International Entrepreneurial Values Elicited Through Repertory Test and Laddering Analysis: An SME, Internet-Enabled Tourism Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the international entrepreneurial values influencing the intensity of Internet use in the internationalization process of small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs), within the Australian tourism industry. The findings point to a relationship between the values of international entrepreneurs and the inclination of the firm to develop and initiate international activity. And so, this study endeavors to offer insight into issues that remain unresolved in existing tourism and international entrepreneurship (IE) literature. Two effective but underutilized qualitative methods were used in this study to identify the values of international entrepreneurs. They are repertory test and laddering analysis.

Keywords: International entrepreneurship, SMEs, values, Internet, internationalization.
INTRODUCTION

During the last decade, international marketing and management scholars have been exploring the interrelationships that exist between the cognitive perspectives of entrepreneurs on a firm’s international market growth. Early studies investigating the link between ‘internal determinants’ or entrepreneurial behaviour, and the internationalization process of the firm became prevalent throughout the early 1980’s, with studies focusing on the attributes distinguishing entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurial managers (Begley and Boyd, 1987; Welch & Young, 1982), and the effect of the cognitive values on firm growth (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). Internationalization has been extensively researched in international marketing studies to evaluate the movement of a firm’s increasing involvement in international operations (Cavusgil, 1981; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Johanson & Weidersheim-Paul, 1975; Rogers, 1962; Welch & Luostarinen, 1988). That is, internationalization is generally considered as a process model, which implies that firms move in an incremental fashion increasing their foreign market commitment across national borders gradually (Rogers, 1972).

According to the literature, firms are well established in the domestic market, prior to foreign market expansion (Johanson & Weidersheim-Paul, 1975; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). This assumption remains flawed as more recently researches (see Aspelund & Moen, 2004, Loane, McNaughton & Bell, 2004; Loane, 2006; Petersen, Welch & Liesch, 2002) allude to advances in Internet technology as being a major contributor towards facilitating the internationalization process of firms. More recent research also highlights a shift in IE literature to applying cognitive perspectives in examining how entrepreneurs analyze and exploit opportunities in foreign markets (Zahra, Santeri Korri & Yu, 2005). However, scant research exists in examining how entrepreneurs exploit the opportunities provided in Internet-enabled environments (Mostafa, Wheeler & Jones, 2006). And as such, there remains limited coverage of the Internet-enabled entrepreneurial values in the broader perspective of SME internationalization.

It has been widely acknowledged that the Internet can play an important role in the internationalization process of the firm (Aspelund & Moen, 2004; Andersen, 2001; Hamill, 1997; Loane et al., 2004;
Petersen et al., 2002; Prasad, Ramamurthy & Naidu, 2001). In particular, Internet based technology offers small to medium sized enterprises (SME) enhanced i) opportunity identification and ii) strategy execution, in international markets (Aspelund & Moen, 2004; Loane, 2006; Qureshil, Kamal & Wolcott, 2009). As a result, tourism SMEs in particularly can now respond to customers in global markets at an increasingly faster pace, by better understanding international markets and expanding internationally from near inception, extending the firm’s global reach with less perceived risk (Standing & Vasudavan, 2000). And so, the decision of a firm to pursue international markets is also dependent on the availability of technology, as well as the international orientation of management (Loane, et al., 2004). And such, the aim of this study was to explore the role of the Internet in the internationalization of Australian tourism SMEs and the entrepreneurial values influencing the intensity of Internet use.

It is our aim in this article to provide some insight of the international entrepreneurial values influencing Internet marketing intensity in tourism SME environments. Also, we propose that specific international entrepreneurial values: ‘international vision’, ‘international goals’, positive international growth orientation’, ‘innovativeness’ and ‘giving of financial and knowledge resources’ behavior is associated with Internet adoption, as well as the inclination of the firm to initiate international activity. We also endeavor to offer insight into issues that remain unresolved in existing IE research, namely the lack of research pertaining to the Internet- enabled entrepreneurial values influencing the Internationalization process of the firm.

In the following sections, we provide a detailed discussion in relation to internationalization and IE literature, while highlighting the effect of entrepreneurial values on firm internationalization behavior. Consideration is then given to relevance and increased importance of Internet- enabled IE as a field of business research. We then utilize repertory test and laddering analysis to identify the values of international entrepreneurs in an Internet- enabled context. Finally, we offer concluding comments and discuss in detail the entrepreneurial values elicited from international entrepreneurs, while highlighting the implications of this study for international marketing literature and managerial practice. In doing
so, we seek to provide direction and offer new opportunities for future research in the increasingly important field of Internet-enabled IE.

LITERATURE REVIEW

International entrepreneurship

More recently, researchers (see Andersson & Evangelista, 2006; Etemad, 2004; Loane, 2006; Loane & Bell, 2006; Mathews & Zander, 2007; Mostafa et al., 2006; Oviatt & McDougall, 2000, 2005b; Sinkovics & Bell, 2006; Young, Dimitratos & Dana, 2003) have highlighted the importance of IE as a field of business research. Oviatt & McDougall (2005a, p. 538) highlighted,

“It is clear that the domain of international entrepreneurship is rich in opportunity. Because the field is broad, there are many interesting research questions to be explored, and many existing theories may be beneficially employed.”

More recently, scholars have attempted to reduce the ambiguity that exists in defining the term IE (Oviatt & McDougall, 2005a). As the field of IE is still in a developing stage, researchers have reviewed various theories in an attempt to define IE. This is because many idiosyncratic interpretations of IE are found within the literature (Oviatt & McDougall, 2005a). Essentially, the term international entrepreneurship refers to an individual opportunistic activity that creates value, bears risk, and is strongly associated with innovation in international markets (Styles & Seymour, 2006).

Because academics and scholars have failed to reach a consensus, there remains no accepted generic definition of the term international entrepreneurship. As such, international entrepreneurship research, in its current state lacks coherence (Jantunen, Puimalainen, Saarenketo & Kylaheiko, 2005), and a consensus on a definition remains elusive (Oviatt & McDougall, 2000).

Although IE research, has attracted broader interest from academics in the last decade, little is still known about entrepreneurial capabilities, and the factors influencing the international expansion of firms. Specifically, there is a greater need for IE research from a cognitive perspective to examine
entrepreneurial values influencing the international business decisions of the firm and by which, international opportunities are exploited (Zahra et al., 2005). As such, the use of a cognitive research is important to enrich the current understanding of the aspects shaping firm internationalization decisions (Zahra et al., 2005), by inducing greater depth and rigour in IE research.

Consistent with the ideology of entrepreneurship as an opportunistic activity, it can therefore be argued that IE is defined as ‘the discovery, enactment, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities across national borders to create future goods and services’ (Oviatt & McDougall, 2005a, p. 540).

Further, it can be assumed that IE features two key dimensions: i) recognition of international opportunities, and ii) individual decision making behavior. A key distinction between entrepreneurship and IE is that the latter is international in nature. According to Mathews & Zander (2007) the field of IE is itself, undergoing intense and potentially far reaching change, as the research paths of international marketing and IE are intersecting more frequently than previously thought (Oviatt & McDougall, 2000). This is primarily due the changing nature of international market growth enabled by the Internet. As such, academics are now observing accelerated internationalization amid the smallest of firms (Oviatt & McDougall, 1999).

Cognitive approaches to international entrepreneurship

Upon reviewing the literature in entrepreneurship, it has been found that an increasing number of articles have been published in an attempt to understand the ‘trigger’ (Morison, 2000), and therefore, release of entrepreneurial behavior. Scholars have attempted to conceptualize the motivations behind entrepreneurial behavior, through multiple perspectives (see Hemingway, 2005; Holt, 1997; Korri & Yu, 2005; McGrath, MacMillan & Sheinberg, 1992; Morrison, 2000; Morris & Schindehutte, 2005; Zahra, Santeri). For example, one perspective that is useful is assessing entrepreneurial behavior, is entrepreneurial values, which are highlighted as ‘learned predispositions’ (Morris & Schindehutte, 2005). Values have also been highlighted as ‘cognitive representations’ of universal human requirements related to biological and social needs (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). Consequently, this definition incorporates a dual purpose to the function of values (Hemingway, 2005). That is, values are
can be viewed from two distinct categories, being at an individual personal or entrepreneurial level and from an institutional or firm perspective (Madrigal & Kahle, 1994). As such, this research involved viewing values from a personal and therefore entrepreneurial level to investigate whether groups of entrepreneurs behave in a certain way and therefore, exhibit values that have some commonality. Much of the recent work on personal and international entrepreneurial values stems from the early work of Rokeach (1968-69), who highlighted that values are standards, which are for the most part learned from society and its institutions, and have more to do with modes of conduct and end states of existence (Rokeach, 1968-69). The personal value system developed by Rokeach (1968-69) consisted of terminal (for example, social recognition) and instrumental (for example, ambitious) values.

Conversely, Hemingway (2005) explored the personal values of corporate social entrepreneurs and highlighted how values act as drivers of behavior, paying specific attention to the values of entrepreneurs in the field of corporate social responsibility (Hemingway, 2005). A key assumption of the study is that entrepreneurs in corporate socially responsible organizations are not merely driven by economics, but also personal morality, inspired by employees’ own socially oriented personal values (Hemingway, 2005).

Given that recent work has highlighted the importance of SMEs, international entrepreneurial activity is continuing at an unprecedented pace (Tajeddinin & Mueller, 2009). Subsequently, there is an increasing prominence of entrepreneurial SMEs in the global economy (Oviatt & McDougall, 2000), primarily due to the technological revolution, and increasing world globalization (Peng, 2006). This in economic change has also fueled firm internationalization and given rise to the number of new technology enabled SMEs. As such, international entrepreneurs can leverage their capabilities by the opportunities provided by the Internet. Therefore, the internationalization of entrepreneurship is also becoming increasingly facilitated through the use of the Internet (Etemad, Wilkinson & Dana, 2010).
Internet- enabled international entrepreneurship

The Internet has provided international entrepreneurial SMEs the ability to overcome key limitations of size, which generally inhibits small firm internationalization (Dholakia & Kshetri, 2004). There is also a great deal of evidence that suggests that the Internet has increased the international opportunities for SMEs on a global scale. (see; Angelides, 1997; Arenius, Sasi & Gabrielsson, 2006; Aspelund & Moen, 2004; Bennett, 1997; Berry & Brock, 2004; Hamill & Gregory, 1997; Herbig, Palumbo & Bellman, 1998; Lituchy & Rail, 2000; Loane, 2006; Quelch & Klein, 1996; Sinkovics, Bell & Deans, 2004). For example, allowing international entrepreneurial SMEs to compete more effectively and efficiently by increasing market transactions, enhancing the learning process relevant to international markets, by giving international entrepreneurs access to competitor and market information (Morgan- Thomas & Bridgewater, 2004; Petersen et al., 2002). However, research examining how international entrepreneurs recognize and exploit international opportunities, remains limited.

Early contributions by Poon and Jevons (1997) and Samiee (1998a) suggested that the Internet provides SMEs with important international market opportunities, including; the ability to access information, develop knowledge values and develop and maintain international network relationships. As such, key decision- makers in small international entrepreneurial firms have the ability to make international business decisions quicker than ever before. In light of this, there has been a call by numerous scholars to re- investigate the internationalization process of firms, due to the Internet’s influence on the internationalization process of the firm (Aspelund & Moen, 2004; Hamill, 1997; Petersen et al., 2002). Previous research inquiry alludes to the fact that these key decision makers or entrepreneurs can influence both the implementation of Internet marketing intensity, that is, the varying degree of implementation of the Internet, and important international business decisions of the firm; although this link is yet to be empirically investigated (Aspelund & Moen, 2004; Loane, 2006).

Aspelund and Moen (2004) highlighted that the intensity of Internet use in small technology intensive firms can considerably influence the international vision, niche focus and technology advantage of the
firm. International vision, a single cognitive behavioral element in this study, is measured through a construct identified as, international orientation (Aspelund & Moen, 2004; Loane, 2006). This seminal work is important in highlighting the influence of the Internet on the internationalization process, although only one single cognitive component (international vision) is identified. The findings of this empirical study suggest a relationship between international orientation, Internet use and firm growth. Aspelund and Moen (2004) further argued that the Internet is a powerful tool for small technology-enabled firms in the execution of international marketing strategies. This empirical study is important in moving the current body of knowledge away from basic conceptualizations to the statistical validation of constructs, commonly presented within the literature. However, the link between Internet use and cognitive behavioural motivations, other than international vision remains limited.

Conversely, Mostafa et al., (2006) investigated the link between entrepreneurial orientation, commitment to the Internet and export performance. The findings of the study suggest that there is a relationship between entrepreneurial oriented mangers that are innovative, proactive and risk seeking, and a high level of commitment to the Internet (Mostafa et al., 2006). As such, the authors argued that entrepreneurial oriented mangers are more committed to the Internet and are more likely to exploit those opportunities provided by the Internet. In contrast to the work of Aspelund and Moen (2004) Mostafa et al., (2006) explored the link between Internet commitment and several key cognitive factors including, innovativeness, proactiveness and risk taking. The results of the study are consistent with those of Poon and Swatman (1997) who argued that entrepreneurial behavior facilitates the Internet adoption in entrepreneurial SMEs. Although the empirical study makes important contributions, the descriptive statistics do not model the interrelationships between entrepreneurial orientation, Internet commitment and firm performance. As such, further empirical research is required to explore the processes by which the Internet facilitates firm performance (Mostafa et al., 2006).
In terms of international entrepreneurial values in a technology environment, few authors have begun to highlight key international entrepreneurial values, in an Internet-enabled environment (see Aspelund and Moen, 2004; Mostafa et al., 2006). As such, the theoretical discussion and empirical research on international entrepreneurial values within an Internet-enabled environment remains limited. Specifically little is also known about the factors influencing an international entrepreneur’s decision to explore competitive global environments (Zahra et al., 2005). Research concerning the values of international entrepreneurs is increasing prevalent, although insufficient attention has been given to the role of personal entrepreneurial values in an international Internet-enabled tourism environment.

Based on a review of the literature it is clear that there has been limited focus on the factors influencing Internet use and international market growth of the firm. Due to the increasing importance of the Internet (Loane, 2006), and the ability of the Internet to facilitate international foreign market expansion, there exists the need for increased understanding on the Internet’s impact on the internationalisation process (Aspelund and Moen, 2004; Mostafa et al., 2006; Prasad et al., 2001). Further, research is needed to explore the cognitive values of international entrepreneurs and processes by which the Internet facilitates firm performance (Mostafa et al., 2006). This is an important gap given that there is very little known about the international entrepreneurial values influencing Internet use in a SME tourism firms. And so, there exists a need to explore the values of international entrepreneurs, which most often operate in dynamic, high technology mediated environments. As such, this study endeavors to offer insight into issues that remain unresolved in existing tourism international entrepreneurship (IE) literature.

**METHODOLOGY**

This research required a qualitative approach to engage with international entrepreneurs. The repertory test and laddering analysis are two established techniques underpinned by the conceptual foundations in Kelly’s (1955) Personal Construct Theory (PCT). Kelly often used the metaphor of ‘individuals as scientists’, to describe how we subscribe to constructive alternativism to predict and control our
environment, rather than engage in a stimulus-response manner. Thus our environment is open to reconstruction, and our individual construct system is used to guide our behavior (Jankowicz, 1987). At the heart of construing is anticipation. Kelly proposed we develop a repertoire of constructs that we continually test and amend through life experiences, in order to enhance our predictive efforts: “A person’s processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events” (1955, p. 46). The repertory test was developed by Kelly to operationalise PCT.

In a structured personal interview, the repertory test is used to explore an individual’s construct system. Although the technique was initially designed for use in Kelly’s field of clinical psychology, applications have been successful in a diverse range of other fields, such as human resource management (see Honey, 1979); information systems (see Whyte & Bytheway, 1996) and retailing (see Mitchell & Kiral, 1999) for example. It has been argued the technique has been underutilized in the literature related to both entrepreneurship and tourism (Chandler & Lyon 2001). While the repertory test was developed for application with a single individual, Kelly proposed the potential for group applications due to PCT’s commonality corollary. Even though people have individual construct systems, the way we construe certain events can be similar to those of others (Fransella, Bannister & Bell, 2004). Such commonality of constructs means that the point of data saturation can be reached with small samples. As such, the aim of this study involved viewing values from a personal and therefore entrepreneurial level to investigate whether groups of entrepreneurs behave in a certain way and therefore, exhibit values that have some commonality.

In PCT, Kelly defined a construct as “a way in which things are construed as being alike and yet different from others” (Kelly, 1955, p. 105). For this reason the triad card method has been the most common approach used to elicit salient constructs (Fransella & Bannister, 1977). Elements are presented to subjects in a series of triads (threes), using symbols such as verbal labels printed on cards. An element is the category of object that is the focus of the study, which in this case were international tourism markets. Elements may either be provided by the researcher or elicited from participants. In
this research, nine elements were elicited from each participant by using three standardised questions. Using all triad combinations of 9 elements a total of 84 triads would be required, which was considered impractical. Instead, Burton and Nerlove’s (1976) balanced incomplete design formula was used to reduce number of triad combinations to 24. The following random order of triad combinations was provided by Burton and Nerlove (1976). Each of the elements randomly appeared eight times with each pair of elements featuring twice.

1,2,3  4,5,6  7,8,9  1,4,7  2,5,8  3,6,9  1,5,9  2,6,7  3,4,8  1,6,8  2,4,9  3,5,7  3,4,5  6,7,8  9,1,2  3,6,9  4,7,1  5,8,2  3,7,2  4,8,9  5,6,1  3,8,1,  4,6,2  5,7,9

At the presentation of each triad, participants were asked: "In what important way are two of these markets alike, but different to the third?" The elicited response is usually a small number of words or a sentence describing a functional attribute representative of a decision making construct. At the elicitation of each construct Laddering Analysis was used. Laddering analysis refers to an in-depth tailored interviewing technique that is used to gain understanding of how people translate attributes in meaningful associations (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). Laddering Analysis was initially developed by Hinkle (1965), one of Kelly’s PhD students, as an extension of the repertory test. However, in business-related fields, the technique has commonly been used to operationalise Mean-end Theory and attributed to Gutman and colleagues (see Gutman, 1982, Reynolds & Gutman, 1984, 1988). Laddering moves upwards from functional attributes (A) to consequences (C) to more abstract higher order values (V) that guide behavior, by repeating the question: Why is that important to you? The A-C-V sequence forms a ladder that indicates the relationship between attributes and core personal values. A key strength of repertory test is that only a small sample is required to reach a point of data redundancy.

Qualitative research requires a sample of information rich participants. Of interest to this study were international tourism entrepreneurs of SMEs, enabled by the Internet. This study employed qualitative research techniques and was initially used a convenience sampling technique in an attempt to develop
the research sample. The use of snowballing is widely recognized in qualitative research. Snowballing is a technique that can be used to build a research sample by using the participants in the research study to recommend further participants, thus extending the sample of participants. Subsequently, invitations to participate were sent to each proposed research contact. The sample consisted of five female and six male international entrepreneurs, or owner/ founders of SMEs within the tourism industry. The sample consisted of relatively young international entrepreneurs, with a total of seven entrepreneurs aged 45 and under, and four international entrepreneurs aged over 45.

The country of origin for six of the international entrepreneurs was Australia, while two of the participants came from both New Zealand and the United Kingdom. One of the participants was from Japan. All but two of the international entrepreneurs had prior international business experience. Whilst all service firms apart of this study were from the tourism industry, diversity was apparent in the primary offerings of each firm. For instance, the types of firms included: ‘custom New Zealand holidays’, ‘certified eco tours’, ‘sailing cruise holidays’, ‘boutique travel agencies’, ‘sellers of adventure rides’, ‘water sports businesses’ and ‘professional luxury travel providers.’ All international entrepreneurs in this study were apart of firms that used the Internet for daily business operation. The intensity of Internet use ranged from simple e- mail use to advertising and public relations, website development and blogging. The proportion of revenue coming from international customers ranged from 95% to 5%. A table outlining the demographics of international entrepreneurs represented in this study can be seen in Table 1.

**INTERPRETATION**

The international entrepreneurs in this study were advised to think of their firm’s use of the Internet and subsequently, how the Internet has/ has not allowed the firm to attract customers in overseas markets. As previously explained, the triad card method was used to elicit constructs and the selection of elements were generated by the participants using three key questions. Participants were given nine blank cards and were asked to write one country on each card. The first three countries include, those
places where the majority of the businesses customers come from, the second three includes, three
countries that the business does not have customers from, but would like to in the future; and the last
three includes, countries in that the business has considered targeting customers but will not now
pursue. Briefly, the participant was then asked to specify, in regards to Internet usage within your firm
and how you are using the Internet to attract and maintain customers in foreign markets “In what
important way are two of these alike but different to the third.” Only the positive pole was recorded.

The data generated from the repertory test interviews was then placed into an excel spreadsheet. The
first stage of interpreting that data involved coding the attributes elicited from the repertory test
interviews. Standard content analysis procedures were used to reduce the number of themed codes
elicited, whilst grouping similar themes based on common wording. For example, responses such as
‘higher Internet marketing presence’, ‘greater awareness of the Internet’, ‘increased access to the
Internet’ were grouped together under a themed label entitled ‘Internet marketing’. The process of
reducing the data involved examining the original A-C-V analysis to see what common themes re-
emerged.

In total the 90 verbal labels elicited from international entrepreneurs were reduced to just 24 codes
mentioned by at least 11 participants. The reliability of these codes were validated and therefore,
verified by four co- researchers. Co- researchers were asked to follow Guba’s (1978) guidelines,
where the themed codes should feature internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity. That is, all
codes presented under a theme should be similar in nature, and all themed codes should be different
from each other. The summary of content codes illustrated in Table 2 indicate the most salient
attributes, consequences and values elicited from participants in the repertory test interviews. The
fraction brackets indicate how many of the 11 participants had elicited a verbal label represented in
that particular code. The personal values elicited from international entrepreneurs in this study are also
consistent with the 18 items in Rokeach’s (1968- 69) Terminal Values Scales. A person is said to have
far fewer terminal values than instrumental values because the most far reaching changes in a person’s
life is brought about by a combination of terminal values (Rokeach, 1968- 69).
The hierarchical value map as illustrated in Figure 1 was developed by constructing chains of elements from the individual and aggregate data. The term ladder is used to indicate individual’s data while chain is used to refer to a sequence of linkages between elements in aggregate form. Only chains representing the ladders of at least two participants were used. The hierarchical value map in Figure 1 demonstrates salient relationships between the cognitive attributes, consequences and values of entrepreneurs. And so, the aim of this study was to elicit the personal values of Internet- enabled international entrepreneurs. Each of the personal core values elicited subsumes a larger range of consequences and attributes.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Overall, this study makes three important contributions to IE research. Our first contribution to IE literature was the elicitation of key Internet- enabled international entrepreneurial values: ‘international vision’, ‘international goals’, ‘positive international growth orientation’, ‘innovativeness’, and ‘giving of financial and knowledge resources’. As there is little known about the link between IE and entrepreneurial values (Knight, 2001; Zahra et al., 2005) this research identified some of the core international entrepreneurial values, influencing a firm’s international market growth in an Internet- enabled environment. Currently, the interrelationship between international entrepreneurship and the exploitation of Internet international marketing opportunities is scant. As such, these key findings therefore assist in the understanding of the motivations behind international entrepreneurial values and international business decision making.

Secondly, the use of our cognitive research approach has also enriched the current understanding of the aspects influencing an international entrepreneur’s decision to expand internationally into foreign markets enabled by the Internet. For example, an international entrepreneur that has intrinsic values associated with an ‘international vision’ and ‘goal setting’ behavior enables the international entrepreneur to exploit the opportunities provided by an Internet- enabled international market
environment. Further, international entrepreneurs placing a focus on ‘international market growth’ within the firm are more likely to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the Internet, by leveraging the firm’s international market growth. Furthermore, ‘international goal setting’ behaviour was highlighted by international entrepreneurs in this study as important for making imperative business decisions, measuring success and making informed decisions about the future international direction of the business.

Previous literature in international marketing alludes to the link between an international entrepreneurs positive ‘international vision’ and aspiration of Internet-enabled internationalization (Andersson & Evangelista, 2006; Aspelund & Moen, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Mostafa et al., 2006). As such, these key findings highlight the international entrepreneurial values of: ‘international vision’, ‘international goals’, ‘positive international growth orientation’, ‘innovativeness’, and ‘giving of financial and knowledge resources’ in an international Internet-enabled context, enable international tourism entrepreneurs to evaluate and exploit the opportunities provided by the Internet. This is an important contribution given that international entrepreneurs within the tourism industry often operate in dynamic, fast paced, high technology mediated environments (Standing & Vasudavan, 2000).

Another salient core value elicited from international entrepreneurs in this research study was ‘innovativeness’. In this study, international entrepreneurs for the most part, invested a great deal in technological innovation, development and creation of new ideas and market awareness (Wang, 2008). And so, innovativeness is a core value given that the international expansion of entrepreneurial firms increased competition, which meant that entrepreneurs became more innovative and forward thinking in business practices. Encouragement of new ideas was also evident in the firm’s development and adoption of websites and online reservation systems.

For entrepreneurs ‘giving of financial and knowledge resources’ most often involves more than donating money, but also providing time and knowledge. For the international entrepreneurs in this study, ‘giving of financial and knowledge resources’ was highlighted as a necessary step in personal
and corporate investment. The younger international entrepreneurs in this study active in ‘giving’ behavior also highlighted that the process involved one of learning both personally and professionally. This study also highlights the importance of international entrepreneurial values, including that of ‘giving’ behavior. This is also a relevant finding given that a younger generation of international entrepreneurs are becoming increasingly active in giving their knowledge, time and expertise.

Thirdly, this study makes an important methodological contribution to the field of international entrepreneurship where the use of repertory test and laddering is scant. To date, international entrepreneurial studies investigating the cognitive processes of entrepreneurs have disregarded repertory grid and laddering analysis as an appropriate means to elicit important cognitive information from entrepreneurs. In light of this, the findings of this study will broaden Internet-enabled international entrepreneurship literature by offering an original perspective to the cognitive processes of international entrepreneurs by identifying the core values of firm leaders. Together, the use of repertory test and laddering analysis provides the field of IE with new and interesting insights into entrepreneurial cognitive behavior, enriching the current understanding of the factors guiding internationalization business decisions in the firm.

The findings of this study also have important implications for entrepreneurs of SMEs. The findings of this study point to a relationship between the values of the decision-maker/s and the inclination to initiate and develop international activity. The findings of this study also assist international entrepreneurs in hiring new managerial talent that encompass the values highlighted in this study. These finding are also specifically relevant for those firms at an early stage of Internet-enabled internationalization. Further the values elicited from this study will assist managers in developing an entrepreneurial business culture, with individuals that share similar core values.

Although, this study provides valuable contributions to international marketing literature and more specifically the increasingly important field of Internet enabled international entrepreneurship, there are some limitations. As this study is a cross-sectional snapshot of entrepreneurial values in an
Internet-enabled environment, generalisability of this study is limited and confined only to service firms within the tourism industry. Future studies may consider applying longitudinal approaches to capture changing entrepreneurial values over time.

Further research opportunities relevant to the cognitive understanding of international entrepreneurs in an Internet-enabled environment still remain with the International marketing literature. From a theoretical perspective an important area for future research lies in determining whether the findings of this study can be generalized to other service industries. It is also suggested that the personal values elicited from the international entrepreneurs in this study be validated by studies employing quantitative techniques applicable to a larger subset of the international entrepreneurial population in Australia. Furthermore, as this study is primarily concerned with international tourism entrepreneurs in an Internet-enabled context, future research is warranted to investigate whether entrepreneurs of SMEs in other industries share similar international entrepreneurial personal values.
REFERENCES


### Table 1 - International entrepreneurial demographics of participants in this study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Prior international business experience</th>
<th>Type of business</th>
<th>Business main use of the Internet</th>
<th>Proportion of revenue coming from international customers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Custom New Zealand holidays</td>
<td>Website, e-mail, advertising and public relations</td>
<td>95 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Certified eco tours</td>
<td>Website, e-mail, advertising and blogging</td>
<td>70 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sailing cruise holidays</td>
<td>Website and e-mail</td>
<td>45 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Boutique travel agency</td>
<td>Website and e-mail</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Seller of adventure rides</td>
<td>Website, e-mail, advertising, public relations and blogging</td>
<td>60 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Water sports business</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>40 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Personalized cruises</td>
<td>Website, e-mail and advertising</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Professional luxury travel</td>
<td>Website and e-mail</td>
<td>15 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Seller of adventure rides</td>
<td>Website and e-mail</td>
<td>45 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Water sports business</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Daily cruise trips</td>
<td>Website, e-mail and advertising</td>
<td>65 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2 - Summary of content codes

| VALUES                                      | V20. Giving back to the community (6/11)  
|                                           | V21. International vision (9/11)          
|                                           | V22. International goals (5/11)           
|                                           | V23. Innovativeness (9/11)                
|                                           | V24. Positive international growth orientation (8/11) |
| CONSEQUENCES                               | C11. Yields will be greater (6/11)         
|                                           | C12. Enormous international marketing potential (6/11) |
|                                           | C13. Greater Internet presence (8/11)      
|                                           | C14. Competitive advantages (9/11)         
|                                           | C15. Increase in market share (2/11)       
|                                           | C16. Increased propensity to purchase online (4/11) |
|                                           | C17. Familiarity with the country (10/11)   
|                                           | C18. Increased competition (10/11)         
|                                           | C19. Perceived as exclusive (4/11)         |
| COGNITIVE ATTRIBUTES                      | A1. Greater Internet marketing presence (6/11) |
|                                           | A2. Established networks (9/11)            
|                                           | A3. Communication is easier (6/11)         
|                                           | A4. Populated countries (4/11)             
|                                           | A5. Strong economy (4/11)                  
|                                           | A6. Similarities with the home country (4/11) |
|                                           | A7. Country is culturally diverse (5/11)   
|                                           | A8. Prior knowledge and experience in this country (4/11) |
|                                           | A9. Higher Internet adoption rates (7/11)  
|                                           | A10. Higher number of interested buyers (8/11) |

*Note: The fraction brackets indicate how many of the 11 participants had elicited a verbal label represented in that particular code.*
Figure 1- Hierarchical value map

Key

- 2-4 relations
- 5-7 relations
- 8-11 relations