



THE SOCIAL REPRESENTATION OF THE TERM ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR STUDENTS IN A BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION COURSE

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SUMMARY

The objective of this work was to identify the social representations that students of the undergraduate course in administration of a private Higher Education Institution have of the term entrepreneurship. The theoretical foundation presented a brief contextualization about entrepreneurship in Brazil and about the theory of social representations. An exploratory study was carried out with students enrolled in the initial periods of the undergraduate course in business administration at a private college in the Metropolitan Region of Recife, using the word evocation test as a collection technique. The results only demonstrate the perception of the students, who indicated the substantive words: investment, planning, creativity, innovation and vision as the central core. Two of them, creativity and vision,

Key words: Social representation. Entrepreneurship. Business administration students.

INTRODUCTION

Administration teaching is relatively recent, having started at the end of the 19th century, at the Wharton School, in the United States and École DES Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC), in France (BERTERO, 2006). In Brazil, the first business administration course was born in 1941, at the initiative of the Jesuit priest Roberto de Sabóia de Medeiros, founder of the School of Business Administration - ESAN, in São Paulo, according to data from the Federal Council of Administration (CFA, 2009). Then, the Faculty of Economic and

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Administrative Sciences of the University of São Paulo, the School of Business Administration of São Paulo - EAESP and the Brazilian School of Public Administration - EBAP, in Rio de Janeiro, were both founded by the Getúlio Vargas Foundation.

According to Bertero (2006, p. 8), “the main axes for the training of administrators that guided the first undergraduate courses implemented were the *foundation in the social sciences* and the emphasis on *administration as a modernizing profession*”(Italics in the original). Modernizing in the sense of training professional administrators and business leaders, which was a challenge in a country of industrialization so late that it was only in 1928 that industrial income in Brazil surpassed agrarian income for the first time (COTRIM, 1995). Possibly the delay in industrialization led to a lack of concern with the training of labor for the labor market and, until the end of the 1980s, higher education was primarily offered by public universities, at the federal and state level, except in rare cases. exceptions.

Only from the beginning of 1990 there was a sharp expansion of private higher education in Brazil. According to data from the Ministry of Education (BRAZIL, 2008) between the years 2002 and 2003, the number of courses increased 23%, from 550 to 677, and the number of graduates increased 125%, reaching 19,900. Regarding the administration course, the expansion can be seen below, in table 1:

Ano	Número IES	Matrículas	Concluintes
Antes de 1960	2	Não informado	Não informado
1960	31	Não informado	Não informado
1970	164	66.829	5.278
1980	247	134.742	21.746
1990	320	174.330	22.394
2000	821	338.789	35.658
2002	1.158	493.104	54.656
2003	1.710	576.305	64.792

Table 1: Expansion of business courses
Source: MEC / INEP / DAES

According to Dolabela (2001), when it comes to formal entrepreneurship education, the São Paulo School of Business Administration of Fundação Getúlio Vargas, which, in 1981, offered the discipline in a Specialization in Administration course. Only in 1984 was the Business Creation - Entrepreneur Training course offered in the undergraduate course.

Because it is a plural and multifaceted concept, teaching entrepreneurship in undergraduate courses in administration is still a great challenge (SOUSA; GUIMARÃES, 2005), since the formation of the entrepreneur requires the acquisition of knowledge and

skills, experiences, creative and innovative capacity (SOUSA, 2001). Thus, the objective of this work is to identify the social representation that students of the administration course of a private Higher Education Institution make of the term entrepreneurship.

The article is structured in five parts, including this introduction. The theoretical basis follows, which addresses a brief contextualization about entrepreneurship in Brazil, about the theory of social representations and the central nucleus and the peripheral system of social representation, in addition to the methodological procedures, where the research design, the universe and collection instruments. Next, the results obtained are discussed and, finally, the final considerations are made.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN BRAZIL

In his studies, Filion (1999) observes that there is a notable confusion regarding the definition of the term entrepreneurship and that there are two currents of thought that deal with the concept of entrepreneur in a dichotomous way: economists associate it with innovation while behaviorists concentrate on creative and intuitive aspects.

Schumpeter (1983) associated entrepreneurship with economic development, showing how innovative actions can introduce cyclical discontinuities in the economy. For the author, the central roles of the entrepreneur were fixed on three bases: innovation, risk taking and the permanent exposure of the economy to a state of imbalance, which leads to the breaking of established paradigms.

Drucker (1992) considers the entrepreneur as one who practices innovation in a systematic way, that is, the entrepreneur seeks the sources of innovation and creates opportunities. For him, the meaning of the word entrepreneurship is associated with the person who practices a hard and difficult task, with seven sources for an innovative opportunity: the unexpected, a contradiction between what is what it should be, a need, a structural change, changes changes in perception and new scientific knowledge.

Under the behaviorist current, entrepreneurs have the characteristics of creativity, persistence, internality and leadership (VIDAL; SANTOS FEYELET, 2003). For people interested in studying the creation of new ventures, the best indicators to predict the success of an entrepreneur are the value, diversity and depth of experience and qualifications acquired in the sector in which they intend to operate (FILION, 1999).

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Souza and Guimarães (2005), in order to bring together the entrepreneurial characteristics proposed by different authors, present the matrix below:

Características	Autores																
	J. Schumpeter	D. MacClellande	Max Weber	L.-J. Fillion	R.E. McDonald	R. Degen	P. F. Drucker	R. Lalkala	I. Dutra	Barros e Prates	H. Mintzberg	E. Angelo	Longnecker et al	E. Leite	Carland et al	Friese et al	Total
Busca de oportunidades	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X			11
Conhecimento do mercado						X	X	X				X		X			5
Conhecimento do produto						X	X	X				X		X			5
Correr riscos	X	X		X	X	X	X				X	X		X	X		10
Criatividade		X		X		X		X	X	X		X		X	X		9
Iniciativa	X	X		X					X					X		X	6
Inovação	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	16
Liderança	X	X	X	X	X		X				X						7
Necessidade de realização	X	X									X				X	X	5
Proatividade	X	X		X											X	X	5
Visionariedade				X					X		X			X		X	5

Table 2: Entrepreneur Characteristics Matrix
Source: Souza; Guimarães (2005, p. 17).

It can be observed that the characteristic 'innovation' is cited by all authors, it is important to note that Schumpeter (1983) and Drucker (1992) establish a very close relationship between entrepreneurship and innovation. The characteristics 'search for opportunities', 'creativity' and 'taking risks' were the most cited after innovation, remembering that Fillion (1991) points out that entrepreneurs are creative people, who seek opportunities to create new businesses.

It is possible to consider that the globalization of the economy has triggered several changes in the structure of society, in particular in Latin American society (TORTATE, 2003). For the author, for decades, most Latin American countries had a closed and protectionist market, with the State in charge of meeting the basic needs of the populations, while large

local groups were in charge of dominating the production of the remaining goods. Consequently, there was no incentive for the citizen to open his own enterprise because it was more advantageous to be an employee of a large company, whether state or private.

It turns out that in the 1990s, with the processes of deregulation of economies, several multinational companies arrived in Latin American markets, leading to the collapse of large local groups that are not used to a competitive environment (TORTATE, 2003).

Specifically in the Brazilian case, the classic employment models aimed at salaried work in large industrial or state-owned companies were extinct from the second half of the 1980s, generating unemployment and underemployment in alarming numbers (RODRIGUES; WETZEL, 2003). For Pochmann (1998), the Economically Active Population (PEA), between 1989 and 1996, increased 16.5%, while the share of the occupied PEA grew 11.4% in the same period of time. As a result, there was a significant increase in unemployment: 179.1%, which is equivalent to more than 3.26 million people without job opportunities. Data from the Workers' Assistance Fund (FAT) show that the annual average participation of jobs with employment in the total occupation dropped from 53.7% in 1991 to 44.5% in 1999 (MTE, 1999).

In addition to the decrease in the quantity and quality of employment in Brazil, changes in its nature have also occurred. According to Silveira (1994), these changes took place in three very evident dimensions: first, the role of autonomous activities and small enterprises is growing when compared to salaried employment in large companies; second, female participation in the economically active population significantly increases; and, finally, there is a tendency to shift from the industry sector to the service sector.

More recently, Calado (2004) exposes that Brazil already has around four million companies employing thirty million people, in addition to enabling the occupation of six million entrepreneurs - including partners and owners. Almost half of these companies (49.8%) have been operating in the tertiary sector, that is, in commerce, while 13.3% are real estate, rental and service providers, and only 9.9% are industries. The remaining companies (23%) are distributed in several other activities of the national economy, such as the agribusiness sector.

Research data *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor* - GEM (2008) show that, in Brazil, for every two entrepreneurs per opportunity there is an entrepreneur out of necessity, in addition to registering a significant increase in entrepreneurial activity among young people.

It is in this scenario that the theme of entrepreneurship gains importance and it is essential to know the social representation of future managers on the subject.

SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

The concept of social representations, according to Minayo (1995) and Cavendon (2003), has its origin in the work *The elementary forms of religious life*, in which Durkheim (1978) states that the first systems of representations that man made of the world and of himself are of religious origin and religious representations are collective representations, since they express collective realities.

According to the author, society is the highest manifestation of nature and, therefore, collective representations always add something to individual representations. Durkheim (1978) considers collective consciousness as the highest form of psychic life and collective representations holding society's primacy over the individual.

The Durkheimian view of prioritizing society over the individual is considered by Herzlich (1991) to be restrictive, as it seeks to minimize the possibilities of individual manifestations.

According to Cavendon (2003, p. 101-102), “the notion of 'social representation' is in limbo between Anthropology, Sociology and Social Psychology [...], because in each of these domains there is sometimes the supremacy of the social over the individual, now the individual is seen standing out from the social ”, which has been generating a conceptual polysemy.

Serge Moscovici is considered the greatest representative of the European aspect of the theory, starting from his studies the consolidation of the expression “social representations” (CAVEDON, 2003). Moscovici (1995) considers that social representation plays an important role in the conflict between the individual and the social, seeking a balance and complementarity between these categories.

[...] all the cultures we know have formal institutions and norms that lead, on the one hand, to individuation, and on the other to socialization. The representations they elaborate bear the mark of this tension, giving it meaning and trying to keep it within the limits of the bearable. There is no subject without a system or a system without a subject. The role of shared representations is to ensure that their coexistence is possible (MOSCOVICI, 1995, p. 12).

The roles played by social thinking can be analyzed according to three aspects: sociological, psychological and psychosociological (MOSCOVICI, 2003), and the REGMPE, Brasil-BR, V.2, Nº1, p. 106-122, Jan./Apr.2017 <http://www.regmpe.com.br> Page 111

psychosociological conception integrates the psychological and sociological aspects and underlies the Theory of Social Representations (MOSCOVICI, 2003).

According to the sociological aspect, the social class imposes an ideology on individuals and groups. In the psychological aspect, individuals process and transform the information received. Finally, in the psychosociological aspect, individuals participate in the construction of society through social interactions and not only process information or introject ideologies. In this sense, Jovchelovitch (1995, p. 78) points out that “the subject is not removed from social reality, nor merely condemned to reproduce it. Its task is to elaborate the permanent tension between a world that is already constituted and its own efforts to be a subject”.

In the words of Jodelet (1992, p. 123), "social representation is a form of specific knowledge or common sense knowledge, whose contents are built from socially marked processes". Social representations are formed when people meet to speak, to argue, to discuss daily life, as well as when they are exposed to institutions, the media, myths and the historical and cultural heritage of their societies (GUARESCHI; JOVCHELOVITCH, 1994).

Common sense knowledge, hermetically isolated by modern science, has been increasingly rescued. Souza Santos (1989) suggests a rehabilitation of what he calls 'lumpendiscursos' and Alves (2005, p. 12) indicates that “science learning is a process of *progressive development of common sense*”(Italics in the original). In this sense, the utility of the theory of social representations is revealed in the search for a better understanding of collective practices. Through the knowledge of a social representation, it is possible to better understand the processes of symbolic constitution found in society and in which individuals engage to make sense of the world and build their social identity in it (GTHE MONTH; STHE; OBookcase, 2003; JOVCHELOVITCH, 1995).

Therefore, this work sought to identify the meanings of the term entrepreneurship given by students enrolled in an undergraduate course in administration, showing the social representations that underlie or derive from it.

THE CENTRAL NUCLEUS AND THE PERIPHERAL SYSTEM OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATION

It is important to note that social representations are not necessarily consensual. The meaning attributed to a given object, in addition to the attribution process itself, constitutes psychosocial constructions that integrate the personal history of each individual with the

result of their group interactions. In order to help identify the most relevant part of a social representation, the values and perceptions that are more clearly and cohesively shared by the investigated group, one can work with the so-called central nucleus of social representation.

It was in 1976 that Jean-Claude Abric proposed the theory of the central nucleus, presented as complementary to the theory of social representations. In proposing this theory, Abric understood that “the organization of a representation has a particular characteristic: not only are the elements of the representation hierarchical, but in addition every representation is organized around a central nucleus, consisting of one or a few elements that give representation its meaning” (ABRIC *apud* STHE, 2002, p.62).

In this way, the central core is formed by the fundamental meanings of representation, those that give it identity. Passing the central nucleus through transformations, a new identity is created. The values that represent the central nucleus of a social representation are those that, generally, the subject is not aware or does not make explicit, but that, nevertheless, direct his action and define his behavior. In other words, they represent what is “non-negotiable”, the essence of social representation, formed by the collective memory of the group and its norms.

Therefore, the central nucleus has a consensual function that aims at homogeneity of the group and which is characterized by being stable, coherent, resistant to change, in addition to being somewhat independent of the immediate social and material context, that is, it is not significantly influenced by the most recent facts. For Madeira (2001) and Sá (2002), the central nucleus is decisive in the inflection that the meaning of a given object assumes for a group in a given historical and cultural context.

There is also in this theory what has been called the “peripheral system”, which houses the differences of perception between the individuals involved in the research, in order to support the heterogeneity of the group and accommodate the contradictions brought by the most immediate context (MADEIRA, 2001; MAZZOTTI, 2001). representing a distinct part of social representation, the peripheral system is composed of elements that are positioned around the central core, not constituting “non-negotiable” values. On the contrary, it accommodates the concepts, perceptions and values that the individual even admits to reviewing, negotiating. Madeira (2001) and Sá (2002) explain that it can even be seen as a form of defense of the central nucleus, allowing exchange with other groups and providing the evolution of social representation, without changing it.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This research is characterized as exploratory, as the topic studied is still subject to systematic knowledge (VERGARA, 1997). It is important to note that we do not seek answers considered as truths, as social representations are constantly being reformulated (FREITAS; CASTRO, 2004). The result that is sought is the understanding and description of the meaning of a term, which makes the research also descriptive.

The collection technique used was the free evocation of words test, applied to raise elements that possibly comprised the structure of the representation of the object under study. The inducing word was *entrepreneurship*. The material obtained was treated considering the conjugation of the frequency and the order of evocation of the words, which implies contemplate, respectively, the collective and the individual dimension.

84 students from a private college in the Metropolitan Region of Recife who were attending the initial periods of the undergraduate business administration course were interviewed. The selection of respondents in the initial periods of graduation is justified not only by the accessibility criteria of the researchers, but mainly because it sought to understand what non-theoretical-academic perceptions the interviewees had about entrepreneurship, which is usually studied from the middle to the end of the course.

The students were asked to mention in writing the first six words or expressions that came to mind spontaneously from the inductive term “entrepreneurship”. The researchers considered the order of spontaneous citation of words or expressions to be the order of importance attributed by the interviewees.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

In all, 489 responses were collected and listed, classified in 185 categories. Words or expressions of the same meaning belonging to the same semantic class were gathered. For example: innovation and invention, creating and creating opportunities.

Of the 185 categories, those that separately reached less than 1% of the simple frequency were disregarded, being this the criterion for determining the categories that are not significant. For the calculations of the word evocation test, the 26 categories with the highest simple frequency were used, which totaled 49.08% of the data worked. Table 3 shows the categories, frequencies and average evocation orders.

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Categorias	Frequência de evocação em 1º lugar	Frequência de evocação em 2º lugar	Frequência de evocação em 3º lugar	Frequência de evocação em 4º lugar	Frequência de evocação em 5º lugar	Frequência de evocação em 6º lugar	Σ das frequências de evocação	Ordem média de evocação
Investimento	5	4	4	6	1	3	23	3,13
Planejamento	2	6	5	2	2	1	18	2,94
Criatividade	9	3	2	0	1	2	17	2,24
Inovação	5	4	2	2	2	1	16	2,69
Organização	0	3	3	2	4	4	16	4,19
Atitude	2	1	2	5	4	1	15	3,73
Visão	4	0	2	3	2	1	12	3,17
Conhecimento	2	1	2	1	4	0	10	3,40
Criar	3	4	1	1	0	0	9	2,00
Ousadia	2	2	2	0	2	1	9	3,11
Iniciativa	0	0	2	4	0	2	8	4,25
Coragem	0	0	2	4	0	1	7	4,00
Mercado	2	2	1	1	1	0	7	2,57
Administrar	0	2	2	1	1	0	6	3,17
Empresa	3	1	0	0	1	1	6	2,67
Gestão	3	0	0	2	1	0	6	2,67
Inovar	0	1	2	1	1	1	6	3,83
Investir	4	1	1	0	0	0	6	1,50
Negócio	2	2	0	1	1	0	6	2,50
Oportunidade	0	0	1	1	3	1	6	4,67
Planejar	1	1	2	2	0	0	6	2,83
Administração	1	1	0	1	0	2	5	3,80
Capacitação	0	0	0	4	1	0	5	4,20
Flexibilidade	1	0	1	1	0	2	5	4,00
Persistência	0	1	1	0	1	2	5	4,40
Responsabilidade	0	2	2	0	1	0	5	3,00
Total	51	42	42	45	34	26	240	84,65

Table 3 - Categories, frequencies and average evocation orders
Source: Research data.

After calculating the frequency and mean evocation order (OME) for each of the 26 significant categories, the results of the mean evocation frequency can be reached at 9.23 and for the arithmetic mean of the mean evocation orders the value of 3.26. Therefore, the distribution criteria in the four quadrants diagram are presented in Table 4, below:

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Frequência média de evocação	9,23	Eixo vertical (valores > 9,23 devem ser alocados na parte superior)
Média das ordens médias de evocação	3,26	Eixo horizontal (valores < 3,26 devem ser alocados do lado esquerdo)

Table 4 - Diagram of average evocation frequency and average OME
Source: Research data.

In the upper left quadrant of figure 1, there is the central nucleus, where the categories are most frequently and most readily cited. The importance of these categories for the interviewed students is reflected in the high number of times they were evoked, resulting in a higher frequency than the average and in the high degree of importance attributed in the hierarchy, making the OME smaller than the mean (STHE, 2002).

The categories located in the lower right quadrant represent the categories mentioned less frequently and later. They are considered components of the so-called peripheral system, in which the less rigid aspects of the studied social representation are found. They are ideas or expressions that, although they are associated by students with the concept of entrepreneurship, are not considered essential to the understanding of this concept, being more easily modifiable (MADEIRA, 2001; STHE, 2002).

Finally, the elements of the other two quadrants, upper right and lower left, allow a less direct interpretation, since they deal with cognitions that, despite not forming the central nucleus, maintain a close relationship with it (TURA, 1997). In figure 1, you can see the diagram formed.

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		Frequência de Evocação	
Ordem Média de Evocação (OME)	Investimento (23) Planejamento (18) Criatividade (17) Inovação (16) Visão (12)	Organização (16) Atitude (15)	
	Criar (9) Ousadia (9) Mercado (7) Administrar (6) Empresa (6) Gestão (6) Investir (6) Negócio (6) Planejar (6) Responsabilidade (5)	Iniciativa (8) Coragem (7) Inovar (6) Oportunidade (6) Administração (5) Capacitação (5) Flexibilidade (5) Persistência (5)	

Figure 1: Evocation Diagram
Source: Research data.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research had as essential objective to verify the possibility of contribution of the theory of social representations to the study of entrepreneurship. This was not a study with a large sample and sufficiently stratified to allow the extrapolation of the results achieved to the general population or even to a determined part of it. The results only demonstrate the perception of students attending the initial periods of the undergraduate course in business administration at a private college in the Metropolitan Region of Recife. Having made this reservation, some final considerations can be made.

The central core is formed by the substantive words: investment, planning, creativity, innovation and vision. Two of them, creativity and vision, were considered personal qualities intrinsic to the entrepreneur and the students understood that it is from them that **conception** of something entrepreneurial. The words investment, planning and innovation, typical activities of business management, were considered to trigger **materialization** of the enterprise.

The words less mentioned and cited later were: initiative, courage, innovate, opportunity, administration, training, flexibility, persistence and the students understood that they represented categories that would guarantee the **maintenance** of the enterprise. And

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finally, the other words that appear in the evocation diagram are: organization, attitude, create, boldness, market, administer, company, management, invest, business, plan, responsibility. These words, according to the students' perception, constitute the elements of **expansion and development** of the enterprise.

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