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WORKING PAPER

**A small business leader's perception on
CSR and business ethical concepts:
an application of RGT in management and social sciences.**

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ABSTRACT

Recent academic articles point to an increased vagueness and overlapping of the concepts around business ethics and corporate responsibility. However, the perception of these notions in the entrepreneurial world can differ from the original academic definitions. This paper focuses on entrepreneurial cognition, a research stream which is increasingly being recognized as a perspective for understanding entrepreneurship related phenomena. Given the impact of the entrepreneur as owner of his venture, corporate responsibility and ethical issues can take a different breadth in SMEs. The entrepreneur has the possibility to shape the corporate culture and to enact values other than profit.

This paper centres its attention on the cognitive study of a specific topic of management and entrepreneurship: the process of how CSR and business ethics related concepts are perceived or interpreted. For this research, the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) is used, a method with limited applications in the business and society field.

Our findings partially reject the confusion in terminology noticed in the academic literature. Entrepreneurs, pragmatically and rather clearly differentiate the various corporate responsibility and business ethics related concepts. These findings add to a better understanding of how entrepreneurs think and integrate corporate responsibility and ethical issues into their decision-making.

Key Words

Business Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility, Entrepreneurship, Small business, Cognition, Perception, Repertory Grid Technique.