



TSENOV ACADEMY OF ECONOMICS – SVISHTOV
Faculty of Industry and Commerce
Department of Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship

PhD student Feim Azem Brava

**IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING ON THE
ACQUISITION OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF SMALL
AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES**

ABSTRACT

of a dissertation

for acquiring educational and scientific degree „doctor“

in doctoral program

“Economics and Management (Industry)“

Supervisors:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Iskra Panteleeva

Prof. Dr. Lyubcho Varametzov

Svishtov

2024

The dissertation was discussed and proposed for defense under the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Implementation of the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov, by the Department of Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship at the Faculty of Industry and Commerce at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov.

The author is a PhD student in a part-time form of study at the Department of Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship at the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov.

The dissertation has a total volume of 196 pages and is structured in: introduction (6 pages), a main text of three chapters (160 pages) and a conclusion (4 pages). A declaration of originality and authenticity is provided. The applications, with a total volume of 12 pages, are 2 in number. The information in the dissertation is visualized in 9 figures and 61 tables. The list of used literature consists of 133 sources, of which 130 are in Latin and 3 are in Cyrillic.

The defense of the dissertation will take place on September 6, at 10:30 a.m., in the Rector's Meeting Hall at the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics.

The materials on the defense are available to those interested in the Department of Doctoral Studies and Academic Advancement at the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov – <https://www.uni-svishtov.bg/bg>.

CONTENTS OF THE AUTHOR REFERENCE

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

1. Relevance and significance of the research
2. Object and subject of the research
3. Aim and objectives of the dissertation
4. Research thesis and hypotheses
5. Research methodology
6. Main sources of information
7. Limiting conditions of the study
8. Approval of the dissertation research

II. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

Introduction

First chapter. THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs
 - 1.1. Entrepreneurship as a driver of socio-economic development
 - 1.2. The entrepreneur as the main figure in the entrepreneurial process
 - 1.3. Types of entrepreneurs
 - 1.4. Entrepreneurial identity through the lens of entrepreneurship education
 - 1.5. Entrepreneurial competencies
2. Training and entrepreneurial training
 - 2.1. Training as a strategic tool of modern management
 - 2.2. Entrepreneurship training
3. Competitiveness and competitive advantages of small and medium enterprises
 - 3.1. Nature and importance of small and medium enterprises
 - 3.2. Competitiveness of small and medium enterprises
4. Conclusions and summaries from the first chapter

Second chapter. METHODOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE RESEARCH

1. Problem-subject framework of the study
2. Relevance of the research
3. Conceptual-categorical research model
4. Aim and objectives of the research
5. Hypothetical framework
6. Methodical approach
7. Research tools

Third chapter. ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH RESULTS

1. Profile of respondents
2. Testing Hypothesis 1
3. Testing Hypothesis 2
4. Hypothesis testing with correlation analysis
5. Interpretation of the hypothetical framework

Conclusion

Literature

Applications

Declaration of originality and authenticity

III. SYNTHESIZED STATEMENT OF THE THESIS

IV. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN CONTRIBUTING POINTS IN THE DISSERTATION

V. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

VI. STATEMENT FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF THE MINIMUM NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN RELATION TO THE PROCEDURE FOR THE FOR OBTAINING THE DOCTORATE

VII. LIST OF PARTICIPATIONS IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES AND FORUMS

VIII. DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY AND AUTHENTICITY

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

1. Relevance and significance of the study

Nowadays, developed countries are changing their business philosophy and focusing on people and their creative potential, knowledge and experience as the most important resources for production and development. In the "knowledge industry", the main driving force is the entrepreneurial intellect and creative imagination of people. The survival and success of an organization depends on the full use of the human mind. The strength and success of the organization depends less and less on the machines, equipment, real estate at its disposal, and more on the quality of personnel, etc. "politics of the mind".

Building a knowledge-based society is a process that must operate continuously, taking into account the economic and social context of society. As a function of its own development, each country must create the conditions for economic activities with higher added value, better and more productive jobs, social prosperity and use of its own resources in accordance with the philosophy of sustainable development. A key element for economic progress, apart from capital and technology, is the workforce, i.e. her competencies for entrepreneurial activity and high-quality, efficient and effective performance of work tasks.

In recent decades, entrepreneurship has been increasingly recognized by researchers, practitioners, and policymakers as an important driver of economic development and changes in societal well-being. Entrepreneurship is today seen as a major source of innovation in all industries, leading to the birth of new enterprises and the growth and renewal of already existing business organizations.

The approaches to promoting entrepreneurship adopted at the government level in different countries are different. The current state of the world economy, economic crises and/or recession create the need to develop an appropriate entrepreneurial spirit, to expand the application of entrepreneurial education, aimed at acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for the proper use of the constantly emerging business opportunities and for building competitive advantages of business organizations.

If the primary goal of each employee is viewed from the perspective of personal contribution in providing the highest level of service, quality and product value, fostering an entrepreneurial spirit in employees will enable them to acquire appropriate entrepreneurial competencies at all levels of the organization such as qualitative basis for organizational development in a certain direction. The main recommendation of the European Conference on Entrepreneurship Education in Europe, held in Oslo, emphasizes that

entrepreneurship should be understood not only as business management, but also as the development of entrepreneurial behavior (creativity, initiative, independence, teamwork). Integrating entrepreneurial and business behavior into work by developing projects to identify key competencies among employees is an aspect of existential importance for organizational development. In fact, it is of fundamental importance for the personality of employees to experience themselves as future entrepreneurs, to receive adequate training that will allow them to develop a tendency towards self-reliance and independence, a tendency to question their past and future actions, to be oriented towards achieving results and ready to argue them, to present their ideas to managers.

Entrepreneurial learning has emerged as an important but still underdeveloped and, to some extent, misunderstood area of research. The dissertation focuses on the development of this field from the perspective of socially constructed learning based on the learning experiences and behaviors of entrepreneurs in SMEs. The unit of analysis is the small and medium-sized entrepreneur. The dissertation developed a conceptual framework for the analysis of entrepreneurship education, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the foundations and perspectives of entrepreneurship education, which will allow entrepreneurs to achieve a competitive advantage and increase the level of innovation in SMEs.

Entrepreneurial competencies and their relationship to entrepreneurship education as a function of their development represent a particular challenge for researchers. Researching entrepreneurs is in itself a big challenge and brings with it certain difficulties. As a result of the present study, more in-depth and broad information about the entrepreneurial identity, the necessary entrepreneurial competencies that will allow entrepreneurs to achieve a competitive advantage, will be obtained. The study of entrepreneurial competences and entrepreneurship training leads not only to innovations in the activity of SMEs, but also to the use of information, knowledge and ideas for the efficient and effective realization of entrepreneurial roles. Entrepreneurship training becomes a major resource for production and development. Knowledge as the main determinant of human capital is an important factor in managing SMEs and creating value for organizations.

2. Object and subject of the research

The object of research in the dissertation is *entrepreneurial training*, and its subject – *its influence on the acquisition of competitive advantages by small and medium-sized enterprises*.

3. Aim and objectives of the thesis

The main aim of this dissertation is *to investigate the impact of entrepreneurial training on the acquisition of competitive advantages of small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, the current research emphasizes the role of entrepreneurial identity and defines the necessary entrepreneurial competencies, the acquisition of which will enable entrepreneurs to achieve a competitive advantage.*

Achieving the goal defined in this way is related to solving the following **research objectives:**

First, to review and analyze the specialized literature in the field of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial identity and competence, competitive advantages and the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Second, to develop a methodological approach and a methodological toolkit for researching the impact of entrepreneurial training on the acquisition of competitive advantages of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Third, to conduct an empirical study, the results of which will show whether the accepted hypotheses are confirmed or rejected.

4. Research thesis and hypotheses

Research thesis

The main thesis defended in the dissertation can be defined as follows: *Entrepreneurship training that develops entrepreneurial competencies for personal effectiveness and workplace competencies leads to the acquisition of competitive advantages of small and medium-sized enterprises.*

Hypotheses

To prove the research thesis, the following hypotheses are considered:

General Hypothesis: Entrepreneurship training that develops the personal effectiveness competencies and workplace competencies of entrepreneurs will lead to the acquisition of a competitive advantage for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Specific Hypothesis 1: Entrepreneurial personal efficacy competencies developed through entrepreneurship education have a positive impact on SMEs' acquisition of competitive advantage.

Individual Hypothesis 1.1: Developing interpersonal skills through entrepreneurship education will positively influence SMEs' acquisition of competitive advantage.

Individual Hypothesis 1.2: Developing risk-taking skills through entrepreneurship education will positively influence SMEs' acquisition of competitive advantage.

Individual Hypothesis 1.3: Developing entrepreneurial skills through entrepreneurship education will positively influence the achievement of competitive advantage for SMEs.

Individual Hypothesis 1.4: Developing responsibility skills through entrepreneurship education will positively influence the achievement of competitive advantage for SMEs.

Specific Hypothesis 2: Entrepreneurial workplace competencies developed through entrepreneurship education have a positive impact on the achievement of competitive advantage for SMEs.

Individual Hypothesis 2.1: Developing creativity through entrepreneurship education will positively influence SMEs' achievement of competitive advantage.

Individual Hypothesis 2.2: Developing customer focus through entrepreneurship education will positively influence the achievement of competitive advantage for SMEs.

Individual Hypothesis 2.3: Developing innovation through entrepreneurship education will positively influence SMEs' achievement of competitive advantage.

Individual Hypothesis 2.4: Developing problem-solving skills through entrepreneurship education will positively influence the achievement of competitive advantage for SMEs.

5. Research methodology

The research design of the doctoral dissertation involves the application of multiple scientific methods. The main scientific methods used in scientific work are: the methods of induction and deduction, analysis, synthesis and comparative analysis.

The inductive method aims to analyze the current scientific and professional literature that elaborates the problem of entrepreneurial competences and entrepreneurship education. In fact, the method of induction identifies the theoretical knowledge, characteristics, models and theories that develop the defined phenomenon in the study.

The method of deduction is the basis for drawing conclusions from the tested hypotheses. The method of deduction makes it possible to develop the theory of the subject of research, in the case of identifying the entrepreneurial competencies that are in function of achieving a competitive advantage through the application of entrepreneurship education. It then moves on to operationalization at the level of separate and individual hypotheses that include dependent and independent variables.

The method of comparative analysis was also applied in the study. Hypotheses are generated in a hypothetical framework to be tested through a survey of a suitably selected sample of SMEs. The verification of the hypotheses is carried out with quantitative research and statistical processing of the data obtained from the survey questionnaire. Comparative research makes it possible to generalize conclusions, since the confirmation of hypotheses can be considered scientific truth.

In general, it is about applied research related to a clearly defined objective and having a practical application in SMEs.

The research technique used in scientific work is survey. The survey technique enables the acquisition of relevant knowledge and the necessary entrepreneurial competencies that can be developed through the application of entrepreneurship education to achieve a competitive advantage. The instrument used in the study is a questionnaire. Survey maps provide a convenient way to collect data from a larger number of respondents from a specific geographic area. It is a tool with a high frequency of use, as respondents can freely express their opinions and remain anonymous.

6. Main sources of information

In the theoretical development of the problem and the construction of the methodological foundations of the study, as well as the subsequent application of the developed methodology and the conducted analysis, current research on the topic of the dissertation work and empirical data obtained as a result of an empirical study were used. The main information sources used in the dissertation work are: specialized scientific literature on the subject of the dissertation research (textbooks, monographs, books, scientific studies and articles, collections of scientific forums, etc.); official information from statistical institutions; data from empirical studies with a theme and scope close to the present study; information from observations and registration of statistical data; Internet sites, databases, etc., in the field of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial competences and the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, etc. For the collection of empirical data, a survey card was developed, which was sent to managers of small and medium-sized enterprises active at the time of the study, operating in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo. The data obtained from the questionnaire were processed with Microsoft Excel and the statistical program SPSS in order to formulate the relevant qualitative and quantitative conclusions.

7. Limiting conditions of the study

The wide-ranging issues of the dissertation require the introduction of some restrictions:

Limitations regarding the subject of the study. The dissertation examines the impact of entrepreneurship education on the acquisition of competitive advantages by small and medium-sized enterprises. The attention of the author of the dissertation is directed above all to the practical dimensions of the research and the verification of the pre-defined hypotheses and sub-hypotheses. Thus, some other aspects of the research remain outside the scope of the study (organizational and management aspects of small and medium-sized businesses, the legal basis of their functioning, policies in the field of entrepreneurial training, etc.).

Limitations on the scope of the companies studied. The studied companies were determined taking into account the following criteria: Geographical representation of

organizations from the territory of the Republic of Kosovo; Small and medium-sized organizations; According to the type of ownership – only privately owned companies were studied; Respondents included were: managers; Presentation of organizations according to the field of activity (production, non-production).

Limitation on study period. The survey was conducted among 120 respondents in the period May-June 2022 on the territory of the Republic of Kosovo.

8. Approval of the dissertation research

The dissertation was discussed and directed for defense by the "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" Department at the Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov. Close to the topic of the dissertation, 5 articles (3 co-authored and 2 authored) have been published in specialized publications. Parts of the dissertation have been presented at various scientific forums - doctoral sessions, conferences, etc.

I. MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

Structurally, the dissertation consists of an introduction (5 pages), three chapters (160 pages), a conclusion (4 pages), a list of references (13 pages), and appendices (11 pages). In terms of content, the dissertation is structured as follows:

Introduction

First chapter. THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs
 - 1.1. Entrepreneurship as a driver of socio-economic development
 - 1.2. The entrepreneur as the main figure in the entrepreneurial process
 - 1.3. Types of entrepreneurs
 - 1.4. Entrepreneurial identity through the lens of entrepreneurship education
 - 1.5. Entrepreneurial competencies
2. Training and entrepreneurial training
 - 2.1. Training as a strategic tool of modern management
 - 2.2. Entrepreneurship training
3. Competitiveness and competitive advantages of small and medium enterprises
 - 3.1. Nature and importance of small and medium enterprises
 - 3.2. Competitiveness of small and medium enterprises
4. Conclusions and summaries from the first chapter

Second chapter. METHODOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE RESEARCH

1. Problem-subject framework of the study
2. Relevance of the research
3. Conceptual-categorical research model
4. Aim and objectives of the research
5. Hypothetical framework

Third chapter. ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH RESULTS

1. Profile of respondents
2. Testing Hypothesis 1
3. Testing Hypothesis 2
4. Hypothesis testing with correlation analysis
5. Interpretation of the hypothetical framework

Conclusion

Literature

Applications

Declaration of originality and authenticity

I. SYNTHESIZED STATEMENT OF THE THESIS

Introduction

The introductory part of the dissertation substantiates the relevance and practical significance of the research. The object, subject, purpose, tasks, research thesis and hypotheses are defined. The methodology of scientific research is presented.

CHAPTER I. THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the first chapter, the theoretical base related to the topic is laid out. Definitions of the main concepts used in the dissertation are presented. The views of various authors on the issues of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial training, entrepreneurial competences and identity, competitive advantages and the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises are presented in a systematized form.

The chapter consists of four paragraphs in the following sequence:

1. Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs

The **first paragraph** consists of five sub-paragraphs. In the **first subparagraph**, entrepreneurship is seen as the main driver of socio-economic development. Interest in entrepreneurship is said to have started mostly in the 1980s and accelerated after the turn of the century. It has been argued that the contribution of new businesses to the growth of national economies has not gone unnoticed, and in recent decades entrepreneurship has been increasingly recognized by economists and politicians as an important driver of improvements in public welfare (Martínez et al., 2010). Globally, and particularly in developing countries, the economic landscape is changing, with a movement from foreign direct investment to self-employment and entrepreneurship. There is an ever-increasing number of people considering self-employment as a career option due to the high level of unemployment in these economies (Njoroge & Gathungu, 2013).

The author notes that many authors equate entrepreneurship with starting their own business. However, quite a few researchers believe that entrepreneurship is more than that. For some, an entrepreneur is someone who is willing to take the risk (of a new venture) if there is a significant opportunity for profit. Others emphasize the role of the entrepreneur as an innovator who sells his innovation. For others, entrepreneurs create new goods or processes that are in demand in the market and their demand is currently unsatisfied.

According to the author, entrepreneurship is creating and building something valuable. This means that entrepreneurship involves the creation and dissemination of value for individual groups, organizations and society as a result of the realization of an opportunity. It is a dynamic process of creating incremental wealth in innovative ways (Amzad et al., 2009).

It traces the development of the concept of entrepreneurship, first created in 1700, the meaning of which has evolved since then until today. In the 20th century, Joseph Schumpeter (1883-1950) focused on how the entrepreneurial drive for innovation and progress creates sudden shocks and changes. Schumpeter saw entrepreneurship as a force of "creative destruction." The entrepreneur introduces new combinations, making old industries obsolete. Pre-established ways of doing business are being disrupted by the creation of new and better ways of managing. Business expert Peter Drucker takes this idea even further, describing an entrepreneur as someone who actually seeks change, responds to it, and sees it as an opportunity.

It is noted that the concept of entrepreneurship has been extensively studied. In almost all definitions of entrepreneurship, there is agreement on the type of behavior that involves: (1) taking initiative, (2) organizing and reorganizing social and economic mechanisms to turn resources and situations into practical account, and (3) accepting risk or failure (Njoroge & Gathungu, 2013). Around the world, governments have recognized the importance of entrepreneurship in motivating people, businesses and related stakeholders to embrace and develop new opportunities that can promote positive change and create economic growth in these societies (Blenker et al, 2008). Entrepreneurship is today seen as a major source of innovation in all industries, leading to the birth of new enterprises and the growth and renewal of already existing business organizations.

According to the author, the role of entrepreneurship in economic development involves more than simply increasing the volume of production and increasing income per capita. It also includes initiating and creating changes in the structure of business and society. For these changes to lead to increased production and economic growth, there must be innovation leading to investment in new products and new ventures.

In the **second subparagraph**, the entrepreneur is seen as a key figure in the entrepreneurial process. According to Amzad et al. (2009) an entrepreneur is one who uses resources, labor, materials and other assets or their combinations that make their value greater than before, and also one who introduces change, innovation and a new order.

Entrepreneurs are individuals who take the primary risks of capital, time and/or career commitment or value provision of some product or service. The product or service may or may not be new or unique, but value must somehow be infused by the entrepreneur by obtaining and locating the necessary skills and resources.

It is stated that the most common definition of an entrepreneur is "A person who organizes, manages and takes the risk to run a business or enterprise." Peter Drucker notes that an entrepreneur is always looking for change, responding to it and seeing it as an opportunity. Of course, not everyone does this, but one who possesses the entrepreneurial qualities of sense of opportunity, risk-taking, initiative, ability to

mobilize resources and the capacity to plan, organize, implement and execute can be described as a person, possessing entrepreneurial qualities. These qualities are supported by an entrepreneurial spirit as well as a willingness to take on challenges with a desire to create new ventures. Someone who can see an opportunity and creates an organization to realize that opportunity, ie. one who adapts to this idea resources and organization to create and implement a new venture is an entrepreneur.

Successful entrepreneurs are noted to be of different ages, income levels, genders, or races. They differ in education and experience. But research shows that the most successful entrepreneurs share some personal qualities, including creativity, dedication, determination, flexibility, leadership, passion, confidence and clarity (OECD, 2003).

The entrepreneur has been researched in numerous studies using various methodologies and it has finally been concluded that the psychological profile or definition of an entrepreneur is a seemingly impossible task. Thus, the psychological approach in the study of the entrepreneur has already shifted from the study of personality to the study of behavior, motivation and cognition. Entrepreneurial motivation and cognition research is an approach that seeks to understand more about what precedes entrepreneurial behavior than the personality characteristics/profile of entrepreneurs. Research that takes into account individual entrepreneurial intentions is one of the oldest approaches to understanding entrepreneurial processes and has been adopted by a number of authors.

Developing a new business requires an individual to make a conscious choice and decision, and it is a conscious behavior that is intentional in nature. It therefore seems logical that intentions can provide valuable insight into the type of individual attracted to becoming an entrepreneur. Shapero & Sokol (1982) developed an "entrepreneurial event formation" model that considers life course changes and their influence on the perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of the individual associated with new venture creation. According to this model, life changes (displacements) cause a change in entrepreneurial intention and subsequent behavior. Change can occur either in a negative form (job loss) or in a positive form (financial support). The intention to become an entrepreneur and start a business project depends on the perception of desirability (do I want to do it) and feasibility (do I have the opportunity to do it) in relation to the activity to achieve the goal.

The theory of planned behavior is another model of intention and is used for its predictive power and applicability in a variety of content areas, including entrepreneurship. Based on beliefs, attitudes, and intentional connections, a person's beliefs and attitudes about a particular behavior inform their intention to perform that behavior. In an entrepreneurial context, this means that the entrepreneur's beliefs and attitudes about entrepreneurship shape his intention to create new projects. Krueger et al. (2000) investigated the predictive ability of the theory of planned behavior in relation

to intentions to start a new business and confirmed that attitude and perceived behavioral control were significantly related to entrepreneurial intentions.

It is noted that all current research on entrepreneurial competencies unreservedly assumes that entrepreneurs differ from non-entrepreneurs in terms of the competencies they possess. However, no one has empirically investigated whether or not entrepreneurial competencies can differentiate between entrepreneurs and managers. Today, entrepreneurship is of fundamental importance to our society. Entrepreneurial companies contribute to the economic good by increasing the innovative capacity of the economy. Moreover, entrepreneurship creates new businesses and jobs that are critical to today's global business climate. As Low and MacMillan argue, the creation of new firms is a critical driver of economic development, creating hundreds of thousands of new jobs, raising state and local income taxes, increasing exports, and generally increasing national productivity (Low & MacMillan, 1988). The study of entrepreneurs begins with a personality trait approach. This approach holds that there are different character traits and motivations that separate entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs and successful entrepreneurs from unsuccessful entrepreneurs.

The **third subparagraph** also deals with the types of entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs can be of different types and may prefer to act alone or share risks in groups with others. Based on Drucker's (1985) classification, the following types of entrepreneurs are considered:

- A sole trader who essentially works alone or has several employees.
- Active partners are basically solo operators who have partners who contribute money to the business without actively participating in it.
- Partners are those entrepreneurs who manage the company as a joint activity, all of them actively participate in the work of the company.
- Investors are those whose core competency is their creativity and ingenuity.
- Challengers are those who enter the business because it is a challenge and get bored when everything seems settled and they seem to be doing well.
- Buyers prefer to buy a business instead of starting their own, it seems to them a less risky alternative.
- Business for life - those who see their business as an integral part of their life.

Different types of entrepreneurial characteristics are also discussed in this subsection. A common theme in these literatures is whether having certain characteristics will make a firm more or less successful. One category of these characteristics is demographic characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, and parental background. The second category is entrepreneurial psychological and behavioral characteristics using different approaches such as motivation, personal qualities, values, goals and attitudes. The third category is the basic human factors such as level of education, work experience, initial experience, training and skills and technical know-

how. Many entrepreneurial characteristics appear to be positively related to firm performance. They emphasize the importance of psychological characteristics, managerial abilities, as well as the factor of origin and experience.

In the **fourth subparagraph**, entrepreneurial identity is examined through the lens of entrepreneurial learning. It is noted that identity, even when specific to the individual, is a social phenomenon and is therefore constructed through interaction with others. Individuals are capable of maintaining multiple identities in terms of roles related to their work and family status as well as other social contexts (Blenker et al., 2012).

According to the author, entrepreneurial trainings interested in facilitating the process of building an entrepreneurial identity should include highly engaged mentors and networks of stakeholders with whom entrepreneurs can shape their identity. In addition, entrepreneurship training can include methods that include storytelling that entrepreneurs can use to legitimize their identity.

Research in entrepreneurship education outlines the competencies, skills and knowledge required for entrepreneurship, examining whether the skills taught are applicable to entrepreneurial practice. They emphasize that identity is essential for meaning, motivation, decision-making and other activities that can be considered critical in entrepreneurial action.

A number of researchers and theorists argue and prove that identity is a social phenomenon. In psychology, Baumeister (2011) summarizes his work on ownership and identity as follows: "Identity is determined in part by its place in the social system, including roles and attachments."

To act entrepreneurially, people are seen as needing a set of capabilities that are personal, organizational and social. Components that influence entrepreneurial capabilities include identity and knowledge (related to the individual) as well as networks, legitimacy and locality (viewed as related to the context). The work of developing an entrepreneurial identity, which is primarily related to a person's biography, involves not only internal self-reflection, but also social engagement - through conversation and action. But when engaging socially, especially with established social groups, people who want to take on the role of entrepreneur often struggle with how that role fits into existing identities and roles. Our focus is to understand entrepreneurial identity construction from the perspective of entrepreneurship education so that research understanding can be applied to facilitate identity construction.

The professional identity of managers develops in the cultural context and in the social groups in which they behave professionally. Education is also part of identity development, which creates a kind of thinking during the lifelong learning process. Entrepreneurship education should equip people with the skills needed to start businesses.

The **fifth subparagraph** deals with entrepreneurial competencies. It is noted that the wide variety of definitions of the concept of "competence" found in the scientific literature is a real challenge for researchers. It is often equated with terms such as 'skills', 'expertise', 'insight' (Smith & Morse, 2005).

There are at least two key meanings or uses of the term competence: competence as the behavior that an individual demonstrates; and competencies as minimum standards of performance (Strebler et al., 1997). Entrepreneurial competencies are often defined as a specific group of competencies related to the exercise of successful entrepreneurship.

A distinction is made between managerial competencies and entrepreneurial competencies (Lerner and Almor, 2002). Entrepreneurial competencies are needed to start a business, while managerial skills are needed to grow a business, and entrepreneurial competency requires competencies in both areas (Man et al., 2002).

There is evidence that understanding the competencies required and the changing role of the entrepreneur through the different phases of business development will support the development of competence and in turn have implications for successful business growth (Churchill & Lewis, 1983), i.e. . gaining competitive advantages.

In this subparagraph, a model of the competencies is presented (Figure 1).

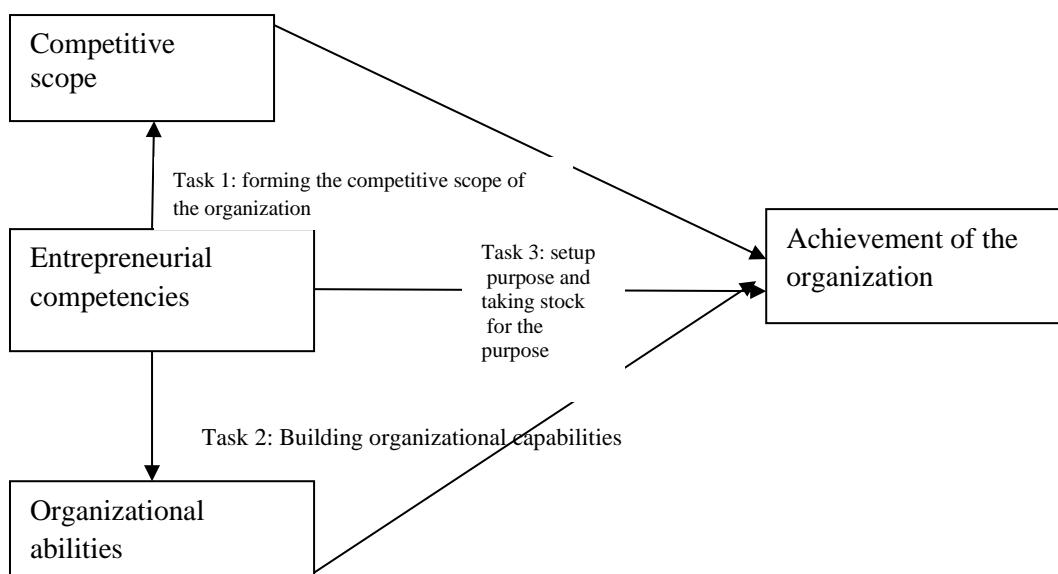


Figure 1. KEO model of competencies

Source: Man, Thomas W.Y., Theresa Lau. and K.F. Chan. 2002. The competitiveness of small and medium enterprises a conceptualization with focus on entrepreneurial competencies. Journal of Business Venturing.

Based on the concept of competencies and the competency approach, Man et al. (2002) proposed a conceptual model that links characteristics of SMEs, owner-managers and organizational performance. As shown in Figure 1, the model distinguishes four main constructs: entrepreneurial competencies, competitive scope, organizational capabilities, and firm performance. Competitiveness and organizational capabilities represent the structure of the external factor of the environment and the internal factor of the firm, respectively. At the center of the model are the relationships between entrepreneurial competencies and other constructs. These relationships are conceptualized as three main entrepreneurial tasks: shaping the firm's competitive scope, creating organizational capabilities, and setting a goal and taking action on the goal, by assessing competitive scope and using organizational capabilities. In the model of Man et al. (2002), entrepreneurial competencies play a key role in determining firm performance. Although competitive scope and organizational capabilities are still the two determinants of firm performance, they are influenced by entrepreneurial competencies. Empirically, a significant relationship is observed between entrepreneurial competencies and firm performance.

In summary, entrepreneurial competencies are seen as important to business growth and success, and understanding the nature and role of these competencies may have important implications for practice.

2. Training and entrepreneurial training

The **second paragraph** of the first chapter is devoted to training and, in particular, to entrepreneurial training. In the **first subparagraph**, training is seen as a strategic tool of modern management. It is noted that the most important part of this learning from a cognitive point of view lies in its persistence. Accordingly, training differs in:

Group/team training. Here the emphasis is on creativity and the free flow of ideas, not on the acquisition of group qualifications and abilities. The team method of training can be the standard of training for the entire organization.

Organizational training. Indeed, organizational learning implies the sharing of knowledge, beliefs and prejudices between individuals and groups. Such functioning of the organization is not simply the sum of the efforts of individuals or group efforts. It is the result of organizational learning encoded in the way individual and group knowledge functions and is applied. Organizational learning happens when we do all of the above together.

Adaptive learning or learning in a circle (single loop learning) is a basic form of learning in which knowledge is acquired and changes are made only within a predetermined set of assumptions that remain outside of any questions. With adaptive learning, the organization adjusts its activities if they deviate from the predefined course.

Generative learning or double loop learning is the acquisition of knowledge that revises and changes the basic assumptions on which existing ways of working are built. So, with generative learning, existing ways of working are not refined, but completely new assumptions are created, which lead to changes that are radical in this type of learning, because the basic assumptions and definitions on which the functioning of the organization is based are changed.

The **second subparagraph** deals with entrepreneurial training. It is noted that the role of education and training in providing entrepreneurs with the necessary business skills and knowledge to plan, create and develop their business ideas is great and is recognized by academics, practitioners and governments. This is because, according to human capital theory, investments in knowledge, skills and abilities improve productive capacity, increase competencies and opportunities for innovative and flexible responses to environmental challenges.

Jones & English (2004) define entrepreneurship education as the process of providing people with the ability to recognize business opportunities and the insight, confidence, knowledge and skills to act on them. Martínez et al. (2010) define entrepreneurship education in a broad sense as building knowledge and skills "for" or "with the purpose of" entrepreneurship in general, as part of recognized educational programs of primary, secondary or higher education institutions. The authors define entrepreneurship education as building knowledge and skills in preparation for starting a business. Training is a type of improvement of knowledge, attitude and skill orientation (Seun & Kalsom, 2015).

Entrepreneurship requires distinctive competencies (Nisula & Pekkola, 2012): vision, adaptability, persuasiveness, confidence, competitiveness, risk-taking, honesty, persistence, and integration of knowledge across disciplines. *These competencies can be acquired through training. Training is critical to the development and creation of entrepreneurs.* The results of some studies show that the lack of training and education is a barrier to entrepreneurs and the implementation of various training programs can solve this problem (Idrus et al., 2014). Such studies provide a framework for the content of future entrepreneurship education programs that can help create new businesses, grow existing ones, and generate new jobs.

Entrepreneurship education plays an essential role in shaping attitudes, skills and culture. *It is emphasized that entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and behaviors can be learned and entrepreneurial education and training throughout an individual's life is imperative.*

3. Competitiveness and competitive advantages of small and medium enterprises

The **third paragraph** of the first chapter examines the competitiveness and competitive advantages of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It consists of

two sub-paragraphs. The first **sub-paragraph** is devoted to the essence and meaning of SMEs. It found that large enterprises have enjoyed support from governments, the financial sector and other stakeholders for years, but this situation is rapidly changing in all economies worldwide, with the focus shifting to the development of small businesses. Small and medium-sized enterprises are often cited as the “lifeblood” of modern economies because they constitute over 75% of businesses and provide livelihoods to the poor (Gunasekaran et al., 2011).

The role of SMEs in the socio-economic development of countries worldwide is emphasized. Their importance can be seen in terms of their contribution to economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction and the development of the industrial base. The potential and key role of SMEs in poverty alleviation and job creation is also highlighted by other authors (Ayyagari et al., 2014; De Wit & de Kok, J., 2014).

SMEs have an exceptional potential for flexible adaptation to the economic situation in the country and the changing market situation and are of great importance for the development of the national economy (Ahmedova, 2015). SMEs form the largest share among the business units that make up the national, regional and European economy. This fact determines not only the research interest, but also the state policy regarding this sector and encourages the search for new management approaches to increase their competitiveness.

SMEs are catalysts for growth because they provide much-needed employment, which promotes economic growth (Schreyer, 1996). However, despite the sector's critical role, it faces many challenges, with over 90% of SMEs not living past their third birthday (Njoroge & Gathungu, 2013).

The proliferation of small businesses is welcome because the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) contributes significantly to job creation, social stability and economic well-being around the world (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002). Although these businesses are relatively small in scale, with limited funds and weak structures, they make a significant contribution to economic prosperity, create countless jobs and promote social stability.

It is noted that the management of SMEs is not fundamentally different from the management of a large organization. One major difference, however, is that a small business is usually run by an owner manager who is often the entrepreneur himself, while a large corporation is often run by a manager who does not necessarily own stock in the company. The rest is simply a matter of scale. A small business operates on a very small scale compared to a corporation.

Globalization, aided mainly by technological progress and rapid change in consumer needs, is a major challenge for the competitiveness of SMEs. SMEs must no longer consider only their domestic rivals while charting their growth and development

course, but must also adopt a broad strategy within their industry and assess how trends and market dynamics in the global economy could affect their business. to survive.

The advantages of SMEs over large companies are also highlighted. For example, a small business can be started at a very low cost and on a part-time basis. This business also lends itself well to marketing because it can easily serve specialized niches, something that would have been more difficult before the Internet revolution that began in the late 1990s. Adapting to change is critical in business and especially in small businesses. It is usually easier for small businesses to respond quickly to the market. Small business owners develop closer relationships with their clients and customers, which leads to higher trust. Independence is another advantage of owning a small business. The freedom to work independently is a reward for small business owners. In addition, many people want to make their own decisions, take their own risks, and reap the rewards of their own efforts. Small business owners have the satisfaction of making their own decisions within the constraints imposed by economic and other environmental factors.

The **second subparagraph** deals with the competitive advantages and competitiveness of SMEs. It is noted that the intense competition on both global and local markets places ever greater demands on companies to achieve competitiveness. Especially in smaller open economies, such as those in the Balkan countries, and in particular, in the Republic of Kosovo, competitiveness allows firms to increase their potential, which cannot be fully exploited in the limited small domestic markets.

Different views on the essence of competitiveness are examined, noting the lack of a generally accepted definition of this concept. Very often a company's competitiveness is limited to the competitiveness of the product(s) it produces. In other words, if an enterprise's product is preferred by consumers in a given market, then the enterprise is competitive in that market. However, company competitiveness is more than product competitiveness. According to Velev (2007), the competitiveness of the enterprise is expressed in its ability, through continuous renewal and improvement, to create and maintain sustainable competitive advantages leading to higher economic results for a long period.

The main characteristics of competitiveness are described, which reveal its essence and content (Saveleva, 2009; Varamezov et al., 2015):

√ Competitiveness is manifested only in the presence of competition. Only in very rare cases does it have an "absolute" character.

√ Competitiveness has a relative character and is manifested as a result of a comparison (comparison) of the analyzed object (subject) with an object (subject) competing with it.

√ Competitiveness has a dynamic nature, i.e. it changes over time and depends on a number of factors and circumstances.

√ Competitiveness always has a concrete manifestation, i.e. it is related to specific conditions and, above all, to a specific market or market segment, to a specific period of time, etc.

√ Important from a practical point of view is the possibility to influence competitiveness, i.e. it can be managed.

√ Competitiveness is a set not only of competitive advantages, but also of competitive weaknesses. The entire complex of competitive advantages can be crossed out by one significant competitive weakness.

√ Competitiveness is subject to quantitative assessment. This implies the presence of a subject of assessment (who assesses), an object of assessment (what is assessed), goals (criteria) of assessment.

√ Competitiveness is a complex (multifaceted) and controversial category. The multifacetedness of this category is expressed in its consideration of different types of markets (commodity, capital, labor, etc.), at different levels (product, enterprise, industry, national economy), etc. The contradiction of competitiveness is expressed in the need to combine the interests of producers and consumers.

The concept of competitiveness at the firm level is understood as the company's ability to compete in a competitive environment, grow and be profitable (Sipa et al., 2015), i.e. stands for superior and sustained multidimensional economic performance. Competitiveness at this level is related in the long run mainly to the profitability of the company (Jambor and Babu, 2016), but is also often related to the nature of the industry and trade barriers. It should reflect all sources of competitiveness and their future prospects (Aiginger & Vogel, 2015), i.e. to analyze from different angles and capture the contribution of different resources and capabilities.

A number of endogenous and exogenous factors, which directly influence the competitiveness of SMEs, were also examined (see Table 1).

Table 1. Competitiveness factors

External factors	Internal factors
Employment	Marketing
Productivity	Innovation
Capital Supply Opportunities	Productivity
Globalization	Knowledge-based development
EU	Management, organization, structure
Business Relationship	Capital Offering
Alliances	Cost effectiveness
Networks	Compliance

Source: Kadocsa, G. (2010). Possible ways for improving the competitiveness of SMEs. A Central-European approach. MEB 2010 – 8th International Conference on Management, Enterprise and Benchmarking, June 4–5, 2010, Budapest, Hungary

For the successful functioning of the competitive market, the enterprise must have advantages over its main competitors. There is a cause and effect relationship

between the categories of competitiveness and competitive advantages: competitiveness is the result of the presence of competitive advantages, without the latter competitiveness is impossible (Saveleva, 2009).

A company's competitive advantage is related to the organization's resources, capabilities, and core competencies. It exists when a firm is able to provide the same benefits as competitors but at a lower cost (cost advantage) or delivers benefits that exceed those of competing products (differentiated advantage).

4. Conclusions and summaries from the first chapter

In the last, fourth paragraph of the first chapter, the author makes relevant conclusions and summaries:

First, the contribution of new businesses to the growth of national economies has not gone unnoticed, and in recent decades entrepreneurship has been increasingly recognized by economists and policymakers as an important driver of improvements in public welfare. However, the role of entrepreneurship in economic development involves more than increasing the volume of production and per capita income. It is also associated with the initiation and creation of changes in the structure of business and society.

Second, the entrepreneur is a major figure in the entrepreneurial process and is the one who uses resources, labor, materials and other assets or their combinations that make their value greater than before, and also the one who introduces change, innovation and new order . An entrepreneur assumes the major risks of capital, time and/or career commitment or provides value for some product or service.

Third, research on entrepreneurship education outlines the competencies, skills and knowledge required for entrepreneurship and whether the skills taught are applicable to entrepreneurial practice. Entrepreneurial identity is essential for meaning, motivation, decision-making and other activities that can be considered critical in entrepreneurial action.

Fourth, the interest in entrepreneurial competence stems from the assumed relationship between competences and the acquisition of competitive advantages of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Fifth, entrepreneurial learning is a strategic tool of modern management, and the most important part of this learning from a cognitive point of view lies in its persistence.

Sixth, in recent decades, entrepreneurship education and the provision of programs aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and business start-up have grown globally.

Seventh, by organizing and conducting entrepreneurial training, small and medium-sized enterprises can gain competitive advantages.

CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE RESEARCH

In the second chapter, the methodological foundations of the study are laid out. The problem-subject framework of the research, the conceptual-categorical model and hypothetical framework are outlined, its relevance and significance, goals and objectives, methodological approach and research tools are clarified.

Chapter Two consists of seven paragraphs.

1. Problem-subject framework of the study

The **first paragraph** outlines the problem-subject framework of the study. It is argued that entrepreneurship is a category closely related to new ideas and innovations and is a driving force for economic growth. Entrepreneurship is a process of researching and recognizing market opportunities, planning, organizing and forecasting, which also involves taking risks. In essence, entrepreneurship is based on innovation, which can be a new product or service, but also an innovative business process. An entrepreneurial society is based on creativity, innovation and risk-taking, which leads to the realization of new and bold ideas. Applying these ideas will open avenues for new industries, increase technological productivity, and thus generate sustainable and long-term economic growth.

It is indicated that a large number of entrepreneurs become ineffective as a result of their insufficient knowledge to manage themselves, other people and the business venture (organization). There is no doubt that management is one of the key factors that enable entrepreneurs to achieve success in business and entrepreneurial activities. Management helps entrepreneurs effectively plan, organize, coordinate and control their entrepreneurial activities. Within entrepreneurial management, it can be seen that there are numerous studies on entrepreneurship, but research on how to manage the entrepreneur himself, how to learn and think entrepreneurially, is largely scarce. This is the gap that needs to be filled through research. In knowing how entrepreneurs can pay attention to the "right way" to run their business. Importantly, entrepreneurs perform multiple management functions such as planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling. Managing all the listed functions by one person is not an easy task. Those who can manage all these functions effectively can lead the business to success, unlike those who cannot and will face failure.

In this context, according to the author, it is necessary to introduce entrepreneurship education as a process through which entrepreneurs will realize the entrepreneurial characteristics that will have a positive impact on the development of SMEs.

The doctoral thesis offers two propositions. The first is that learning is a fundamental and integral part of the entrepreneurial process, in which the human, social and behavioral activities are as important as the economic aspects that are most often highlighted. The second is the conceptual model that explains that the entrepreneurship

education process can be applied to entrepreneurship education and development. Entrepreneurship is an interconnected process of creation, opportunity recognition, innovation, decision making and practice. Numerous definitions given by many authors state that learning is a process in which people develop abilities to act differently, to know, to act and to understand why. Through learning, people create knowledge through experience and create a new reality. Both entrepreneurship and learning are interrelated behavioral and social processes. The term entrepreneurship education means learning to recognize and act on opportunities and to communicate in the direction of initiating, organizing and managing business ventures.

Entrepreneurship education represents an important area of research that is not yet sufficiently understood in the academic aspect of entrepreneurship or from a practical perspective in the development of new entrepreneurs. The PhD thesis aims to answer the research questions: how do people learn to work in an entrepreneurial way - what are the significant processes and experiences in their learning that can be related to existing learning theories? How do we develop a useful framework for understanding entrepreneurship education, both as applied in entrepreneurial practice and conceptually by educators?

As markets evolve and product life cycles accelerate, “owning” a particular market segment becomes more difficult and less valuable. In such an environment, the essence of the strategy lies not in the structure of the company's products and markets, but in the dynamics of its behavior. A successful company quickly moves in and out of products, markets, and sometimes even business segments. But underlying it all is a set of core competencies or capabilities that are difficult to imitate and differentiate the company from the competition. These core competencies, as well as the continuous strategic investments in them, drive the company's long-term dynamics and potential.

Entrepreneurship training is:

- Learning and acting in an innovative and opportunistic way.
- Movement between ideas and activities: applied creativity.
- Recognizing, creating and exploring opportunities.
- Social interactions for independent and social learning.
- Creating different forms of value.
- Initiation and management of organizations.

The answer to the question of why entrepreneurship education is important lies in the fact that society and economies are rebuilt through entrepreneurship education, that is, through innovation, value is created for customers and society. Individuals through entrepreneurship education have the opportunity to think creatively and thus will be able to stimulate vision, ambition and action. The development of self-confidence when acting in uncertainty is not overlooked. It is particularly important to emphasize that through lifelong learning people learn how to survive and develop.

Entrepreneurship, as one of the eight key competences in Europe, is not yet fully understood and applied in the Republic of Kosovo. From a long-term perspective, in order to advance society and the economy as a whole, there is a need to include entrepreneurship in all levels of education, which will enable entrepreneurship training outside of formal education. Entrepreneurship education can be viewed in broad and narrow terms. The broad concept of entrepreneurship education is a function of developing entrepreneurial inclinations, skills, abilities, which includes the development of initiative, value creation, independence, responsibility and other qualities, as well as mastering basic economic concepts. The narrow, specific concept of entrepreneurship education and training is a function of the movement of economic entities and their management. The European Parliament and the European Commission in their recommendations for the development of entrepreneurship have indicated the definitions and principles for the key competences of lifelong learning. According to this view, entrepreneurship represents an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. This implies creativity, innovation, the ability to take reasonable risks, as well as the ability to plan, organize and lead projects to achieve certain goals.

The detailed explanation of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur show the guidelines for defining the problem-subject framework in the study. Entrepreneurship education has emerged as an important but poorly understood area of research. The paper focuses on the development of this field from the perspective of socially constructed learning based on the learning experiences and behaviors of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs. The unit of analysis is the small and medium-sized entrepreneur. A conceptual framework has been developed for the analysis of entrepreneurship education, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the foundations and prospects of entrepreneurship education, which will allow entrepreneurs to achieve a competitive advantage and increase the level of innovation of SMEs.

In this context, the object of the study is entrepreneurship education, and its subject - the impact of entrepreneurship education on the acquisition of competitive advantages of SMEs.

2. Relevance of the research

The **second paragraph** justifies the relevance of the research. Considering the fact that the only constant thing in the world is change, it is clear that today's SMEs and entrepreneurs face change on a daily basis. Changes include changes in day-to-day operations, organizational strategies, culture, people, technology, and more. Successful entrepreneurs are characterized by the ability to lead and manage change. Successful entrepreneurs demonstrate efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and innovation in working with SMEs. In the context of this, both the necessity and the relevance of the research are imposed, which is the result of the view that the main factors that prove to be decisive in the management of SMEs are: people, process and culture. This kind of

thinking allows entrepreneurs to apply entrepreneurship education as a function of developing entrepreneurial competencies that will enable them to succeed in their work and at the same time achieve competitiveness and transform themselves into learning organizations. The question arises, why should the entrepreneurial spirit among SMEs be developed and promoted? Why do entrepreneurs need entrepreneurship training? The answer lies in purely economic reasons. Entrepreneurship training helps entrepreneurs (including young entrepreneurs) develop qualities such as self-confidence, initiative, creativity, teamwork, self-efficacy, passion, motivation to act, desire to learn, intellectual curiosity, recognition for a job well done. These are particularly important features in entrepreneurship education. Any individual or group activity that imposes the need to develop the mentioned characteristics can be considered constructive, as it encourages the desire to do something in the direction of developing and promoting the entrepreneurial spirit. Entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises is known as individual entrepreneurship, which is based on the personal characteristics of the individual, that is, on his knowledge, skills and abilities. When we talk about entrepreneurship, we usually mean individual entrepreneurship, which manifests itself in starting one's own business or buying an existing business from an individual.

3. Conceptual-categorical research model

The **third paragraph** of the second chapter presents the conceptual-categorical model of the study. The PhD thesis identifies the key individual competencies that determine whether a person is an entrepreneur or not, and what are the core entrepreneurial competencies that will enable the success of the entrepreneur and SME. Accordingly, a detailed analysis of the entrepreneurship literature is needed to create a conceptual framework of entrepreneurship related to individual skills. The research should show that the key competencies at the individual level that must be developed through entrepreneurship education for the individual to become a successful entrepreneur will promote the entrepreneurial orientation of the organization in which he works. It will also identify the competencies that enable employees to act as entrepreneurs, as this is useful for any organization that is engaged in entrepreneurship or for any educational institution that is committed to developing entrepreneurial competencies among students.

Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial competencies have been extensively researched in by numerous authors. The doctoral dissertation focuses on those competencies that characterize the entrepreneur. Table 2 presents a summary of the literature review, illustrating 20 competencies recognized as important and influential in achieving entrepreneurial performance (Robles & Zárraga-Rodríguez, 2014).

Table 2. Entrepreneurial competencies

COMPETENCES	DEFINITION
Risk Assumptions	Ability to tolerate ambiguity and uncertain situations and make good decisions in such situations while being able to control one's emotions.
Autonomy/ self determination	Ability to make independent decisions based on a clear understanding of the opportunities and responsibilities that this entails.
Search and analysis of information	Ability to find and share useful business information to solve problems by leveraging the organization's full potential.
Quality of work	Ability to work intensively and persistently towards achieving goals, seeking continuous improvement.
Communication	Ability to actively listen, ask questions, express ideas and concepts in an effective manner.
Self-confidence	Ability to identify new challenges with respect to confidence in one's capabilities, decisions or views.
Development of social/support networks	Ability to create and maintain networks of contacts with individuals who are or will be useful in achieving objectives.
Dynamism	Ability to quickly and adequately adapt to different contexts, situations, people.
Initiative	Ability to take action, create opportunities and improve results without external demands.
Innovation	Ability to do original, unexpected, relevant (timely, useful) new work as needed.
Integrity	The ability to act on what is said or recognized as important.
Leadership	The ability to lead the action of a group in a particular direction by creating an atmosphere of energy and loyalty, setting goals, following through on those goals, and providing feedback that integrates the views of others.
Self control	Ability to self-regulate and know one's own limitations.
Results orientation	Ability to encourage, guide and select behaviors to achieve goals.
Social mobility	The ability to raise or lower your position on the scale of economic well-being.
Negotiations	Ability to lead or control a discussion by creating a collaborative environment and making efforts to strengthen that relationship.
Eliminate problems	Ability to flexibly deal with limited situations and overcome them and ability to deal with contradictions.
Responsibility	Ability to maintain consistency between actions, behavior and words, taking responsibility for own mistakes.
Teamwork	Ability to actively participate in the achievement of a common goal, emphasizing team rather than personal goals.

Source: Lorena Robles, Marta Zárraga-Rodríguez, Key Competencies for Entrepreneurship, 2nd GLOBAL CONFERENCE on BUSINESS, ECONOMICS, MANAGEMENT and TOURISM, 30-31 October 2014, Prague, Czech Republic, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/82046294.pdf>

Because some competencies are more or less universal than others, researchers have developed a model of competencies as a pyramid, where universal competencies are located at the base of the pyramid, while specific competencies are located at the top of the pyramid. This does not mean that certain competencies are given priority over others, but they are simply divided into layers of competencies that provide benefits to entrepreneurs from different industries and sectors of activity (Fig.2).

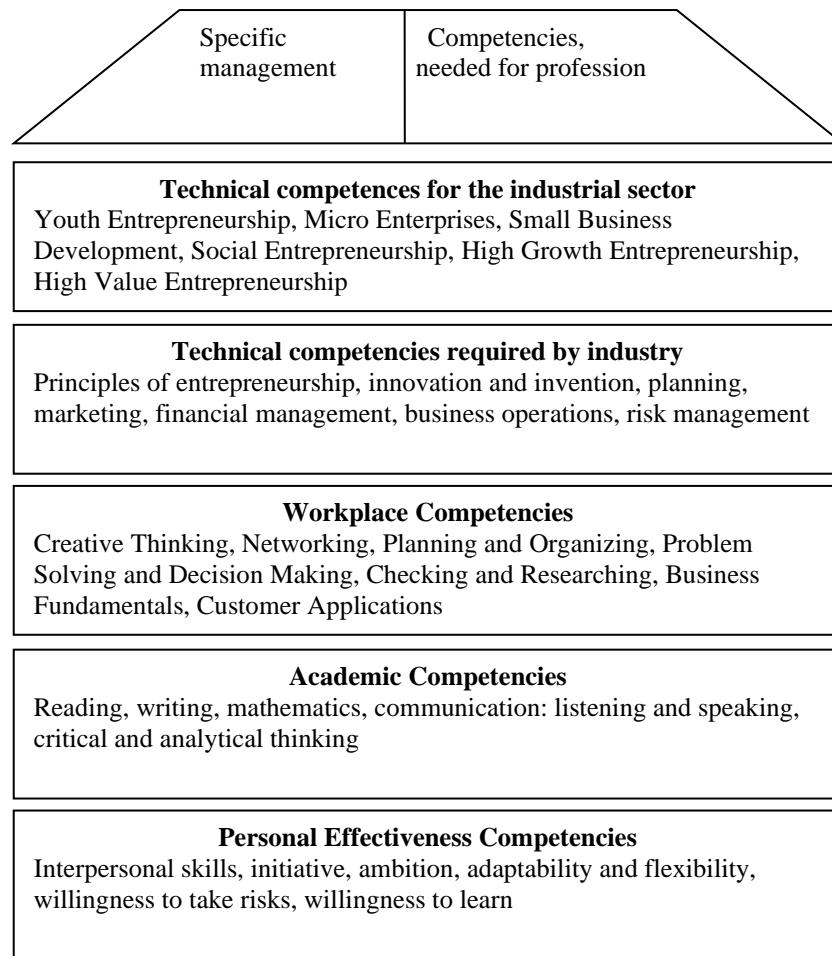


Figure 2. Types of competences

Source: Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (<http://www.entre-ed.org/>)

In the context of the detailed explanation of all aspects of entrepreneurial competences that can be developed through entrepreneurial education and be a function of entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial success, the question arises of the conceptual-categorical model that will be applicable in practice.

Entrepreneurship training offers SME entrepreneurs significant prospects through which they can achieve a competitive advantage that will lead to the success of the SME. The question also arises about the role of entrepreneurship training in the function of developing entrepreneurial competences among entrepreneurs in SMEs. The entrepreneur reflects his entrepreneurial orientation through entrepreneurial behavior, which is based on the entrepreneurial roles he fulfills while working in the SME and the entrepreneurial competencies they need to be able to fulfill the entrepreneurial roles smoothly. Entrepreneurial competencies, which are of great importance for achieving a competitive advantage for entrepreneurs, are grouped into two groups:

- Entrepreneurial competencies for personal effectiveness, which include: interpersonal skills, risk-taking, initiative, responsibility.

- Entrepreneurial workplace competencies that include: creativity, customer focus, innovation and problem solving.

All these entrepreneurial competencies are possessed by entrepreneurs to some extent. Given the fact that their SMEs operate in a dynamic environment, there is a need for entrepreneurs to realize the strengths and weaknesses they have in terms of possessing entrepreneurial competencies and to apply entrepreneurship education as a function of developing the necessary entrepreneurial competencies. Thus, this approach will lead to a seamless realization of entrepreneurial roles, which will emphasize the entrepreneurial orientation of the entrepreneur and the SME, and lead to entrepreneurial success measured by achieving competitive advantage. Such an approach provides a solid basis for understanding the entrepreneurial identity, with all the knowledge, skills, abilities and competences and for placing learning as an individual and social process in the function of identifying and exploiting opportunities to be able to create and/or manage the business venture in an effective, efficient and innovative manner. In this way, all the principles in entrepreneurship will be respected, which will lead to the achievement of a competitive advantage. This approach is especially important for young entrepreneurs who are at the beginning of creating their own business venture, for future young entrepreneurs, as well as for entrepreneurs who already have the experience to apply the concept of lifelong learning in their daily work. and SME management. In the model that will be explored in the doctoral dissertation, entrepreneurship education is the starting point. Entrepreneurship learning as a social and individual process defines the entrepreneurial identity and the skills, knowledge and abilities that an SME entrepreneur possesses. The set of knowledge, skills and abilities that are required to fulfill the entrepreneurial roles within an SME determine the organizational entrepreneurial orientation. It is this approach that necessitates the applicability of entrepreneurship education as a function of the development of competencies among entrepreneurs for personal effectiveness and workplace competencies. Of course, this includes other types of competencies, but this paper focuses on these two sets of competencies, while the remaining competencies remain to be explored in the future.

4. Aim and objectives of the research

In the **fourth paragraph**, the purpose and tasks of the research are presented. The aim of the dissertation is to investigate the impact of entrepreneurial training on the acquisition of competitive advantages of small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, the current research emphasizes the role of entrepreneurial identity and defines the necessary entrepreneurial competencies, the acquisition of which will enable entrepreneurs to achieve a competitive advantage. Conducting the research, both theoretically and empirically, allows obtaining deeper and broader information about entrepreneurial identity, the necessary entrepreneurial competencies that will allow

entrepreneurs to achieve a competitive advantage. The research work provides a clear picture of the entrepreneurial identity as well as the necessary entrepreneurial competencies that will enable entrepreneurs to achieve a competitive advantage.

In order to achieve the above-formulated goal of the dissertation work, it is necessary to solve the following research tasks:

First, to review and analyze the specialized literature in the field of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial identity and competence, competitive advantages and the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Second, to develop a methodological approach and a methodological toolkit for researching the impact of entrepreneurial training on the acquisition of competitive advantages of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Third, to conduct an empirical study, the results of which will show whether the accepted hypotheses are confirmed or rejected.

5. Hypothetical framework

The **fifth paragraph** outlines the hypothetical framework of the study. A general hypothesis and two special hypotheses are formulated. The general hypothesis states that Entrepreneurship Training, which develops the personal effectiveness competencies and workplace competencies of entrepreneurs, will lead to the acquisition of a competitive advantage for small and medium-sized enterprises. According to the first special hypothesis, Entrepreneurial Personal Effectiveness Competencies developed through entrepreneurship education have a positive impact on the acquisition of competitive advantage of SMEs, and according to the second, Entrepreneurial Workplace Competencies developed through entrepreneurship education have a positive impact on the achievement of competitive advantage for SMEs.

6. Methodical approach

The **sixth paragraph** describes the methodological approach of the research. The main scientific methods used in scientific work are: the methods of induction and deduction, analysis, synthesis and comparative analysis.

The inductive method aims to analyze the current scientific and professional literature that elaborates the problem of entrepreneurial competences and entrepreneurship education.

The method of deduction is the basis for drawing conclusions from the tested hypotheses. The method of deduction makes it possible to develop the theory of the subject of research, in the case of identifying the entrepreneurial competencies that are in function of achieving a competitive advantage through the application of entrepreneurship education. It then moves on to operationalization at the level of separate and individual hypotheses that include dependent and independent variables.

The method of comparative analysis was also applied in the study. Hypotheses are generated in a hypothetical framework to be tested through a survey of a suitably

selected sample of SMEs. The verification of the hypotheses is carried out with quantitative research and statistical processing of the data obtained from the survey questionnaire. Comparative research makes it possible to generalize conclusions, since the confirmation of hypotheses can be considered scientific truth.

In general, it is about applied research related to a clearly defined objective and having a practical application in SMEs.

The research technique used in the scientific work is questionnaire survey and the instrument used in the research is survey card. Survey maps provide a convenient way to collect data from a larger number of respondents from a specific geographic area. It is a tool with a high frequency of use, as respondents can freely express their opinions and remain anonymous.

7. Research tools

In the seventh paragraph, the main research tool - the survey card - is presented. The research was conducted in order to measure the independent variables:

Developing interpersonal skills.

Developing risk-taking skills.

Developing initiative.

Developing responsibility skills.

Developing creativity.

Developing customer focus.

Developing innovations.

Developing problem solving skills.

and the dependent variable: Achieving competitive advantage.

CHAPTER III. ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH RESULTS

In the third chapter, the final research task of the dissertation is carried out. In it, the results of the research are presented and analyzed, and the hypotheses are tested.

Chapter Three consists of five paragraphs.

1. Profile of respondents

The **first paragraph** outlines the profile of the respondents. It provides a clear picture of the gender and age of the SME managers surveyed, as well as the size of the enterprises, the area in which they operate (manufacturing or non-manufacturing) and their history.

2. Testing Hypothesis 1

In the **second paragraph**, based on the results of the empirical study, hypothesis 1 is tested.

Hypothesis 1 examines the relationship between entrepreneurial personal efficacy competencies developed through entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurs' acquisition of competitive advantage in SMEs. This hypothesis covers 4 entrepreneurial

competencies that fall under the personal effectiveness competencies of the entrepreneur, namely:

1. Developing interpersonal skills.
2. Developing risk-taking skills.
3. Developing initiative.
4. Developing a responsibility skill.

The main assumption analyzed is the author's view that the mentioned 4 competencies can be developed through the application of entrepreneurship education and that they positively influence the acquisition of a competitive advantage by entrepreneurs in SMEs. The aforementioned entrepreneurial competencies help entrepreneurs lay the foundations of managing an SME by putting the main focus on the entrepreneur's personality.

The results of the study show that there is statistical significance between the variables measured in SMEs and that the hypothesis is accepted. Interpersonal skills play a major role in the day-to-day operations of SMEs. They are closely related to emotional intelligence and, in a professional context, are attributes used to understand what motivates employees and how they use their knowledge to achieve excellent results. In the work of SMEs, interpersonal skills are becoming increasingly important. There are a number of skills that can be said to be defined as interpersonal, which are used to varying degrees in the workplace depending on where the job is and what the level of responsibility is. One of the most important interpersonal skills is being able to work in a team, communicate effectively, and demonstrate the necessary commitment and work ethic. Confidence, cooperation and positivity are some of the most necessary interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills are necessary because without them, day-to-day business and day-to-day operations in an SME would be very difficult, as all aspects of work involve communication. Many jobs also involve collaboration and interaction with different types of people, and interpersonal skills are vital to success on the job. The most important interpersonal skills that determine the work of SMEs are self-confidence, professionalism, business ethics, cooperation. The right level of confidence in the workplace can open doors and help achieve excellent performance and achieve a competitive advantage. It can also contribute to choosing an appropriate approach in different situations, as well as to dealing with them positively and effectively. In order to be successful and thereby gain a competitive advantage, it is especially important to develop self-confidence, as it improves the way people perceive attitudes, ideas and opinions. Self-confidence also enables effective handling of challenging situations, which enables the achievement of new and higher goals at work. Professionalism includes the way you present yourself, from your appearance to the way you treat other people.

Another aspect that has been developed in relation to entrepreneurial competencies for personal effectiveness is the development of risk-taking skills through entrepreneurship education. The author argues that this will have a positive impact on the achievement of competitive advantage by SME entrepreneurs. This aspect analyzes the relationship between the independent variable: "developing risk-taking skills through entrepreneurship education" and the dependent variable: "gaining competitive advantage of SMEs". From the results obtained, it follows that there is statistical significance between the variables measured in the organizations and that the hypothesis is accepted.

Risk-taking as a skill and entrepreneurship are two related terms that are continuously of interest to many researchers. In most definitions, entrepreneurs are associated with risk and risk-taking. Entrepreneurs must take risks to realize their ideas. In the analysis and testing of the hypothesis, the relationship between the entrepreneur and risk-taking is considered and explored, as well as the importance of the effect of risk-taking in achieving competitive advantage. The business and day-to-day activities of SMEs involve and imply risk-taking and working in conditions of uncertainty. Risk-taking, as an entrepreneurial competence to achieve personal effectiveness, differentiates entrepreneurs from other people as well as from the competition, and thus enables them to achieve a competitive advantage. Entrepreneurs or so-called "risk-takers" are characterized by: high expectations, constant learning, promotion of changes, trusting instincts, "gambling" and others.

The third aspect of entrepreneurial competencies for personal effectiveness is the development of the ability to take initiative. The author's main position is that the development of initiative skills through entrepreneurship education will positively influence the achievement of a competitive advantage for SMEs. Thus, the object of analysis will be the relationship between the independent variable: "developing initiative skills through entrepreneurship education" and the dependent variable: "acquiring a competitive advantage of SMEs".

From the obtained results it is necessary to conclude that there is statistical significance between the given variables measured in the organizations. It follows that the individual hypothesis is accepted. The independent variable: developing initiative skills through entrepreneurship education and the dependent variable: achieving competitive advantage of SMEs are statistically significant. A sense of initiative refers to an individual's ability to transform ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects to achieve competitive advantage. This skill supports people not only in everyday life but also in the workplace to be aware of the context of their work and the ability to identify and recognize opportunities. Initiative means undertaking activities of one's own free will, without external influence. To achieve business results or gain a competitive advantage, you

need to take the initiative to do things. High initiative means achieving higher results. If there is neither desire nor initiative, then it is obvious that one cannot gain a competitive advantage or achieve success in a business venture. Success in achieving results lies in taking initiative.

The last aspect, that is, the fourth entrepreneurial competence, which is part of the entrepreneurial competencies of personal effectiveness, is responsibility. The answer to the questions “what does it mean to be a responsible entrepreneur?” and “what does responsibility cover?” lies in the analysis of hypothesis 1.4. which states: developing responsibility skills through entrepreneurship education will positively influence the achievement of SMEs' competitive advantage. In fact, the analysis involves testing the relationship between the independent variable: developing responsibility skills through entrepreneurship education and the dependent variable: achieving a competitive advantage of SMEs. The author's point of view regarding the relationship between the given variables is that developing responsibility skills through entrepreneurship education has a positive impact on achieving competitive advantage.

The relationship between the given variables shows that the independent variable: developing responsibility skills through entrepreneurship education and the dependent variable: achieving a competitive advantage of SMEs are statistically significant, from which it follows that the individual hypothesis 1.4., tested in SMEs, is accepted. Being a responsible entrepreneur, taking responsibility means managing and motivating employees. Taking responsibility also includes social responsibility. Accountability allows the entrepreneur to make the difference between success and failure. To build a successful business, the entrepreneur must take responsibility for it. Being a responsible entrepreneur means being clear, concise, focused on results, customers, goals and critical thinking. In fact, it is an entrepreneurial competence that provides the basis for leading and managing SMEs. In his work, the entrepreneur faces a lot of pressure. Accountability is often avoided by many people, but the fact is that it provides the basis for running a business. It is very common for entrepreneurs to avoid direct responsibility for their SMEs or failures. Accountability is the entrepreneurial skill that makes the difference between a successful and a failed business.

In the context of the analysis, it can be concluded from the tested hypothesis that there is a statistical significance between entrepreneurial competencies for personal effectiveness and the achievement of competitive advantage of SMEs. Therefore, entrepreneurship education should help entrepreneurs develop the necessary entrepreneurial competencies, which will help entrepreneurs realize their weaknesses and strengths and increase their knowledge in the function of developing the necessary entrepreneurial competencies.

3. Testing Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 examines the relationship between workplace entrepreneurial competencies developed through entrepreneurship education and the acquisition of competitive advantage by entrepreneurs in SMEs. This hypothesis covers the 4 entrepreneurial competencies that fall within the competencies of the entrepreneur's workplace, namely:

1. Developing creativity.
2. Developing innovations.
3. Developing customer focus.
4. Develop problem-solving skills.

The initial assumption under analysis is the author's view that the mentioned 4 competencies can be developed through the application of entrepreneurship education and that they positively influence the achievement of a competitive advantage by entrepreneurs in SMEs. The mentioned entrepreneurial competencies help entrepreneurs to lay the foundations in the management and development of SMEs, putting the main focus on the entrepreneurial competencies that the entrepreneur needs during the activity.

The results show that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial competencies in the workplace and the achievement of competitive advantage by entrepreneurs in SMEs. In this context, it can be concluded that workplace entrepreneurial competencies developed through entrepreneurship education have a positive impact on the achievement of competitive advantage by entrepreneurs in SMEs. Entrepreneurial workplace competencies, including creativity, innovation, customer focus and problem solving, are key competencies that have a direct impact on how entrepreneurs manage SMEs. In order to get an answer to the research question whether the aforementioned entrepreneurial competencies are related to the achievement of a competitive advantage, we proceed to test each individual hypothesis separately. The first significant entrepreneurial competency of workplace competencies among entrepreneurs is creativity. Here the attitude of the author, highlighted in the individual hypothesis 2.1. states that: developing creativity through entrepreneurship education will have a positive impact on achieving a competitive advantage for SMEs. Accordingly, the relationship between the independent variable: developing creativity through entrepreneurship education and the dependent variable: achieving competitive advantage of SMEs will be tested. The results show a statistically significant positive relationship between the development of creativity and the achievement of a competitive advantage of SMEs. As for the characteristics of creative people, they can be highly motivated individuals who spend many years perfectly managing their chosen profession. Contrary to stereotypes, creative people are not necessarily geniuses and fundamentally closed individuals. On the contrary, they are more open to experimenting

with different activities. Highly creative people are dissatisfied with the status quo and are constantly looking for new and unusual solutions to the problems facing the organization. In today's working environment, creativity is the most desirable need for any organization. For most entrepreneurs, it is quite clear that creativity is an important condition for survival in dynamic and highly competitive markets. Creative behavior is not unique to successful entrepreneurs. The success of an SME depends on the creative activities of all employees, which is why human capital should be seen as an important resource.

Another important entrepreneurial competency that stems from creativity is the ability to innovate. Answers to the questions "what does it mean to be innovative?" and "how to implement innovation?" will in fact provide a significant rationale for the view that: developing innovation through entrepreneurial learning will positively impact the achievement of a competitive advantage for SMEs. Therefore, the subject of analysis is the relationship between the independent variable: developing innovation through entrepreneurship education and the dependent variable: achieving competitive advantage of SMEs. The study found a statistically significant positive relationship between the development of innovation and the achievement of competitive advantage.

The last few decades have seen an increase in the importance of innovation, leading to the growth of new SMEs every year. Advances in technology are changing the world very quickly. In addition, innovation leads to competitiveness among SMEs. If SMEs want to remain competitive in the market, they need to innovate in their products and services. Innovation is often seen as the implementation of new solutions that meet new requirements, unexpressed needs, or existing market needs. This is achieved with more efficient products, services, processes, technologies or business models that are already present in the market. Innovation is a key feature of entrepreneurship. In fact, it can be said that innovation is what makes an entrepreneurial business "entrepreneurial". Entrepreneurial business is exposed to constant change. Changes occur through the action of external (changes in laws and regulations, changes in technology, economic changes) and internal forces (introduction of new equipment, changes in organization, employee relations). Of the many problems entrepreneurs face, change is one of the biggest. Innovation is a tool of entrepreneurship. It should be kept in mind that innovation creates resources.

In addition to creativity and innovation, an important entrepreneurial competency in the workplace is customer focus. Namely, market orientation, the implementation of marketing strategies allows entrepreneurs to achieve a competitive advantage. The research position states: developing a customer focus through entrepreneurship education will positively influence SMEs' achievement of competitive advantage. The result is testing the relationship between the independent variable: developing customer focus through entrepreneurship education and the dependent variable: achieving

competitive advantage of SMEs. There is a statistically significant positive relationship between developing a buyer skill focus and achieving competitive advantage. This means that the wants, needs and motivations of buyers, dictated by the market, shape the organization and create the growth strategy. An SME should primarily serve consumers. Entrepreneurs' willingness to use their unique social and business networks, accept and manage risks, act proactively and have the ability to innovate are central to the culture, strategy and tactics of customer focus, customer value creation, targeting marketing and long-term perspective of achievement. The intense and interactive relationship between the entrepreneur and the customers is one of the key elements that form the perspective of the SME. Market orientation is one of the central components that emerges as an SME's response to product/service demand. It is defined as the environment of the organization in which the necessary behavior is created to create value for customers and therefore more effective performance. It is a process of meeting customer needs through analyzes and assessments of SME customer wants. Thus, market orientation can be determined by behavioral indicators such as consumer determination and value creation by two criteria: long-term focus and profitability. Successful organizations emphasize customer focus. Businesses must be aware of their image, as it affects customers' perception of the company. Customer focus can be seen as the central driving force that drives SMEs to create, build and maintain customer relationships. The relationship between SMEs and customers is one where the organization identifies with the customers at a basic level and the customers identify with the organization.

Another important workplace entrepreneurial competency is problem solving. Problem solving in SMEs by the entrepreneur is hypothesized to have a positive impact on achieving competitive advantage. The author's starting point is that: developing problem-solving skills through entrepreneurship education will positively influence SMEs' achievement of competitive advantage. Therefore, statistical processing will test the relationship between the independent variable: developing problem-solving skills through entrepreneurship education and the dependent variable: achieving competitive advantage of SMEs. The results of the empirical study show a statistically significant positive relationship between problem-solving skills and the achievement of competitive advantage.

Entrepreneurship is most directly related to small and medium-sized enterprises. They can exist and develop only in a specific economic environment. This is the market environment, with private ownership and an environment in which a rich network of various types of support for entrepreneurship has been created, the so-called entrepreneurial environment. That is why today the governments of all modern economies are working to create a favorable investment climate, which is an essential prerequisite for increasing productive investment and thus for the expansion of existing

businesses and the entry of new businesses into the market. Entrepreneurship and the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector in global exchanges play a significant role in the development of any national economy. They contribute to increasing the number of employed, increasing exports and imports, raising the standard of people, etc. or in other words strengthen the overall functioning of the state itself. That is why the support that comes from the state and the policies that are prepared for the development of entrepreneurship and the sector of small and medium enterprises, through the preparation and implementation of strategies, programs with clearly defined measures and activities, are an important element of any institution that deals with supporting entrepreneurship and the small and medium-sized enterprise sector.

4. Hypothesis testing with correlation analysis

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to calculate the correlation between the study variables. SPSS displays the statistics for testing the hypotheses and calculating the correlation coefficient. According to the data obtained, it can be judged whether the general hypothesis is accepted or not.

The main view regarding the first hypothesis is that there is a positive correlation between the entrepreneurial competencies of personal effectiveness developed through entrepreneurship education and the achievement of SME competitive advantage. When an entrepreneur's primary goal is to achieve competitive advantage, the first step is to have developed entrepreneurial competencies for personal effectiveness. In this context, it is necessary to analyze the necessary entrepreneurial competencies for personal effectiveness that can and should be developed through entrepreneurship education. The processed data show this relationship. Thus, in relation to the basic attitude contained in the specific hypothesis 1, the entrepreneurial competencies of personal effectiveness developed through entrepreneurship education have a positive impact on the achievement of competitive advantage of SMEs.

Table 3. Correlation data between given variables

Correlations

		Entrepreneurial _ competencies _ for_personal_efficacy	Gaining_a_competitive_adv antage
Entrepreneurial _ competencies _ for_personal_efficacy	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 120	,375** 120
Gaining_a_competitive _advantage	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	,375** 120	1 120

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson ® correlation coefficient value is 0.375 and shows a positive linearly increasing correlation trend. The relationship is also seen from the p-value for statistical

significance of the result, which has a value of 0.001. The statistical criterion $.001 < 0.05$ ie. $p < \alpha$ is satisfied.

In addition to the Pearson correlation, SPSS also provides Kendall's tau-b and Spearman's rho (Spearman's coefficient) values as symmetrical correlations, presented in Table 4.

From the result shown, it can be noted that the t-test value for statistical significance is completely identical to that of the Pearson correlation ($p = 0.001$). On the other hand, the correlation coefficient is 0.268 (Kendall's tau-b) and 0.337 (Spearman's rho). In other words, symmetrical correlations also indicate the fact that there is a moderate positive correlation between the variables. In the context of what has been said so far, the reasoned conclusion is drawn that there is a relationship between the independent and dependent variable and that the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4. Kendall's tau-b and Spearman's rho data between given variables
Correlations

			Entrepreneurial _ competencies _ for_personal_effica cy	Gaining_a_compet itive_advantage
Kendall's tau_b	Entrepreneurial _ competencies _ for_personal_effica cy	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	1,000 . 120	,268** ,000 120
	Gaining_a_competi tive_advantage	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	,268** ,000 120	1,000 . 120
Spearman's rho	Entrepreneurial _ competencies _ for_personal_effica cy	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	1,000 . 120	,337** ,000 120
	Gaining_a_competi tive_advantage	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	,337** ,000 120	1,000 . 120

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The main assumption regarding Hypothesis 2, which relates to workplace entrepreneurial competencies and the achievement of competitive advantage, is that there is a positive relationship between these two components. The Pearson \textcircled{R} correlation coefficient value is 0.561 and shows a strong positive trend of linear increasing correlation. The relationship is also seen from the p-value for statistical significance of the result, which has a value of 0.001. The statistical criterion $.001 < 0.05$ ie. $p < \alpha$ is satisfied.

Table 5. Correlation data between the variables "entrepreneurial workplace competencies" and "gaining competitive advantage"

Correlations			Entrepreneurial _ competencies _at_work_place	Gaining_a_comp etitive_advantag e
Entrepreneurial _ competencies _at_work_place	Pearson Correlation		1	,561**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			,000
	N		120	120
Gaining_a_competitive_adv antage	Pearson Correlation		,561**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	
	N		120	120

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Statistical significance results can be determined from both the Pearson Correlation Table and the Chi Square Table ($X^2= 0.001$) statistical significance test of the result obtained above. In addition to the Pearson correlation, SPSS also provides the values of Kendall's tau-b and Spearman's rho (Spearman's coefficient) as symmetrical correlations, presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Kendall's tau-b and Spearman's rho data between given variables

Correlations			Entrepreneurial _competencies _at_work_place	Gaining_a_co mpetitive_adv antage
Kendall's tau_b	Entrepreneurial _ competencies _at_work_place	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,435**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000
		N	120	120
	Gaining_a_competitiv e_advantage	Correlation Coefficient	,435**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
		N	120	120
Spearman's rho	Entrepreneurial _ competencies _at_work_place	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,591**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000
		N	120	120
	Gaining_a_competitiv e_advantage	Correlation Coefficient	,591**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
		N	120	120

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the displayed result obtained in Table 6, it can be noted that the statistical significance value is completely identical to that of the Pearson correlation ($p= 0.000$). On the other hand, the correlation coefficient is 0.435 (Kendall's tau-b) and 0.591 (Spearman's rho). In other words, symmetrical correlations also indicate the fact that there is a highly positive correlation between the variables. In the context of what has been said so far, the conclusion is forced that there is a strong positive correlation

between the independent and the dependent variable, which indicates the fact that the special hypothesis 2 is accepted.

5. Interpretation of the hypothetical framework

The **fifth paragraph** of the third chapter interprets the hypothetical framework. The research, aimed at understanding the perspectives of entrepreneurship education for achieving competitive advantage by entrepreneurs in SMEs, was conducted in small and medium-sized enterprises. Special emphasis was placed on the role of entrepreneurship education in the function of developing entrepreneurial competences among entrepreneurs in SMEs. The obtained results were processed with Pearson's correlation coefficient, symmetrical non-parametric correlation (Kendall's tau-b and Spearman's rho) and Chi Square (X^2), and the purpose of the analysis is to prove the presence of certain relationships in the model. The obtained results of the empirical tests confirmed the presence of such a relationship, which was assumed to exist.

The model proposed in the study remains unchanged (see Figure 3 in Chapter Two). Entrepreneurship education has a leading role. Entrepreneurship training models the entrepreneurial identity and the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities that play an important role in achieving a competitive advantage for SMEs. In this way, the entrepreneur, through the skills and abilities he continuously develops, realizes entrepreneurial roles in SMEs and thus models the entrepreneurial orientation of SMEs.

Such an approach defines the role and prospects of entrepreneurship education in the function of developing competencies among entrepreneurs for personal effectiveness and workplace competencies. Applying entrepreneurship education in this way will be the basis for SME success, which means: competitive advantage.

Conclusion

The success of small and medium enterprises depends on the entrepreneurial competencies possessed by the entrepreneurs and how they apply them in their day-to-day operations. It was the question of how entrepreneurial competencies are related to the achievement of a competitive advantage of SMEs that was the subject of research in the dissertation work. It highlights the role and perspectives of entrepreneurship education in the function of developing entrepreneurial competencies and their impact on the business performance and/or success of small and medium-sized enterprises. The dissertation provides a basis for defining a framework of the necessary entrepreneurial competencies that will be applicable in SMEs. In accordance with the author's research dilemmas on this issue, the study was conducted in three parts, theoretical development of the research problem, methodological basis of the study and analysis of the empirical data obtained, in order to finally draw conclusions and recommendations for future research.

It is an indisputable fact that the concepts of "entrepreneurship", "entrepreneurial management", "entrepreneurial orientation" are particularly relevant in the field of SMEs. In particular, entrepreneurial characteristics such as creativity, innovation, problem solving are at the center of SME activity and confirm the link between SMEs and entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship has been shown to have a major impact on the health of SMEs. Entrepreneurial characteristics: opportunity recognition, innovation, independent thinking, risk-taking, initiative, responsibility are the main skills and competencies that small business owners must possess in order to achieve success in the market and gain a competitive advantage. Entrepreneurial characteristics have a positive effect on the business success of SMEs. Therefore, the role of entrepreneurship education is emphasized as a process through which entrepreneurs will realize the development of the necessary entrepreneurial characteristics that will contribute to the success of SMEs.

Entrepreneurship education is an integral part of the entrepreneurial process in which economic, human, social and behavioral activities are particularly important. On this basis, a conceptual model has been developed that provides a rationale that the entrepreneurship education process is applicable in entrepreneurship education and development. Through entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurs create new knowledge and create a new reality, which shows the fact of mutual relationship between entrepreneurship and learning. Perspectives on entrepreneurial learning to achieve competitive advantage by entrepreneurs in SMEs determine the directions of development of this problem from the perspective of the experience and behavior towards learning of SME entrepreneurs. The personality of the entrepreneur serves as the basis for the development of the conceptual framework of entrepreneurship education and the perspectives of entrepreneurship education that will enable entrepreneurs to achieve a competitive advantage. The role of entrepreneurship education in the function of developing entrepreneurial competences among entrepreneurs in SMEs determines the combination of necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes. Entrepreneurship in SMEs requires the acquisition of certain skills and knowledge, as well as the development of abilities that are necessary for entrepreneurs. For this purpose, the study developed a model in which entrepreneurship education is the starting point. As a social and individual process, it defines the entrepreneurial identity and defines the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities available to the SME entrepreneur. All these necessary knowledge, skills and abilities enable the entrepreneur to fulfill the entrepreneurial roles defining the entrepreneurial orientation of the SME. Therefore, the applicability of entrepreneurship education is in the direction of developing competencies among entrepreneurs for personal effectiveness and workplace competencies.

Entrepreneurship training promotes learning processes and improves relevant entrepreneurial competencies. In organizations, entrepreneurship education represents an important mechanism for strengthening entrepreneurial behavior and entrepreneurial orientation, encouraging them to be open to new challenges, ideas and changes. Entrepreneurship training is based on experience, which can be direct or delegated. This means that learning begins with the acquisition of new information through experience, but to be successful, it also requires a process of thoughtful decision-making to occur. This is done to interpret the meaning of the new information.

Theory and practice show that entrepreneurs can be created. However, the important question is how they can be created on a strategic basis and how formal and non-formal education can help create excellent entrepreneurs to ensure long-term sustainable economic development and prosperity in the country.

IV. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN CONTRIBUTING POINTS IN THE DISSERTATION

1. Based on a wide-ranging literature survey, the theoretical knowledge in the field of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial competencies has been enriched. An approach was applied in which the entrepreneurial identity was examined through the lens of entrepreneurial learning. The competitive advantages of small and medium enterprises are systematized.

2. A research toolkit was developed and tested to assess the impact of entrepreneurial training on the acquisition of competitive advantages of small and medium-sized enterprises.

3. The author's systematization of entrepreneurial competencies, the acquisition of which in the process of entrepreneurial training will allow the achievement of a competitive advantage for small and medium-sized enterprises, has been made.

4. A conceptual-categorical model has been developed for the impact of entrepreneurial training on the competitive advantage of SMEs through entrepreneurial roles, entrepreneurial orientation and competencies for personal effectiveness and workplace competencies.

V. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1. Lajqi, H. & **Brava, F.** (2010). The role of remittances, the case of Kosova. *Vizione*, 15: 73 – 78.
2. **Brava, F.** (2018). Policies and management in the field of security in Kosovo, *KNOWLEDGE - International Journal*, 26(6): 1839 – 1842.
3. Terziev, V. & **Brava, F.** (2018). The Role of the Security Policy in Kosovo. *Journal of Innovations and Sustainability*, 4(3): 69 – 74.
4. **Brava, F.** (2019). Importance of foreign direct investments (FDI) in Kosovo and creation of favorable policies in attracting them. *KNOWLEDGE - International Journal*, 30(6): 1607-1609.
5. **Brava, F.** & Kekenoski, L. (2019). International trade and protection in front free trade. *KNOWLEDGE - International Journal*, 31(5): 1455 – 1458.

VI. REFERENCE FOR FULFILMENT OF THE MINIMUM NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN RELATION TO THE PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING THE DOCTORATE

Indicators	Points
Group of indicators A.	
Indicator 1. Dissertation for the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor".	
Impact of entrepreneurship education on the acquisition of competitive advantages of small and medium-sized enterprises	50
<i>The dissertation has been discussed and the procedure for its defense has been opened.</i>	
Group of indicators D.	
<i>Sum of indicators 4 to 10</i>	
7. Articles and papers published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes	
Lajqi, H. & Brava, F. (2010). The role of remittances, the case of Kosova. <i>Vizione</i> , 15: 73 – 78.	5
Brava, F. (2018). Policies and management in the field of security in Kosovo, <i>KNOWLEDGE - International Journal</i> , 26(6): 1839 – 1842.	10
Terziev, V. & Brava, F. (2018). The Role of the Security Policy in Kosovo. <i>Journal of Innovations and Sustainability</i> , 4(3): 69 – 74.	5
Brava, F. (2019). Importance of foreign direct investments (FDI) in Kosovo and creation of favorable policies in attracting them. <i>KNOWLEDGE - International Journal</i> , 30(6): 1607-1609.	10
Brava, F. & Kekenoski, L. (2019). International trade and protection in front free trade. <i>KNOWLEDGE - International Journal</i> , 31(5): 1455 – 1458.	5
Total points scored - sum of indicators 4 to 10	35
Required number of points - sum of indicators 4 to 10	30

VII. VII. LIST OF PARTICIPATIONS IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES AND FORUMS

Conferences:

Doctoral Scientific Session 2023, Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov
International Scientific Conference „Knowledge – capital of the future“, Budva, Montenegro, June 20, 2020.

XXII International Scientific Conference „The power of knowledge“, Kavala, Greece, 11-13.10, 2019.

International Scientific Conference „Knowledge without borders“, Skopje, 25.07.2019.

International Scientific Conference „Knowledge Without Borders“, Budva, Montenegro, 07.06, 2019.

International Scientific Conference „Knowledge without borders“, Skopje, July 05.2018.

International Scientific Conference „Knowledge in Practice“, Bansko, Republic of Bulgaria, December 16-18, 2016.

XIII. DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY AND AUTHENTICITY

by **Feim Azem Brava**

In connection with the procedure for obtaining the degree of Doctor of Education and Science in the Doctoral Programme in Economics and Management (Industry), I declare:

1. The results and contributions in the dissertation on “Impact of entrepreneurship training on the acquisition of competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprises” are original and not borrowed from research and publications in which the author has no participation.

2. The information presented by the author in the form of copies of documents and publications, personally compiled reports, etc. corresponds to the objective truth.

3. The results obtained, described and/or published by other authors are duly and extensively cited in the bibliography.

Declarant:

Svishtov

/Feim Brava/