

An additional elaboration on knowledge- uncertainty-based learning (KUBL), using the subject of Entrepreneurship as an example

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Abstract

The notion of knowledge-uncertainty-based learning (KUBL) has recently been postulated by the writer for effective management subject learning. In order to refine the KUBL notion, this article clarifies the nature of KUBL by comparing it with that of knowledge-certainty-based learning (KCBL). It also offers an example of KUBL study material via a literature review of the entrepreneurship subject. The literature review relies exclusively on the Journal of Entrepreneurship (Sage Publications). The article makes further enhancement of the newly formulated KUBL notion.

Key words: Knowledge-certainty-based learning (KCBL), knowledge-uncertainty-based learning (KUBL), KUBL study material, management subject learning, entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

In management subject learning, a prime thinking is that learners should strive to build up intellectual capability on reflective learning and higher-order thinking. This is typified by learning frameworks such as Gibb's reflective cycle (re: Mulder, n.d.; Finlay, 2008) and Bloom's Taxonomy (re: Armstrong, n.d.; Vieyra, 2006). Of late, this writer has propounded on the importance of knowledge-uncertainty-based learning (KUBL) as a way to pursue this intellectual capability

building goal (Ho, 2019a). In Ho (2019a), the writer discusses the KUBL topic using the Total Quality Management subject as an example. In this article, the writer takes another look at KUBL, using the subject of entrepreneurship as an example. It is, thus, a follow-up article of Ho (2019a).

Knowledge-uncertainty-based learning (KUBL) as compared with knowledge-certainty-based learning (KCBL)

To nurture a learner’s mindset to be receptive to reflective and higher-order learning, a management subject learner needs to understand the nature and differences between the following two types of learning, namely, knowledge-certainty based learning (KCBL) and knowledge-uncertainty-based learning (KUBL). In Ho (2019a), the writer explains KUBL in terms of its six underlying thinkings as well as KUBL study materials produced via literature review. Here, a comparison of the two learning modes is provided in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1: A comparison of knowledge-certainty based learning (KCBL) and knowledge-uncertainty-based learning (KUBL) in terms of attributes

Attributes	Knowledge-certainty based learning (KCBL)	Knowledge-uncertainty-based learning (KUBL)
<i>Attribute 1:</i> The theoretical stance on the nature of management subject knowledge produced by the academic community	Objective	Subjective, critical, postmodern
<i>Attribute 2:</i> The theoretical stance on the world of management practices	Unitary	Pluralistic, coercive
<i>Attribute 3:</i> The perceived nature of the management subject knowledge production activities	Rational, scientific, progressive, cumulative, goal-directed, slightly time-space insensitive and systematic	Cultural, idiosyncratic, political, controversial, fragmental, strongly time-space sensitive, opportunistic and imaginative
<i>Attribute 4:</i> The theoretical stance on the world of academic	Unitary	Pluralistic, coercive

community		
Attribute 5: Prime study materials of management subjects for the learning mode	Introductory textbooks on management subjects and practitioners' articles on social media	Academic journal articles, notably in the form of KUBL study materials
Attribute 6: The learning mode's order of learning in terms of Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning	Remembering, understanding, applying and analyzing [low-order learning]	Applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating [high-order learning]

Regarding Table 1, the underlying views on nature of management subject knowledge, the world of management practices, the perceived nature of knowledge-production activities, the world of the academic community, main study materials relied on, learning objectives of KCBL and KUBL are incompatible¹; yet, the two learning modes are both essential for effective management subject learning; for instance, both of them are required to meet the range of learning needs as identified in Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning. It is by grasping their different nature that management subject learners become more capable of making use of both of these two learning modes in effective management subject learning². This usage can take the form of "learning paradigm switching" from KCBL to KUBL as the learner's learning status evolves, e.g. from low-order learning to high-order learning (re: attribute 6 of Table 1]. In addition, Ho (2019a) calls for more efforts to produce KUBL study materials via literature review and offers an example on such kind of study material for the Total Quality Management subject. In the next section, another KUBL study material is presented as related to the subject of Entrepreneurship.

Examining the entrepreneurship literature to come up a KUBL study material on it

The management subject considered here is entrepreneurship, which is "an act of seeking investment and production opportunity,

¹ The terms of unitary, pluralistic, coercive and critical theoretical stances have been much examined in the critical systems thinking literature; see, for example, Jackson (2003) and the Facebook page on the *multi-perspective, systems-based research*.

² Education systems in certain countries (e.g., Clow, 2013) encourage students to learn by heart, which in turn favours KCBL; this is detrimental to reflective and high-order learning.

developing and managing a business venture, so as to undertake production function, arranging inputs like land, labour, material and capital, introducing new techniques and products, identifying new sources for the enterprise” (Businessjargons.com, n.d.). In order to produce a KUBL study material for the entrepreneurship, this writer examined articles published in *The Journal of Entrepreneurship* (Sage Publications). The range of years of publication for this literature review exercise is from 1999 to 2019. Extracts on contention issues, knowledge uncertainty and knowledge gaps are gathered from 30 academic articles and incorporated into a table (re: Table 1); the key words associated with the extracts are indicated next to the extracts. The extracts are sorted in chronological order. Table 1 is as follows:

Table 2: Issues and related key words in entrepreneurship research based on a sample of academic articles, sorted in chronological order

Years of publication	Issues and knowledge gaps as recognized in entrepreneurship academic articles: extracts from <i>The Journal of Entrepreneurship</i>	Key words involved
Article 1 1999	“There are numerous theoretical and empirical studies that consider attributes such as risk-taking, innovativeness, need for achievement, and managerial competence as important enabling qualities for entrepreneurship. A closer look into such studies reveals that the issue of age and family background has received scant attention, especially as explanatory variables of the phenomenon of entrepreneurship” (Kazmi, 1999).	Influences of age and family background
Article 2 2000	“One conceptual element that is considered a major factor in stimulating new business creation and SME growth and development in regional and local environments is the entrepreneurial infrastructure. Surprisingly, however, this concept has not specifically received extensive theoretical or empirical attention. Similarly, the decision-making process for participating in infrastructure support networks has not been investigated” (Tan, Tan and Young, 2000).	Entrepreneurial infrastructure
Article 3 2002	“... we do feel that enough emphasis has not been placed on the aspect of research on women and enterprise? Attention paid to women as owners is also showing a decreasing trend, particularly if one looks into what has gone into the last few years” (Ganesan, Kaur and Maheshwari, 2002).	Women and enterprise
Article 4	“Ideas behind innovation are considered not singular and consistent for the entire development	Innovation

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2005	process, but are multiple and constantly developing, perhaps diverging or converging, and ultimately cohering into new ideas, which will have partially stable outcomes, to give rise to spin-off ideas and projects (Chandler, Keller & Lyon, 2000; Rogers, 2001; Van de Ven, Polley, Garud & Venkataraman, 1999; Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993). A more complete analysis of innovation therefore, requires a careful consideration of all the important attributes involved” (Hung and Mondejar, 2005).	
Article 5 2011	“Research within the framework of social network theory has not paid much attention to the entrepreneurial attributes” (Prajapati and Biswas, 2011).	Social network theory
Article 6 2011	“There is a lively debate going on, both in academic and political circles, concerning what elements constitute an enabling environment for small-scale African business entrepreneurs” (Kristiansen, 2001).	Small-scale business entrepreneurs
Article 7 2012	“Opportunity recognition (OR) is at the very heart of entrepreneurship. However, research on OR in the context of social entrepreneurship is still in its early stages” (Lehner and Kaniskas, 2012).	Opportunity recognition
Article 8 2012	“Traditional ethnic entrepreneurship studies focus on specific characteristics of a given ethnic group (Waldinger, Aldrich & Ward, 1990). Recent research has begun to investigate how a given ethnic group interacts with or incorporates itself into the larger economy for a more comprehensive picture (Valdez, 2008)” (Ma, Wang and Lee, 2012).	Ethnic group
Article 9 2013	“Entrepreneurship through education was seen by many policy and strategy leaders as a positive venture, however the growth in the early 2000s did not appear to be co-ordinated or have a consistent approach with most curriculum-based programmes being offered through Business Schools (ISBA, 2004; Matlay, 2005; McKeown et al., 2006; NCGE, 2008; see also Brush et al., 2003 for provision in the US). ISBA (2004) argued that there was a need to develop programmes tailored to the specific needs of target markets, rather than providing generic courses” (Higgins, Smith and Mirza, 2013).	Entrepreneurship education
Article 10 2013	“Researchers have claimed that entrepreneurship is omnipresent in humans, but its manifestation depends on the environment (Begley & Tan, 2001). There is a need to explore the influence of socio-cultural characteristics on intrapreneurial	Socio-cultural characteristics

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	orientation” (Sinha and Srivastava, 2013).	
Article 11 2014	“Social Entrepreneur (SE) is an emerging research construct with no universally accepted definition (Austin, Stevenson & Wei-Skillern, 2006; Swanson & Zhang, 2010). SE is variously defined in terms of an entrepreneur with a social vision and abilities to analyse, empathise, enthuse, communicate, enable, empower, advocate and mediate (De Leeuw, 1999; Mort, Weerawardena & Carnegie, 2003; Yunus, 2011)” (Basu and Sharma, 2014).	Social entrepreneurship
Article 12 2014	“There is a limited body of evidence exploring the individual level differences in the opportunity or necessity-driven entrepreneur’s profiles (Block & Wagner, 2007; Davidsson & Wiklund, 2001; Kautonen & Palmroos, 2009). Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical research focused on a comparison of differences between the necessity and opportunity motivation of entrepreneurship in the post-socialist or crossnational contexts. The majority of empirical evidence is based on the developed economy context and there is a gap of evidence for transitional economies or less developed countries (Giacomin, Guyot, Janssen & Lohest, 2007; Grilo & Thurik, 2008)” (Borozan and Pfeifer, 2014).	Entrepreneurship motivation
Article 13 2014	“While the self-employment propensity of immigrants is well documented, little is known about what happens to ventures started up by them. Are earnings derived from the new ventures large enough to compensate for the opportunity cost of being self-employed?” (Irastorza and Peña, 2014).	Immigrants
Article 14 2014	“In deciding which individual to hire for a specific job or position, the personnel selection process is an invaluable help to choosing the person with the most adequate profile and potential to contribute to the success of the organisation (e.g., Schmidt & Chan, 1998; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). It is, therefore, quite surprising that in the field of entrepreneurship research, personnel selection theories, methods and procedures seem to be absent” (Santos and Caetano, 2014).	Personnel selection
Article 15 2014	“The study of entrepreneurship is quite young and while a great deal of understanding about it has been achieved in the past decade, integrative approaches have been rare (Antonicic, Cardon & Hisrich 2004; Cooper, Markman & Niss, 2000; Ma & Tan 2006). Whether one argues that strategy	Integrative approaches

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	subsumes entrepreneurship or that entrepreneurship subsumes strategic management, it is difficult to deny that the apparent intersection between strategy and entrepreneurship exists (Meyer, Neck & Meeks, 2002)” (Dhliwayo, 2014).	
Article 16 2015	“Clearly, entrepreneurship research needs to move beyond only studying the context of small, new and owner-managed firms alone if it is to more completely capture samples that are relevant to the phenomena associated with the emergence of new economic activity” (Mattingly, 2015).	New economic activity
Article 17 2015	“... the past decade or so has witnessed the emergence of a small but burgeoning subset of the entrepreneurship literature that has started to seek to explain why entrepreneurs operate in the informal economy both in the global South (Bhatt, 2006; Bhowmik, 2007; Charmes, 1998; Cross, 2000; Cross & Morales, 2007; Das, 2003; Gurtoo & Williams, 2009, 2011; Minard, 2009; Unni & Rani, 2003) and global North (Barbour & Llanes, 2013; Dellot, 2012; Llanes & Barbour, 2007; Small Business Council, 2004; Venkatesh, 2006; Webb, Bruton, Tihanyi & Ireland, 2013; Webb, Ireland & Ketchen, 2014; Williams, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009; Webb, Tihanyi, Ireland & Sirmon, 2009; Williams, Nadin & Baric, 2011). The result is that competing theories have emerged to explain informal sector entrepreneurship” (Williams and Youssef, 2015).	Informal economy
Article 18 2015	“The past several decades have witnessed numerous attempts at incorporating the concept of entrepreneurship into mainstream economic theory. The revival of this concept was spurred by the acute realisation of its absence from economic theory, as well as by the ever-growing interest of policy makers in finding out how entrepreneurship can lead to economic growth (Audretsch & Thurik, 2001)” (Dorobat and Topan, 2015).	Economic theory
Article 19 2015	“Various conceptualisations of social entrepreneurship have emphasised one common purpose of social entrepreneurial ventures (SEVs)—that of devising creative ways to address long-standing social problems (Alter, 2004; Alvord, Brown & Letts, 2004; Bornstein, 2007; Dees, 2001; Mair & Martí, 2006; Martin & Osberg, 2007; Trivedi & Stokols, 2011). Despite their orientation towards the mitigation of intractable social problems, many social enterprises are unsuccessful	Social entrepreneurship; sustainable social change

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	in creating positive and sustained social change (Hamschmidt & Pirson, 2011)” (Trivedi and Misra, 2015).	
Article 20 2016	“Patterns and determinants of firm growth are one of the classic, but still most emphasised, topics in management studies. At the same time, both organisational networks and entrepreneurial orientation (EO) emerged as an important area of inquiry within entrepreneurship. However, these three constructs have not previously been linked together” (Martins, 2016).	Organisational networks; entrepreneurial orientation
Article 21 2016	“Though historical research on entrepreneurship did begin during the early part of the twentieth century, it moved to the sidelines, giving centre stage to the more popular managerial and organisational approaches of the 1970s. While it seems logical to blame Chandler (Wadhvani & Jones, 2006) for the same, it seems doubtful to hold him fully responsible. In recent times, there has been a resurgence of interest in historical approaches to studying entrepreneurship” (Shankar, 2016).	Historical research
Article 22 2017	“Several studies have examined women’s entrepreneurship and associated barriers in different contexts..... However, no study has sought to rank and establish causal relationships among various barriers to women’s entrepreneurship” (Raghuvanshi, Agrawal and Ghosh, 2017).	Women’s entrepreneurship
Article 23 2017	“While economics and sociology literature on informal firms is relatively well developed, entrepreneurship and management journals offer articles that focus on informal ventures from theory-building perspective and macro-level analysis through panel data (Bruton, Ireland, & Ketchen, 2012; Thai & Turkina, 2014; Webb, Bruton, Tihanyi, & Ireland, 2013). Very few studies have adopted the cognitive or behavioural point of view to study entrepreneurship in an informal setting” (Hallam and Zanella, 2017).	Cognitive and behavioural views
Article 24 2017	“Research has focused primarily on social entrepreneurs’ motivations and intentions (e.g., generating economic or ‘social’ value; Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009), less on their behaviours (e.g., attempting to unite economic and social welfare logics of action (Basu & Sharma, 2014; Pache & Santos, 2013) and almost not at all on their <i>function</i> in the economy (cf. Santos, 2012 for an exception). Indeed, a	Economic and social welfare logics of action

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	fundamental question has only begun to be explored: <i>do social entrepreneurs fulfil a unique function in the marketplace?</i> " (Roundy and Bonnal, 2017).	
Article 25 2018	"A key limitation of the SE [strategic entrepreneurship] perspective is that it suffers from a lack of empirical evidence regarding the balance between opportunity-seeking and advantage seeking activities and the absence of a concrete SE model to be applied in empirical studies (Foss & Lyngsie, 2011; Klein, Barney, & Foss, 2012; Luke, Kearins, & Verreynne, 2011). Moreover, contingency-based research has provided insufficient evidence of SE effects on firm performance (FP) (Schindehutte & Morris, 2009)" (Kim, 2018).	Strategic entrepreneurship
Article 26 2018	"Given that the informal sector constitutes the largest share of the urban labour force in Ethiopia, examining the effect of networks on entrepreneurial outcomes is an important yet under-investigated research area" (Kebede, 2018).	Network effect
Article 27 2018	"The role of entrepreneurship in promoting innovation in large firms has received considerable empirical attention. There is a widely held view in the literature that entrepreneurship and innovation are tightly intertwined (Fagerberg, Fossas, & Sappprasert, 2012). However, the relationship between entrepreneurship and innovation is not well articulated (Landström, Åström, & Harirchi, 2013; Maritz & Donovan, 2013)" (Arshi and Burns, 2018).	Innovation and entrepreneurship
Article 28 2019	"Since OR [organisational renewal] is considered essential to respond to a changing environment, it would be prudent to study this phenomenon, including its antecedents. An entrepreneurial mindset among an organisation's managers, as well as rank and file, is essential for OR (Chakravarthy & Lorange, 2008; Taylor, 2001).... does CE [corporate entrepreneurship] indeed lead to OR? If this is true, how are they linked? Second, how can OR, a firm-level construct, be translated to the functional level, such as operations?" (Joshi, Kathuria and Das, 2019).	Organisational renewal
Article 29 2019	"Despite the insights produced by EE [entrepreneurial ecosystems] research, studies have not developed a theory explaining the mechanisms through which vibrant EEs influence entrepreneurial activity" (Roundy and Fayard,	Entrepreneurial ecosystems

	2019).	
Article 30 2019	“... an entrepreneur can be driven by multiple sources of passion, which can positively complement each other or induce conflicts impacting the development of EP [entrepreneurial passion] and performance. Although Cardon, Glauser, and Murnieks (2017) provide evidence for far more sources of EP, such as passion for people, social causes, products or services, there are almost no empirical studies that deal with origins, developments and effects of passion that emerge from such multiple sources and domains.” (Schulte-Holthaus, 2019).	Entrepreneurs’ passion

Regarding Table 1, the main content issues, knowledge uncertainty and knowledge gaps are related to (i) personal and social factors (re: articles 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 17, 22, 23, 29 and 30) (ii) management theories (re: articles 4, 5, 7, 18, 26, 27 and 28) and (iii) subthemes in entrepreneurship practices (re: articles 9, 11, 14, 15, 19 and 25). Overall, the various entrepreneurship issues do not fizzle out, though some of them have a more recent research history, e.g., social entrepreneurship, strategic entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial ecosystem. As the sample size of extracts is small and its source is exclusively from one academic journal, i.e., *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, Table 1 primarily serves as an illustration of KUBL study materials on the entrepreneurship subject.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

On postulating the new topic of knowledge-uncertainty-based learning (KUBL), the writer has produced a pioneering work, using the Total Quality Management subject as an example (Ho, 2019a). This article is a second one on KUBL. It refines the KUBL idea further with another literature review example on the entrepreneurship subject. More intellectual effort is required to conceptually develop this topic further, nevertheless³. Lastly, the writer admits the influence of his research work on managerial intellectual learning (re: the Facebook page on *Managerial intellectual learning*) and the multi-perspective, systems-based research (re: the Facebook page on the *multi-*

³ A third article on KUBL has just been published, using the subject of innovation management as an example, see Ho (2019b).

perspective, systems-based research) in formulating the KUBL topic; thus, studying the subject of managerial intellectual learning is of use to gain a deeper understanding of KUBL.

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