CONCEPTUAL ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES PREDICT SELF-EFFICACY AND SENSE OF COHERENCE OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to investigate the relationships between sense of coherence, self-efficacy and conceptual entrepreneurial competencies of female South African entrepreneurs, as well as to determine whether conceptual entrepreneurial competencies predict self-efficacy and sense of coherence. Little, if any, research has been conducted to determine if conceptual entrepreneurial competencies predict self-efficacy and sense of coherence of South African women. A cross-sectional survey design was used, and women associated with the South African Council of Business Women were conveniently sampled. Existing questionnaires were used. Correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were used to analyse the data. There were significant positive relationships between sense of coherence, self-efficacy and conceptual entrepreneurial competencies of South African entrepreneurial women. Conceptual entrepreneurial competencies predicted self-efficacy and sense of coherence. Attention should be given to the conceptual entrepreneurial competencies of entrepreneurial women to improve their self-efficacy and sense of coherence. New insights into the relationships between sense of coherence, self-efficacy and conceptual entrepreneurial competencies of women South African entrepreneurs were evident.

Keywords: Conceptual Entrepreneurial Competencies, Self-Efficacy, Sense of Coherence

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is increasingly an important driver of economic growth, productivity, innovation and employment. Job creation, innovative products and the pursuit of productivity are the main business activities attributed to entrepreneurship (Koe, Sa'ari, Majid & Ismail, 2012). The establishment of new ventures and stimulating the growth of existing businesses contribute to economic growth (Botha et., 2007). Therefore, every country is arguably willing to do everything possible to encourage the supportive business environment capable of inspiring the emergence of entrepreneurs (Anggraeni et al., 2017).

According to Kelley, Brush et al. (2011), in 2010, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) surveyed individuals from 59 economies, representing 52% of the world's population and 84% of the world's GDP. It was found that 104 million women in these economies were establishing new ventures or developing their businesses, and that self-employed women constituted between 1.5% and 45.5% of the adult female population in their particular economies. The contribution of female entrepreneurs to the economy of developed and developing countries has been extensively researched (Minniti & Langowitz, 2007; Sandhu et al., 2012; Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005). Recent research (GEM, 2017) has indicated that an

estimated 163 million women in 74 economies around the world were either starting new businesses or owned established businesses. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest discontinuances of businesses; this can be related to the high number of businesses that are started in this region (GEM, 2017). GEM (2018) states that Africa has the lowest perceived opportunities in entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurs in South Africa are one of the keys to economic growth because they generate employment. This study therefore intends to determine whether conceptual entrepreneurial competencies predict sense of coherence and self-efficacy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual competencies are related to specific behaviours of the entrepreneur, such as building a context of cooperation and trust, using contacts and connections, persuasive ability, communication and interpersonal skills (Man, Lau, & Chan, 2002). Mitchelmore & Rowley (2013) mention that conceptual competencies are the mental ability to co-ordinate the business and its interests. Conceptual competencies can be related to various conceptual abilities that can be seen in the behaviour of the entrepreneur (Man & Lau, 2000). Man et al. (2002) further argue that conceptual competencies can provide the entrepreneur with appropriate abilities in conducting analyses, decision-making, learning and problem-solving.

Man & Lau (2000) developed a framework to determine the competency-performance relationship of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and their business ventures. Six entrepreneurial competencies that can be connected to performance were identified. This forms part of the conceptual model for competitiveness for SMEs, and includes entrepreneurial competencies, which consist of three other elements, namely the competitive scope, the organisational capabilities of the business and business performance. The competitive scope and organisational capabilities are external environment influences and include internal aspects of the business venture (Man et al., 2002). The competitive scope and organisational capabilities combined can have a possible element of competitiveness. According to the model, there is a relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and other elements of competitiveness (Man et al., 2002). Female entrepreneurs vary-for instance in competencies, start-up motivations and social networks – when embarking on an entrepreneurial journey (Sequerira et al., 2016). A lack of entrepreneurial competencies has a negative effect on the performance of the female entrepreneur's business (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013). Therefore, female entrepreneurs struggle to grow their businesses due to lack of self-efficacy (McGee et al., 2009) and sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1993b).

Many theories have been developed to explain why people behave as they do (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy plays an important role in describing the behaviour of an individual regarding the choices that are made, the level of effort that is involved and the determination of the individual to succeed (McGee et al., 2009). Behaviours can be seen as impelled by inner forces in the form of needs, drives and impulses often operating below the level of consciousness (Bandura, 1977; Rodríquez-Sánchez et al., 2011). According to Bandura (1977), the behaviour of an individual exists in these forces, which lead to the individual's actions. An individual cannot be effective in everything; therefore, the individual's efficacy is developed more in some areas than in others (Bandura, 2006). According to Sherer et al. (1982), the importance of the belief in one's ability to perform various tasks was confirmed with the results obtained in a study conducted on 376 introductory psychology students.

According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy is a set of proximal determinants in the form of people's behaviour, thought patterns and emotional reactions to challenging situations. The

way that people make decisions on which course of action to follow and for how long they must pursue a specific direction has an effect on self-efficacy. If their judgements have proved to be either correct or incorrect, it may have an effect on what activities they pursue in the future. Bandura (1995) further explains that self-efficacy is based on past experiences and accomplishments. Achieving success helps to build a sense of self-efficacy, whereas failure undermines it, especially if it occurs before a sense of self-efficacy has been established. Self-efficacy depends on personal experience as well as indirect experiences where one sees others succeed in similar circumstances (Bandura, 1994).

Bandura (1977); Stajkovic & Luthans (1998) classify four experiences that determine efficacy beliefs. These experiences may have an influence on efficacy expectations, but the influence of information on an individual's sense of self-efficacy depends on how the information is evaluated (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Stajkovic & Luthans (1998) further explain that subjective perceptions of personal and situational factors rather than the direct impact of 'objective' reality are the stronger influence.

Bandura (1997) posits that self-efficacy beliefs consist of four principal sources of information:

1. enactive mastery experiences – an indicator of ability;
2. vicarious experiences – these change efficacy confidence through the development of competencies and comparing;
3. verbal persuasion – social persuasion can increase the levels of confidence; and
4. psychological and affective state – how individuals tend to view their abilities, their strengths and their propensity to underperform.

The word salutogenesis originated from the Latin salus (health) and the Greek genesis (origin) (Antonovsky, 1987). Antonovsky developed the term from his studies of how people manage stress and stay well (Antonovsky, 1987), in contrast with pathogenesis, which studies the causes of diseases. Antonovsky observed that stress is universal, but not all individuals have negative health outcomes in response to stress. Instead, some people achieve health despite their exposure to potentially disabling stress factors. In light of the above, it appears obvious that the introduction of salutogenesis provides a challenge and contradiction to the established practice of entrepreneurs. Below, an understanding of Antonovsky's salutogenic orientation and sense of coherence is presented.

Antonovsky's (1996) salutogenic orientation introduces a resource-oriented, rather than risk-oriented, perspective on the maintenance, restoration or improvement of entrepreneurs' health. To promote health, Antonovsky (1996) demands an orientation to salutary factors which allow people to remain on or move further toward the health side of what he describes as the health-disease continuum, by allowing them to handle the stressors well with which they are confronted.

Sense of coherence is an important contributor to an individual's health. Moksnes et al. (2014) refer to the extent to which events that happen in one's internal and external life are structured and predictable. A higher sense of coherence enables people to manage tension and develop effective ways to find solutions, resulting in less anxiety, depression, perceived stressors and post-traumatic stress disorder (Antonovsky, 1993b; Van der Westhuizen, 2018). Sense of coherence has also been found to act as moderating effect between stress and individuals' emotional health (Hochwälder, 2013; Moksnes et al., 2013). Remes et al. (2018) refer to sense of coherence as the manner in which a person observes life as being predictable, manageable and meaningful; if this is the case, the person will have fewer health problems. Sense of coherence is a theoretical formulation that provides a central explanation for the role of stress in human

functioning. Sense of coherence consists of three dimensions, namely comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1987; Muller & Rothmann, 2009). Morrison & Clift (2005) explain comprehensibility as follows: the person who experiences the world as comprehensible expects that future stimuli will be predictable or, when they do come as surprises, will be orderable and explicable. An individual with a high level of sense comprehensibility will expect that stimuli that can be encountered in the future will be predictable, systematic and understandable (Flensborg-Madsen et al., 2005). Morrison & Clift (2005) refer to manageability as follows: people who experience their world as manageable have the sense that, aided by their own resources or by those of trustworthy others, they will be able to cope. An individual with a high level of sense of manageability will not have the feeling that life is not fair, but will rather have a positive feeling of having the ability to cope (Flensborg-Madsen et al., 2005). Carstens & Spangenberg (1997) explain meaningfulness by stating that an individual who experiences the world in a meaningful way will not be overwhelmed by adverse situations. The individual will rather deal with these situations and see the situations as challenges while seeking meaning in them, thus trying to overcome them with dignity. When individuals have a high level of meaningfulness, any challenge will be accepted rather than avoided (Flensborg-Madsen et al., 2005).

As seen in the above literature review, it is not clear whether there is a nexus between self-efficacy, sense of coherence and conceptual entrepreneurial competencies. The following question arises: Do conceptual entrepreneurial competencies and sense of coherence act as predictors in this possible nexus?

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The South African Council for Business Women (SACBW) was established in 1985 with the intention of representing women in business and creating a vehicle for women to network, learn from each other, grow and mentor other women in the field of business. The slogan "Unlocking Potential" is fundamental to this council, which has the explicit goal of seeing women grow into their full potential, reach their goals and succeed in their business endeavours. However, most entrepreneurial ventures are not successful (Baum, 2005). It is clear from this context that female entrepreneurs are in need of development. From a scholarly perspective, little, if any, research has been conducted to determine if.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to investigate whether there were significant relationships between self-efficacy, sense of coherence and conceptual entrepreneurial competencies, as well as to determine whether conceptual entrepreneurial competencies predict sense of coherence and self-efficacy. Two hypotheses were posed in this study:

H^1 Conceptual entrepreneurial competencies predict self-efficacy
H^2 Conceptual entrepreneurial competencies predict sense of coherence

METHODOLOGY

Cooper & Schindler (2011) define research design as the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data". A cross-sectional survey design was used in this study.

Research Participants

The population consisted of 846 female South African entrepreneurs affiliated to the SACBW. The SACBW consists of 19 branches situated in different provinces in South Africa. In these branches, there were female entrepreneurs who were paying and non-paying members of SACBW and who attended networking functions. Convenience sampling was used.

In terms of sample composition, it emerged that the majority of the 261 respondents were from Gauteng, comprising 119 (45.6%) of the total respondents. This was followed by Mpumalanga, with 94 (36%) respondents. Western Cape was third with 20 respondents (7.7%). In the fourth place were Free State and North West, with 10 (3.8%) respondents each. KwaZulu-Natal was fifth with six (2.3%) respondents, and in the last place Northern Cape and Limpopo accounted for one (0.4%) respondent each.

The next important information pertained to how many respondents from the different branches (or affiliations) of the SACBW completed the questionnaire. The majority of the completed questionnaires were from the Centurion branch (area), with 57 (21.8%) respondents, followed by Nelspruit/Mbombela with 51 (19.5%) respondents. The respondents from the other branches or affiliations were as follows: Alberton – 2 (0.8%), Ballito – 1 (0.4%), Bloemfontein – 10 (3.8%), Cape Town Lakeside – 3 (1.1%), East Rand – 9 (3.4%), Garden Route – 11 (4.2%), Johannesburg – 12 (4.6%), Johannesburg West – 7 (2.7%), Pietermaritzburg – 3 (1.1%), Potchefstroom – 10 (3.8%), Pretoria – 26 (10%), Pretoria North – 9 (3.4%), Secunda – 26 (10%), Stellenbosch – 5 (1.9%) and Witbank/eMalahleni – 10 (3.8%) and 9 (3.4%) respectively.

With regard to the age distribution of the respondents, 101 (38.7%) of the 261 responses were from the 40 to 49 years age group. This represented the majority of the respondents. The next major group was the 30 to 39 years age group, which constituted 65 responses (24.9%). Thirdly, 53 responses (20.3%) were from the 50 to 59 years age group, followed by 22 responses (8.4%) from the 18 to 29 years age group. Lastly, there were 20 responses (7.7%) from the 60 years and above age group. It can be concluded that the female entrepreneurs either worked in the formal business sector or owned other businesses, or that their children's upbringing was given higher priority before starting a business.

The duration of business ownership was investigated. The majority of respondents, totalling 119 (45.6%), fell in the category of "less than a year". Equally, the majority of women entrepreneurs owning businesses for between one and three years represented 45 (17.2%) of the total respondents. A decline in years was indicated from four years onward. It seems from these results that the majority of businesses did not survive after three years. Only 15 respondents had had businesses for longer than five years. There could be reasons other than only economic reasons for why these businesses did not last, such as that the businesses were closed voluntarily due to family responsibilities.

Measuring Instrument

The instrument was compiled using three questionnaires, namely the general self-efficacy scale of Bandura (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995), the conceptual entrepreneurial competencies

of Man (Li, 2009; Man, 2001) and the life orientation questionnaire of Antonovsky (1987), which was used to measure sense of coherence. Content validity was ensured by focusing on theories in the field of conceptual entrepreneurial competency, self-efficacy and sense of coherence. A factor analysis was conducted to determine the construct validity of the questionnaires.

In ensuring that the items as reflected in different dimensions measure the same latent constructs, factor analysis was performed. Factor analysis is a statistical technique to indicate various items that are connected. These are items that belong to each other and are similar, thus measuring the same factors or dimensions (Pietersen & Maree, 2014). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy should not be less than 0.60 and should ideally be higher to continue with factor analysis (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). Kaiser & Rice (1974) suggest that the cut-off value should be 0.5 and that an appropriate value is higher than 0.8. Factor analysis is used to reduce data and to identify a small number of factors to describe the variances that have been mostly observed in a much larger number of apparent variables (Tryfos, 1997). A principal axis factor analysis was performed using direct oblimin rotation, which is the standard method when there is an expectation that factors will be correlated with one another and a non-orthogonal solution is expected. The groupings of items were investigated so that they could be compared to the original theoretical scales (Pietersen & Maree, 2015; Yong & Pearce, 2013).

Bartletts's test of sphericity should be significant at the five per cent level, or $p < 0.05$, to continue with factor analysis (Dauriat et al., 2011). Knafl and Grey (2007) state that, when interpreting the factors in factor analysis, it is common to "suppress or ignore items that have an absolute loading of less than 0.3". The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.880 and the Bartletts's test of sphericity was significant ($p < 0.01$); therefore, the sample of this study was adequate to continue with a factor analysis. The same factors or scales that were identified in the literature review, namely self-efficacy, conceptual entrepreneurial competencies, sense of coherence (comprehensibility), sense of coherence (manageability) and sense of coherence (meaningfulness) were evident in the factor analysis.

In ensuring internal reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's alpha was used as depicted in Table 1. Bryman (2004) posits that, in such a case, Cronbach's alpha is the most appropriate test to determine the internal reliability of the instrument. Bryman and Bell (2011), Cortina (1993), Cronbach (1951), Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), as well as Pietersen and Maree (2014) indicate that an acceptable value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.70 for internal reliability, although 0.80 is deemed desirable.

Table 1
CRONBACH'S ALPHA FOR SELF-EFFICACY, CONCEPTUAL ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCY AND SENSE OF COHERENCE

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Self-efficacy	0.862	10
Conceptual entrepreneurial competencies	0.921	10
Sense of coherence: Comprehensibility	0.907	18
Sense of coherence: Manageability	0.639	6
Sense of coherence: Meaningfulness	0.669	4

Table 1 indicates that self-efficacy had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.862 from 10 items, while conceptual entrepreneurial competencies had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.921 from 10 items. Under

sense of coherence, the Cronbach's alpha for comprehensibility was 0.907, while manageability and meaningfulness had Cronbach's alphas of 0.639 and 0.669 respectively. Although the Cronbach's alphas for manageability and meaningfulness were slightly less than 0.70, Cortina (1993) deems the internal reliability of meaningfulness and manageability as acceptable.

Research Procedure and Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Tshwane University of Technology. Data were collected using SurveyMonkey to ensure confidentiality. The survey was designed in such a way that the respondents first had to consent to participate in the research before answering the questions. The questionnaire was distributed to the 846 affiliated members of the SACBW.

Statistical Analysis

SPSS v.25 statistical package was used to perform statistical procedures. Correlation analysis and regression analysis were performed.

RESULTS

Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression

Correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis examine the relationships between and the predictive value of the variables (Struwig & Stead, 2013).

Table 2 gives a summary of the correlation analysis results for self-efficacy, conceptual entrepreneurial competencies and sense of coherence. The results indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between sense of coherence and conceptual entrepreneurial competencies. The values were significant at a 1% level.

Table 2

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

			Self-efficacy	Conceptual Competencies	Comprehensibility	Manageability	Meaningfulness	SOC total mean
Spearman's rho	Self-efficacy	Correlation coefficient	1	0.667**				
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0				
		N*	236	221				
	Conceptual competencies	Correlation coefficient	0.667**	1				

		Sig. (2-tailed)	0					
		N*	221	221				
	Comprehensi-bility	Correlation coefficient	0.650**	0.568**	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0				
		N*	206	206	206			
	Manageability	Correlation coefficient	0.279**	0.221**	0.271**	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.001	0			
		N*	207	207	206	208		
	Meaningful-ness	Correlation coefficient	0.252**	0.229**	0.407**	0.176*	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.001	0	0.012		
		N*	206	206	206	206	206	
	SOC Total mean	Correlation coefficient	0.631**	0.510**	0.956**	0.362**	0.572**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0	0	0	
		N*	207	207	206	208	206	208
*N = sample size								

Multi-collinearity was assessed by the use of tolerance and VIF statistics. The tolerance should be more than 0.2 (Menard, 1995) and the VIF should be less than 10 (Myers, 1990). All tolerance values were above the suggested value of 0.2, while VIF values were below 10. A lack of multi-collinearity was therefore assumed.

Table 3

COEFFICIENTS OF CONCEPTUAL ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES PREDICTING SELF-EFFICACY

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF

1	(Constant)	1,518	0,148		10,262	0,000		
	Conceptual competencies	0,325	0,025	0,673	12,993	0,000	1,000	1,000
a. Dependent Variable: Self-efficacy								

In Table 3, the beta weight for conceptual entrepreneurial competencies predicting self-efficacy was significant (β= 0.325, p=0.000). It is clear that conceptual competencies significantly predict self-efficacy.

Table 4

COEFFICIENTS OF CONCEPTUAL ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES PREDICTING SENSE OF COHERENCE

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1,890	0,334		5,659	0,000		
	Conceptual competencies	0,549	0,056	0,565	9,750	0,000	1,000	1,000
a. Dependent Variable: SOC Total mean								

In Table 4, the beta weight was as follows: conceptual competencies (β= 549). It is clear that conceptual competencies predict sense of coherence.

A summary of the predictive relationship between self-efficacy, conceptual entrepreneurial competencies and sense of coherence is examined below in Table 5. R^2 is a statistic that will offer some information about the goodness of fit of a model. In regression, the R^2 coefficient of determination is a statistical measure of how well the regression predictions approximate the real data points. An R^2 of 1 indicates that the regression predictions perfectly fit the data (Struwig & Stead, 2013).

Ellis & Steyn (2003) suggest that values of R^2 of smaller than 0.13 could be regarded as a small effect and non-significant; values of R^2 between 0.13-0.25 could be regarded as medium and significant; values of R^2 larger than 0.25 could be regarded as large and practically important.

Table 5

REGRESSION SUMMARY OF SELF-EFFICACY, CONCEPTUAL ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES AND SENSE OF COHERENCE

Regression summary

Independent variable	**Dependent variable**	**Correlation between variables**	***F* significance**	***R*^{2}**	**Effect size *R*^{2}**	**Predictor significance**
Conceptual entrepreneurial competencies	Self-efficacy	0.678	0	0.46	Practically important	0
Conceptual entrepreneurial competencies	Sense of coherence	0.565	0	0.319	Practically important	0

The R^2 for the independent variable conceptual entrepreneurial competencies and the dependent variable self-efficacy variables was also 0.460, which was practically important.

The R^2 for conceptual entrepreneurial competencies (independent) and total sense of coherence (dependent) was 0.319, which was practically important.

In summary, Table 5 indicates that conceptual entrepreneurial competencies was the most significant predictor of self-efficacy with the R^2 of 0.460. Conceptual entrepreneurial competencies also predicted sense of coherence (R^2 of 0.319). Comprehensibility (R^2 of 0.341) predicted conceptual entrepreneurial competences. All these values may be regarded as practically important.

Table 6 illustrates the summary of hypotheses tested.

Table 6

SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES TESTED

	Hypotheses	**Decision**
H^1	Conceptual entrepreneurial competencies predicts self-efficacy	Accept
H^2	Conceptual entrepreneurial competencies predicts sense of coherence	Accept

It is clear that both hypotheses were accepted.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to investigate the relationships between sense of coherence, self-efficacy and conceptual entrepreneurial competencies of South African female entrepreneurs, as well as to determine whether conceptual entrepreneurial competencies predicted self-efficacy and sense of coherences. There were significant positive relationships between the sense of coherence, self-efficacy and conceptual entrepreneurial competencies of South African entrepreneurial women. Conceptual entrepreneurial competencies predicted self-efficacy and sense of coherence.

In the contrast, Ng, Skitmore & Leung (2005) had a differing opinion to the results of this study in the sense that manageability and meaningfulness constitute a significant step toward the understanding and management of potentially stressful situations and their influence of the efficiency and effectiveness of construction industry participants. Frankenhaeuser's (1996) study tested elements of a new model of well-being among female entrepreneurs within family businesses, and the results showed that demands from family and business sources and sense of coherence were significantly associated with both dimensions of well-being. Sense of coherence has a strong sociological element, since coping involves interaction between people and the society around them, and refers to people's integration into their social environments. It comprises a generalised life orientation to perceive and control the environment in a health-promoting way. According to Frankenhaeuser (1996), it is therefore important to promote female entrepreneurs' health by focusing on coping strategies but, according to this study, it is more important to focus on the conceptual entrepreneurial competencies of these women.

Antonovsky (1993) explains that sense of coherence is not merely a "substantive coping strategy" but rather a "mastery orientation" or an "internal locus of control". An individual with a strong sense of coherence to "cope" in stressful situations might decide to "fight, flee or freeze" when confronted with these situations. Sense of coherence, especially the aspects of manageability and meaningfulness, does influence how female entrepreneurs succeed in their business endeavours. Morrison & Clift (2005) refer to manageability as follows: "people who experience their world as manageable have the sense that, aided by their own resources or by those of trustworthy others, they will be able to cope." The study of Ghadi et al. (2015) also found that entrepreneurs should actively develop their abilities to enhance meaning in their work and this deviates from the results of the comprehensibility part of sense of coherence. Bailey (2018) found that salutogenesis supports women's health and represents the values of the midwifery profession. Sense of coherence, mental health and gender awareness are connected (Mayer & Van Zyl, 2013), and this deviates from this study except for the comprehensibility part of sense of coherence.

Although the female entrepreneurs deemed themselves as being fully equipped to start a business (Piperoloulos & Dimov, 2015), problems with the ability to seize opportunities might occur when these start-ups become established businesses (Kammerlander et al., 2015). To be able to seize opportunities, self-efficacy has to be high.

Kerr et al. (2017) also found a link between self-efficacy and entrepreneurship, meaning that female entrepreneurs had a sense of belief about their chances of successfully accomplishing a task. In the same vein, comprehensibility partially predicted conceptual entrepreneurial competencies. Female entrepreneurs may therefore expect stimuli that can be encountered in the future to be predictable, systematic and understandable.

Given the evidence, conceptual entrepreneurial competencies may be an important intervention target among female entrepreneurs. Comprehensibility also needs specific attention

so that the women entrepreneurs can improve their conceptual entrepreneurial competencies. The SACBW can help in this regard by focusing on these factors to prevent female entrepreneurs from failing to cope daily. Women entrepreneurs should not get into a situation where life cannot be comprehended. Value-added training by the SACBW can help its members to improve their conceptual entrepreneurial competencies and comprehensibility. Engaging with the women who are affiliated to the SACBW can help prevent this from occurring. The ability to make sense of all the information that all women entrepreneurs are exposed to plays an important role. Women entrepreneurs are bombarded with information of various kinds from all avenues, which can have an influence on their self-efficacy and sense of coherence.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Women entrepreneurs need to improve their conceptual entrepreneurial competencies and comprehensibility to add value to their businesses. The SACBW can help in this regard by having regular workshops and using specialists to provide the training.

Similar research in the future can be conducted on male entrepreneurs because it is not clear what the predictors will be in the nexus between self-efficacy, sense of coherence and conceptual entrepreneurial competencies. Another future research idea is to investigate whether a demographic difference such as age is a predictor of women entrepreneurs' conceptual entrepreneurial competencies. A qualitative research approach can be used to interview and conduct focus groups with selected women who are affiliated with the SACBW to obtain rich data about their experiences as entrepreneurs.

A limitation in the study was that it focused on women who owned businesses, and the researchers did not conceive that the duration of owning a business might be an issue. After the study had been completed, the duration of business ownership emerged as a factor, as there were not enough respondents who had owned businesses for more than three years. This could have had an influence on the results of the study.

CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurship is essential for the development of South Africa. The results of this study showed that there were significant positive relationships between the sense of coherence, self-efficacy and conceptual entrepreneurial competencies of South African entrepreneurial women. Conceptual entrepreneurial competencies predicted self-efficacy and sense of coherence. This focus of the SACBW should be on helping women entrepreneurs to add value to their businesses by improving their conceptual entrepreneurial competencies and comprehensibility.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationship(s) that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

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