurial Behaviour</b>   | <b>132</b> |
| 6.1. The Motivation to behave entrepreneurially  | 132        |
| 6.2. Values and Intrinsic Motivation   | 134        |
| 6.3. Values and Self-determination   | 140        |
| 6.4. Values and Self-identity  | 143        |
| 6.5. Values and Self-efficacy  | 157        |
| 6.6. Summary   | 168        |
| <b>CHAPTER SEVEN: Values, Intrinsic Motivation and<br/>Entrepreneurial Behaviour</b>                             | <b>170</b> |
| 7.1. The Entrepreneurial Value-set   | 172        |
| 7.2. The Meaning of Entrepreneurial Values   | 174        |
| 7.3. The interaction between self-determination, self-identity<br>and self-efficacy in entrepreneurial behaviour | 177        |
| 7.4. The Role of Values in Entrepreneurial Behaviour   | 179        |
| 7.5. Limitations of this study   | 181        |
| 7.6. Potential Research Questions  | 182        |
| 7.7. Conclusion  | 183        |
| <b>REFERENCES</b>  | <b>185</b> |
| <b>APPENDICES</b>  | <b>203</b> |

## **LIST OF TABLES**

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| <b>Table 1: Top Five rated values</b>  | <b>70</b>      |
| <b>Table 2: Attributes assigned to those perceived to be entrepreneurial</b> | <b>74 - 75</b> |
| <b>Table 3: What it means to be entrepreneurial</b>                          | <b>76</b>      |
| <b>Table 4: Entrepreneurial values and their descriptions</b>                | <b>79 - 80</b> |

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Figure 1: A proposed model of entrepreneurial behaviour</b>  | <b>41</b>  |
| <b>Figure 2: A proposed holistic model of entrepreneurial behaviour</b>   | <b>47</b>  |
| <b>Figure 3: The research process</b>   | <b>57</b>  |
| <b>Figure 4: The relationship between Entrepreneurial Behaviour, Self-efficacy and Self-identity in Self-determined Behaviour</b> | <b>178</b> |