

Marketing in context – the marketing authenticity of owner/entrepreneurs of small firms: Case evidence from Welsh (UK) SME food and drink producers and retailers

JACQUELINE HARRIS

Senior Lecturer, Newport Business School, University of Wales, Newport, South Wales, UK

JONATHAN DEACON

Reader in Marketing and Entrepreneurship, Newport Business School, University of Wales, Newport, South Wales, UK

ABSTRACT

This exploratory paper sets out to gain evidence of 'contextual marketing' (CM) in the small firm by exploring the phenomena of 'authenticity' within cases drawn from a single sector and displaying similarity of firm type. The aim of this study will seek to explore and define marketing in context and specifically: The marketing authenticity of owner/entrepreneurs of small firms: Case evidence from Welsh (UK) SME food and drink producers and retailers. Case research used here will allow 'meaningful exploration of the characteristics of real life events' (Remenyi et al., 1998), and insight into how small firms 'go to market.' This paper will contribute to knowledge development, and help explain and make meaning from the complex phenomena of small firms that tend to be loosely structured, non-hierarchical, and often adopting an unorthodox/informal style of management.

Keywords: marketing, entrepreneurship, context, authenticity, effectuation

INTRODUCTION

Research into small firms and their activities has resulted in the acknowledgement that they are different to larger firms (Carson, Gilmore and Grant, 2001; Carson and Gilmore, 1999). Extant literature has included, how small firms do business, how they make decisions, their marketing activities and how they survive (Carson and Gilmore, 2000; Gilmore *et al.*, 2001). In parallel, there has been a growing debate within marketing

research regarding how SME owner/managers go about marketing that has focussed on, for example, the individual's characteristics, industry sector characteristics and impact of the economic environment (Kim and Mauborgne, 2005; Deacon, 2002; Covin and Slevin, 1989). This has led researchers to focus on the meaning of the term 'entrepreneur' and how to define 'entrepreneurial behaviour', moving the focus from the firm to the individual, an area previously discussed with

the study of entrepreneurship. More recently, researchers have begun to focus their research at the marketing and entrepreneurship interface (MEI) (Morrish *et al.*, 2010; Morris *et al.*, 2002, Carson and Gilmore, 1999; Carson and Gilmore, 2000; Hills and Hultman, 2006).

In further developing understanding at the 'interface' of marketing and entrepreneurship, this paper will seek to explore, define, and gain insight into evidence of 'contextual marketing' (CM) in the small firm by exploring the phenomena of 'authenticity'. It will seek to explore the marketing authenticity of owner/entrepreneurs of small firms, through case evidence from Welsh (UK) SME food and drink producers and retailers. In so doing the researchers will provide an overview of the extant literature in relation to small firms marketing, marketing at the entrepreneurship interface, and marketing authenticity.

BACKGROUND

Figure 1 illustrates the parental domains of literature that will form the conceptual basis of this paper – the focus of the paper being at the confluence of the three theoretical domains.

Marketing and the small firm

Over the last 30 years, researchers have discussed marketing in relation to small firms (see for example: University of Illinois at Chicago Research Symposium and the Academy of Mar-

keting Special Interest Group – Small Business and Entrepreneurial Marketing). Researchers have over time, seen marketing as a managerial process or function within a prescriptive framework and implementation that led to anticipated outcomes, such views have been taught as a prescriptive managerial process (Copley, 2002; Gilmore and Carson, 2007), it is an approach which Deacon and Morrish (2010) refer to as 'administrative marketing' (AM). However, researchers agree that small firms 'do' marketing differently (Carson, Gilmore and Grant, 2001; Carson and Gilmore, 1999) and argue that it is not simply the case to take AM approaches and make them simpler, indeed it is by no means less sophisticated than that of much larger firms (Carson, 2002). Underpinning SME research is that SME marketing is fundamentally different to the marketing carried out by larger firms and is defined by their smallness and lack of resources (Gilmore, 2011).

Entrepreneurship researchers have often focussed on the individual owner/manager within the firm and their approach to decision making, including the process of going to market (Brockhaus, 1982; Joyce *et al.*, 1996; Hannon and Atherton, 1998; Deacon, 2008; Dew *et al.*, 2009). This concept has become known as 'entrepreneurial marketing' (EM), but is not exclusive to small firms. It is suggested that entrepreneurially minded people start firms because of spotting opportunities that existing larger firms have not. However, the growth of the small firm is only limited to the market awareness of the owner/entrepreneur of the firm (Joyce *et al.*, 1996; Banfield *et al.*, 1996; Hannon and Atherton 1998; Beaver and Ross 2000; Deacon and Spilsbury, 2004). The ability for a small firm to be 'strategically aware' and make this awareness a capability of the firm is far more critical to shaping the competitive posture of the firm than having a written business plan, (Beaver and Prince, 2004). Thus, a tension exists between the 'normative AM' view that suggests a linear, sequential and structured approach rather than a more flexible, emorphic, effectual driven stance adopted by

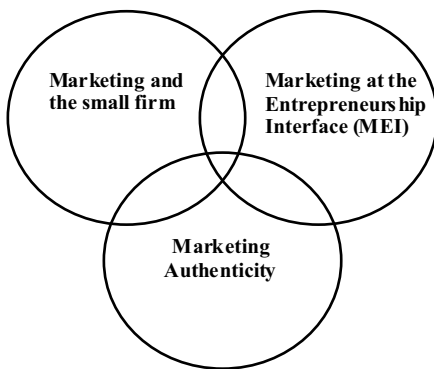


FIGURE 1: PARENTAL DOMAINS OF LITERATURE

many small firms, (Sarasvathy, 2001; Sarasvathy and Simon, 2000; Read and Sarasvathy, 2000). Therefore, those firms with acute awareness of the market in which they operate will be able to maximise opportunity and thus marketing (Bjerke and Hultman 2002), this awareness being the key determinant to growth and fundamentally, survival. However, it is the way in which Bjerke and Hultman view ‘marketing’ that is of interest here – in terms of an organisational mechanism for the development of a co-operative and co-created differentiated and sustainable value proposition.

Distinguishing the entrepreneurial strategy, from the planned one Mintzberg and Waters (1994, p. 193) observed that: ‘Because the leader’s vision is personal, it can also be changed completely... since here the formulator is the implementer, step by step, that person can react quickly to feedback on past actions or to new opportunities or threats in the environment... thus formulating a vision.’ The entrepreneur takes the leading role in the ‘constellation of co-creators of value’ – a term used to describe a complex set of firms involved in the process of co-creating customer value that ties, links and builds relationships between co-operating firms (Bjerke and Hultman, 2002). However, Piercy (1992, p. 66) places the customer at the centre of the firm and argues that customer value exists only on the customer’s terms and that it reflects the customer’s priorities and preferences. Deacon (2008) states that: ‘it is this pivotal view that defines true entrepreneurial marketing,’ this is not just doing ‘existing’ marketing differently – it acknowledges that it is a new form of activity, based upon a set of commercial competencies that places a social network capability at the centre of the firm. Bjerke and Hultman (2002) explicitly acknowledge the differences between their theses compared with those of others, arguing that theirs is founded on acknowledgement of the culture and shared meaning of ‘reality,’ key determinants in developing sector understanding, enabling new processes to be developed that have yet to be fully under-

stood and that informality is a key competitive strength. Therefore, as co-creators of our ‘world,’ we are central to it, and it is the quality of the relationships within it, that will determine our success at navigating a path through complexity. Therefore, there is a need to develop more accurate conceptual frameworks that reflect socio-commercial reality and a contextual view that better reflects the ‘reality’ of the marketing operation undertaken by small firms (Deacon, 2008).

Deacon’s stance suggests that the personal and social constructs of the owner/entrepreneurs are somewhat at odds with the formulaic approach to marketing development (Deacon, 2008). A ‘freeing up’ of the strategic planning approach imposed upon small firms needs to take place – or at least a ‘freeing up of the theories that underpin this view,’ argues Hultman (1999). In summarising, Deacon (2008) suggests, ‘a sharper focus now needs to be taken in order to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning and operation of marketing in specific contexts – aspects of which are the foundations upon which decisions are made.’ (p. 28).

Marketing at the entrepreneurship interface

Discussions regarding what is, and what constitutes, the interface between marketing and entrepreneurship is much debated (see e.g., Gruber, 2003; Hills and Hultman, 2006; Hills *et al.*, 2007; Kraus *et al.*, 2010). In January 2010, the debate continued at the Research Symposium of the University of Chicago, held at the College of Charleston, South Carolina. Hansen and Eggers, (2010), reported the outcomes to the *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*. The report outlines four perspectives of the marketing/entrepreneurship interface (see Table 1). The first perspective considered was historical; that is to say that the two areas share commonalities. The second considered the entrepreneurial issues that exist within a marketing research framework or through a marketing lens. The third considered the reverse of the second the issues of mar-

keting within an entrepreneurial framework or through an entrepreneurship lens. The fourth perspective considered that it was neither perspective two nor three but the opposite of the first – that the subjects do not share commonalities but that it is indeed something else and is therefore ‘unique to the interface’.

The Hansen and Eggers, report suggests that in considering this fourth perspective (the combination of marketing and entrepreneurship), researchers should acknowledge different theory perspectives. The authors report that during the discussion it was argued that, ‘all entrepreneurship involves marketing but not all marketing involves entrepreneurship’. The issue of marketing becoming secondary, it was suggested, was because marketing is used only implicitly, hence the need for researchers: ‘to be more explicit in their use of marketing’ (Hansen and Eggers, 2010). Indeed, Morrish *et al.* (2010) believe that ‘entrepreneurial marketing (EM) is not simply the nexus of marketing and entrepreneurship, but both wholly marketing and wholly entrepreneurship – both customer-centric and entrepreneur/innovation-centric’. Carson (2010) suggests that there needs to be a ‘return to the roots of the interface by focusing on SME marketing, because SMEs represent at least 95 per cent of businesses’. Carsons argument is based on an historical per-

spective that much of the interface research was founded on small business marketing and that entrepreneurship has ‘supplanted the small business origins’, he thus suggests that researchers should take the fourth perspective and consider small business or SME issues within the research framework or context of marketing. This view has practical significance, as it is clear that the vast majority of business enterprise in the world are small business (European Commission, 2003; Small Business Administration, 2009; OECD, 2010) and as a social phenomena are ‘too big to ignore’ (Carson, 2010).

The context, stage and experience of the business owner/entrepreneur are also considered within the interface literature. Schwartz and Teach, (2010) argue that there is ‘much to learn about how we can help small businesses perform better within their specific industry,’ but as Hansen and Eggers (2010) posit ‘much of this help is available through education, teaching, and the many texts written on the subject of marketing, but which do not help start-ups’. Carson *et al.* (2002) observe that ‘small businesses do not understand our words because we talk in the language of academia; there is a need to develop theory in a language that is relevant to small businesses’. For some time research has alluded to the role of context, (see for example, Stokes 2000; Morris *et al.* 2002; Miles and Darroch 2006). Most recently however the work of Deacon (2008) developing the work of Carson (2002; 2003) has helped draw conclusion to this debate by suggesting; ‘marketing is and always has been contextual’.

Marketing authenticity

Theorists have discussed at length, authenticity within postmodern and contextual marketing terms, and how consumers determine the value of authenticity (see e.g., Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Cova 1997; Brown 2001; Brownlie 2007; Nancarrow and Nancarrow 2007, Beverland 2009). They note that authenticity is often subjective and is likely to be based upon value judgments derived from experience and deeply rooted

TABLE 1: ADAPTED FROM HANSEN AND EGGERS (2010)

Perspective	Explanation
1. Marketing and entrepreneurship	Commonalities between both disciplines
2. Entrepreneurship in marketing	Entrepreneurship issues framed in the field of marketing or viewed through a marketing theoretical lens
3. Marketing in entrepreneurship	Marketing issues framed in the field of entrepreneurship or viewed through an entrepreneurship theoretical lens
4. Unique interface concepts	Concepts that are distinct to the interface and evolve out of the combination of entrepreneurship and marketing

in one's cultural, value and belief system. Often members of a niche group (customers and/or businesses) 'may distinguish themselves from the masses through an emphasis on authenticity' (Nancarrow and Nancarrow, 2007). However, 'in the postmodern world there is no need for this authenticity to have real heritage as it can be invented' (Gilmore and Pine, 2007). Gilmore and Pine (2007) suggest that businesses must understand what it means to 'render authenticity' in their consumer offerings and outreach, and they must learn to manage the process of, and excel at, rendering authenticity and behaving authentically. Their framework is based upon 'five economic offerings,' or genres of authenticity (see Table 2). They suggest explicit actions, such as the use of appropriate words in descriptions of products to emphasise their state or provenance, natural authenticity. The implied elements of real and unreal, to elicit honesty, integrity and paradoxically, authenticity of offering, original authenticity; the carrying out of actions in a slow and deliberate way, exceptional authenticity; finally, the use of a place, person or object, event or idea, referential authenticity.

However, the development of 'rendering authenticity' that Gilmore and Pine posit, is very much one from a corporate perspective, and not that of a small firm. It is built upon the company vision, mission and values, in line with whichever

offering(s) are identified. The outcome of such 'rendering' will be the authenticity of that company as perceived by their customers. The challenge for the company however, is finding their way through the complexities of the theory, which suggests, 'colliding the five genres with the Real/Fake matrix' (2007, p. 97) to find a 'foundational polarity,' from which authenticity can be rendered. Therefore, Gilmore and Pine's theory takes a scientific approach that is reductionist and does not allow for the impact of turbulence in the macro, notwithstanding the microenvironments, in which the company (typically small firm) exists. In addition, philosophically, there is a tension between the ontological, nature of 'being'/nature of the world with that of the phenomenological, the immediate phenomena of human experience, such as thinking and feeling (Carson *et al.*, 2001). This they state would result in a polarity of authenticity whereby 'it all *is* fake (in being), but it can be *so* real (to me)' (Gilmore and Pine, 2007). They conclude that 'you (the company) need to find your own way through this polarity to where your customers find your offerings to be so real to them' and only after this will the company 'gain a true understanding of the new discipline of rendering authenticity'.

Beverland (2009) however, concentrates on aspects authenticity in the development, execution and communication of a firm's brand. He

TABLE 2: ADAPTED FROM GILMORE AND PINE (2007)

Genre of authenticity (economic offering)	Description
1. Commodities – natural authenticity;	People perceive as authentic that which exists in its natural state in or of the earth, remaining untouched by human hands; not artificial or synthetic.
2. Goods – original authenticity; or imitation.	People tend to perceive as authentic that which possesses originality in design, being the first of its kind, never before seen by human eyes; not a copy
3. Services – exceptional authenticity;	People tend to perceive as authentic that which is done exceptionally well, executed individually and extraordinarily by someone demonstrating human care; not unfeelingly or disingenuously performed.
4. Experiences – referential authenticity;	People tend to perceive as authentic that which refers to some other context, drawing inspiration from human history, and tapping into our shared memories and longings; not derivative or trivial.
5. Transformations – influential authenticity;	People tend to perceive as authentic that which exerts influence on other entities calling human beings to a higher goal and providing a foretaste of a better way; not inconsequential or without meaning.

discusses authenticity in relation to marketers' management and development of brand over time and through marketing practices. Table 3 provides an overview of the seven habits, which has at its core ten themes that are to be the basis of the firm story and is used by the firm wishing to build brand authenticity. The remaining six habits 'feed' the brand story and elicit aspects of the activity and its methods (artisan amateurs), firm provenance (sticking to your roots); the love of the activity (loving the doing) and closeness to the customer (market immersion). The final two habits centre on the relationship with the immediate external and internal communities: being at one with the community and indoctrinating the staff into the cult of the brand, respectively.

While, Beverland acknowledges that the processes exhibited, 'represent an open, pluralistic, emergent process, as opposed to the rigidly planned and managed process of most brand strategies' (p. 61), he, as others (Gilmore and Pine, 2007) concentrates on the 'self-construction of authenticity' as perceived by the customer. Both of these views also make the assumption that not only are the firms knowledgeable regarding marketing practice but have the resources and capabilities to construct, implement and measure a purposeful strategic marketing plan which can be deployed by the firms (vast) marketing resource. This approach being carried out through a deterministic building, measuring and managing of brand equity, suggesting that they actively engage in planned

TABLE 3: ADAPTED FROM BEVERLAND (2010)

'Habit'	Description
1. Storytelling	Often generated by consumers and society over time; as the brand matures, new stories emerge and old ones decline or are challenged by brand historians and other traditional models of brand management. Beverland (2009) identifies 10 consistent themes from his research (pp. 29-61).
2. Appearing as artisanal amateurs	Authentic brands are founded and run by artisan amateurs who celebrate their lack of professionalism, the role of luck and chance in their success, and even go so far as to focus on their failures. The activities that often set the standard for quality, lends them a powerful aura of authenticity (pp. 63-83).
3. Sticking to your roots	A brand's roots provide the basis for storytelling and emotional connection, and commitment to one's roots enhances their sincerity. The firm remains relevant by maintaining direct engagement in core activities, continued family involvement in the business, commitments to place, and means of production, while slowly embracing new practices that enhance the quality of output (pp. 85-102).
4. Loving the doing	The driver or motivation of authentic brands is 'not the customer, fame, money or feelings of duty' – it's simply the love of their craft, providing great service, growing businesses or producing great products. Being able to identify directly with individuals who love their craft helps customers reconnect with the pre-industrial skilled-artisan tradition (pp. 103-120).
5. Market immersion	Derived from the intuition of the artist and drawn from data absorbed by staff deeply immersed in the marketplace, authentic brands are influenced by consumer trends and lifestyles. The data used is gained in situ and is representative of the consumer comment and experience (pp. 121-139).
6. Being at one with community	Authentic brands play up their relationship to nation, region, industry, cultures, as the people behind these brands care deeply about communities and therefore sensitively immerse themselves in them. Authentic brands may operate globally but they never forget the local (pp. 141-157).
7. Indoctrinating staff into the cult of the brand	Authentic brands take care of employees' welfare, taking leadership positions on important workplace policies, creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, and encouraging employees to question, challenge and innovate. Authentic brands provide the bias for shared storytelling, understanding and respect by using the stories of their staff as a conversation piece (pp. 159-174).

strategy and tactical marketing communications development, is uncommon.

Summary

A review of the literature suggests agreement in the way small firms 'do' marketing. SMEs do not conform to the conventional marketing characteristics of the marketing textbook theories (Carson *et al.*, 2001, p. 6). Indeed, researchers agree that aspects of entrepreneurial marketing are derived from how a SME's limited resources have often constrained the ability to engage effectively in AM (Morrish *et al.*, 2010). The process is therefore driven by the individual rather than marketing processes driving the business i.e. the owner/manager of the firm developing the value in the offering, through engagement in and with social interactions between customers and/or suppliers (Bjerke and Hultman, 2002; Deacon, 2008). This leads to more emphasis on the contextual nature in which the firm operates and carries out marketing, or the process by which they go to market (Deacon, 2008). In relation to marketing authenticity, this approach is viewed as an outcome derived from the process of marketing management, developed through for example brand development, staged experiences or means of production (Beverland, 2010), that is perceived by the customer through engagement, experience and/or consumption of the product or service.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The method and research design chosen for this study is a mixed method design within the parameters of an interpretivist qualitative methodology approach and the data generated through the instruments of face-to-face in depth responsive interviews (Rubin and Rubin 2005), and ethnographic participant-observer observation (Remenyi *et al.*, 1998). The method was a multiple case study approach using semi-structured interviews and narrative as a key focus to explore the findings. The rationale for a qualitative approach was that it provides exceedingly rich and detailed data, obtained from, and related to, a smaller number

of individuals and cases (Deacon, 2008). Such an approach seeks to describe and illicit the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world and thus allowing for a broader and more holistic perspective to be taken on any particular issue (Donnellan, 1995). It is concerned with the *understanding* of things rather than *measuring* them (Gordon and Langmaid, 1988). Recursive analysis was used to analyse the data without coding (Stebbins, 2001).

Study context

SMEs in Wales account for 99% of Welsh business stock and provide employment for well over half the private sector workforce (ONS, 2008). In addition, the Welsh Assembly Government acknowledges the role in the Welsh economy of the food industry; accounting for the equivalent of 55,000 full time jobs in production and processing alone (WAG, 2009). The Welsh Government's Food and Market Development Division (FMDD) Trade Development Programme works with Welsh food and drink manufacturing and processing businesses, offering a range of support, which includes:

- Supplier Development programmes to help businesses become more competitive and improve their sales and marketing skills,
- Meet the Buyer type introduction events,
- In Wales and overseas specialist export marketing advice,
- Food Festivals, Farmers Markets and consumer initiatives raising the profile of the Welsh food brand and creating opportunities for farmers and food and drink producers to meet their customers, and for consumers to try to buy locally produced products, and
- Opportunities to exhibit under the Wales the True Taste brand at trade show (FMDD, 2010).

As part of the commitment to developing the sector, the programme includes The True Taste (GwirFlas) Food and Drink Awards: launched in 2002 it rewards quality and excellence in Welsh food and drink. The FMDD describe 'The True

Taste' brand as 'natural, authentic, modern and pleasurable experience' and is in line with contemporary food trends in the market place (WAG, 2009).

Methodology

The case firms for this study were selected from inclusion in the *Welsh Food and Drink Producers and Wholesalers Directory*, Issue 6 (Oct 2009) (WAG). In addition, all the selected cases are category finalists or winners of The True Taste (GwirFlas) Food and Drink Awards. All cases were contacted by telephone with meetings subsequently being arranged. The interviews and observations were carried out over a period of several weeks. The interviews took place on the businesses premises, often outside (yards; out-

buildings) or within a designated office area or on one occasion in the interviewee's living room. All units of analysis within the cases were the owner/entrepreneurs of the business and all interviews, were with permission, recorded and transcribed. Table 4 provides an overview of the cases and units of analysis. The table offers a categorisation of the business or 'firm type,' a description of the activity and an indication of its age in its current form. In addition, there is a description of the make up of the firm or who is involved in the business. Lastly, the location of the firm and a description of the type of premises are provided.

From Table 4, it can be observed that four out of the six businesses are located within the Welsh border county of Monmouthshire (Wales/England), which is acknowledged as a prominent food

TABLE 4: UNITS OF ANALYSIS – OVERVIEW

Unit of analysis	Firm type	Age of business in current form and description of activity	Make up of the firm	Location
Judith	Vineyard	Age: 9 years Grow grapes and retail wine and mead. Established in 1979.	1-3 includes spouse and family members.	Rural, domestic premises (small farm) Wales/England border (Monmouthshire).
Melanie	Cheese products	Age: 3 years Manufacture niche and customisable cheese and dairy products. Established in 1987.	Board members include father, daughter and son. A total of 105 employees.	Situated in office units on the edge of a market town with a manufacturing unit in a neighbouring valley (Monmouthshire).
Lewis and Sue	Ice cream maker	Age: 9 months Produce and retail ice cream, tubs, cones and blocks. Established in 1996.	2-5 (up to 65 during busy periods).	Semi-rural village setting, domestic premises (small farm) (Newport).
Ed	Micro brewery (a)	Age: 3 years Produce and retail bottled and casked beers. Established over 7 years.	2-4 including his spouse, with occasional help from his father and a 'silent' business partner.	Rural, domestic premises (small farm) on the Wales/ England border (Monmouthshire).
Nick	Micro brewery (b)	Age: 5 years Produce and retail bottled and casked beers. Established over 40 years.	7 include his spouse and 2 of his brothers, plus employees.	Brewing unit on an industrial park on the outskirts of a former Welsh valleys mining town (Rhondda Cynon Taff).
Ben	Cider maker	Age: 3 years Harvest and mash apples to produce cider sold in bottles. Established over 40 years.	2-4 including his brother, with occasional help from his mother and a business partner (an 'old friend of the family).	Rural, domestic premises (large farm) on the Wales/ England border (Monmouthshire).

tourism destination in the UK. The remaining businesses are in nearby counties. Most businesses are in rural or semi-rural locations with only one business (microbrewery (b)) located on an industrial park. Furthermore, four of the six businesses are run from the owner/entrepreneurs domestic premises and all owner/entrepreneurs have had some previous business experience, either having previously run their own business or had been involved managing in a small firm. The make up of the firms were all, without exception, based upon a family or co-partner concern, with all firms having either, both partners; siblings; or in one case a parent and siblings on the board of directors. The age of the businesses less than 10 years trading is an interesting aspect of the study. In two of the cases, the current activity and offering by the businesses was a re-establishment, either albeit a more relevant offering or re-invention of that which existed under a previous owner (vineyard and microbrewery (a)). The remaining businesses were in, or had been through, a process of re-evaluation in order to achieve the next stage of growth or exploit a recognised business opportunity. In these cases, younger family members were driving this. A parent had established these firms' origins and some of these businesses had been in existence more than 20 years.

ANALYSIS

In analysing qualitative data, the researcher is required to be more explicitly interpretive, creative and personal than quantitative analysis (Walker, 1985). The generated data was analysed using recursive abstraction (Stebbins, 2001) a reflexive iterative process (Crabtree and Miller 1999, p. 15) that Gummesson (2003) refers to as the 'hermeneutic' spiral. The analysis used the spoken words of the units of analysis. The process reaching a conclusion when a sensible, valid meaning has been reached and as such when 'saturation' of the data occurs. This naturalistic, interpretive process identifying themes, which were then compared to those identified in the

review of background literature. Table 5 illustrates the themes, sub-components identified within the data generated, the given definitions and the key areas of literature and domains of research are identified.

COMMENTARY

The interviewees were asked, 'Tell me about your business?'; most responded by starting their story at the inception of the businesses, or at least when the interviewee's involvement began. If the interviewee asked for clarification such as 'What do you want to know?', the interviewer provided one of a range of purposeful open-ended responses, such as, 'What do you do (in your business)?', 'How you do it?' or 'How do you get business?' The resultant analysis with themes and sub-components provided below with extracts of relevant points, to illustrate. It is evident that there are indeed commonalities that can be aligned with those aspects of authenticity conceptualised by Beverland (2009) and Gilmore and Pine (2007) and those drawn from the data analysed. For example the existence of a 'story' (Beverland, 2009) based around the firm, its history, heritage and the people or 'actors' and shares commonalities with the first theme.

Theme 1: I'm doing this because I have to ...

The family/heritage and legacy – Throughout all of the interviews there was a strong theme of 'carrying on' with a business which had already been established in some form and therefore had some historical reference in time, with some more recent than others. It was evident in that for some the motivation was emotional as well as inspirational but always economic.

'My stepfather had been growing apples for 40 years and had big commercial contracts; he became ill ... left me his notebook ... a 5 day course and the rest I taught myself' (Ben). He continues 'you've got to have a passion – my step-father passed away ... something he set up

TABLE 5: THEMES AND DEFINED AND RESEARCH DOMAIN(S) IDENTIFIED

Theme and sub-components	Definition	Research concepts
<p>1. I'm doing this because I have to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family/heritage and legacy - Necessity - Storytelling 	<p>A starting point for the beginning or continuation that are referenced to a point in time, a place, an opportunity, necessity/need or a personal ambition/aspiration. It can involve (and often does) others such as family, friends and 'fans'.</p>	<p>Marketing authenticity Entrepreneurial marketing SME and entrepreneurship</p>
<p>2. It's all about me</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creativity and lifestyle 'envy' - Artisan amateurs—learning and loving the doing - Validity by 'experts' 	<p>Self-taught, managed and developed – no external decision making in the quality of the end product, unless taken from external experts to add validity and credibility to what they do.</p>	<p>Marketing authenticity Entrepreneurial marketing SME and entrepreneurship Tribal marketing Effectuation</p>
<p>3. It is what it is...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does and is what it says on the label - Unusual and niche 	<p>Transparency is paramount – nothing to hide, so nothing is hidden.</p>	<p>Marketing authenticity SME and entrepreneurship Entrepreneurial marketing</p>
<p>4. Us' and 'them'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anti (super) marketing - Not piling them high nor selling them cheap 	<p>'Us' can be the entrepreneur and/or the 'people (you)' and can include the artisan collective versus 'them' – the supermarkets.</p>	<p>Entrepreneurial marketing SME and entrepreneurship Tribal marketing Effectuation</p>
<p>5. Take it to those that know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experts in their field - Advocates - Location and place 	<p>Gaining recognition through awards and acknowledgement by the (artisan) community, but also those others in the community that appreciate the product and have influence on credibility in the eyes of 'people' (general public).</p>	<p>Entrepreneurial marketing SME and entrepreneurship Tribal marketing Effectuation</p>
<p>6. Let them find us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Story providing - Our own way of doing - Location and place 	<p>Providing the chance of discovery for the discerning through serendipity, chance, or via those advocates and experts that are already 'in the know.'</p>	<p>Entrepreneurial marketing SME and entrepreneurship Tribal marketing Effectuation</p>
<p>7. I don't want to grow up (yet...maybe? never!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resources - Aspiration/motivation and lifestyle choice - Control, risk and reward 	<p>This business is serious fun – I want to keep it that way, no one will tell me what to do, unless ...</p>	<p>SME and entrepreneurship Entrepreneurial marketing Effectuation</p>

as a bit of fun and to me and my older brother a sense of loyalty ... to keep things going.'

'We sold so much of everyone else's beer in the pubs; it made sense to make some ourselves' (Nick)

Out of necessity – It was clear that for some it was driven by an economic need but also an aspiration and lifestyle choice.

'We wanted a farm not a vineyard, it's very labour intensive; vineyards are hard work. But it was the year of BSE (in cattle) and farmers were being told to diversify and it seemed an option to do something with' (Judith)

'I knew that I wanted to do something with food ... I spent 2 years looking for a place,

when I was offered this place by the previous owner, of whom I was a customer' (Ben)

Storytelling – In all instances, the interviewees relished the stories that they were able to recall in reminiscing or recalling start up scenarios and everyday trials and tribulations.

'My father was sent to the local village market to buy a cow but he returned with 6 of them ... there's only so much milk one family can drink ... so my mother started making cottage cheese in the kitchen – it started to win awards at fairs and shows – that's when we thought that there could be something more to this' (Mel)

'A family friend told us that if you're in ice cream then you only have to work 6 months of the year... when the local Italian family offered us their recipe we jumped at the chance ... (laughs) ... well, the benefit of hindsight!' (Lewis and Sue)

Similarly aspects of the artisan nature of creativity and loving the doing (Beverland, 2009) are exhibited in the second of the study's themes:

Theme 2: It's all about me

Creativity and lifestyle 'envy' – having the luxury of choosing to live a certain way of life and producing a product that has an element of creative freedom was paramount for all of the owner/entrepreneurs. This can include aspects of the blending of the grapes or apples for wine or cider; hops, malt and barley for ale or cream and flavourings for ice cream or cheese. In addition to the credibility, they gain from producing award-winning products.

'It is more or less 7 days a week ... it's a lifestyle – but a very nice lifestyle' (Judith)

Artisan amateurs – this illustrates how the learning and loving of the doing 'as long as there's a creative element I'm happy... that's the fun bit – whatever you put in, something comes out the

end, such as the beer itself, the way you package it, the way you promote yourself, the perceived value' (Nick), which he states comes from him and his team.

Validity by 'experts' – these experts did not necessarily have to be recognised in their field but could also be the consumer gathering.

'If they like the cheap stuff then they (people) don't know anything about ice cream – we have people coming from London to take home supplies' (Lewis and Sue)

'I quite like the small pub ones (awards) ... you're there tasting with all the crowd ... it's funny what a cider expert likes ... I tend to disagree (with) ... I have to go with the customers' (Ben)

Furthermore, Gilmore and Pines', (2007) genres of natural and exceptional authenticity are present in the third theme of the study:

Theme 3: It is what it is ...

Does and is what it says on the label – although not explicitly discussed there was evidence of transparency in what they did and how they did it, there was an element of openness, honesty and a relaxed attitude to people asking them to see what they do, what they used and seeing for themselves the origins of the product. This could also be perceived as a way of adding value to the whole product experience – customers initially experience the product while visiting a (for example) pub/restaurant, follow the signs to the producer, tour the facilities, taste the product and make a purchase.

'There's no additives, its 100% apple juice' (Ben); 'it's Welsh wine produced from Welsh grown grapes' (Judith); 'it's Italian ice cream ... full fat ... none of this aerated nonsense' (Lewis)

Unusual and niche – emphasises the uniqueness of what they do and differentiates their offering and the experience of the customer interaction.

'We're not a commodity, we're customised... the fact that we can do short, specific and tailored runs of products... that's very much our business' (Mel)

'Yes, we do tours of the vineyard... that is quite unusual...you wouldn't get that in France; we've even started to get hen parties!' (Judith); 'We do tours of the brewery and we can do lunches, workshops and customised evening events – my wife does those' (Ed)

Theme 4: 'Us' and 'them'

Anti (super) marketing – There was a real feeling of animosity against the large supermarkets and in particular Tesco. However, the only chain supermarket that did not come in for criticism was Waitrose; which could be because of its business model (part of the John Lewis partnership) and also it being perceived as high end, and a reputation for promoting local and artisan products – such as HRH Prince of Wales' own Duchy Originals brand.

'When asked, 'what is special about Waitrose?' Ben replies: 'meant to be the best... it has the best products but you pay for it...people also take you more seriously'

Not piling them high nor selling them cheap – most see this as a 'selling out' to commercialisation and a compromise on quality, plus a loss of control regarding their business practices and lifestyle.

'I like to think that our cider is the top end of the market quality wise and I don't want to expand it too quickly' referring to not actively pursuing a supermarket that would dictate production, delivery quotas and timings and impose severe penalties for non-compliance.' (Ben)

Nick: 'they devalue the product remember when Stella [Artois] (Belgian lager brand) used to be known for being 'reassuringly expensive' now they (Tesco) sell it so cheap it's become known as the 'wife beater'!

'It would be too expensive, people wouldn't pay the price it would cost to produce, plus we would have to compromise on quality' (Lewis and Sue)

Theme 5: Take it to those that know

An expert in their field – the validation and recognition by others 'in the know' is of utmost importance. The winning of the first award is paramount in the psychology of the owner/entrepreneurs self-assessment of their progress and alignment with other producers in their sector.

'If you win something (in this case a 'Decanter' – an international wine award)then you know you're okay – it all helps, anyone who knows about wine will know what that means' (Judith)

'Anything you can win with prestige... that makes people love us' (Nick)

'We won a silver award the first time we took our ice cream to the awards ... when an Italian ice cream maker comes up to you and says that you're the best you believe it' (Lewis)

Advocates – the advocates discussed in this context, are well known influencers, (celebrity chefs, food critics and local businesses) whose reputation goes beyond the immediate vicinity and locale of their business.

'If you've got Matt Tebutt (local gastro pub owner) talking on the TV about your product it all helps...' he continues... 'yeah we actively went around about 40 pubs, but a lot of them are owned by breweries– but the independents said they'd give it ago, so now we do about 20 pubs and restaurants and gastro pubs, and that's gone very very well' (Ben)

Location and place – the 'clustering' of destination pubs, restaurants, craft and historic sites in the area offers additional routes to market, assisted by like-minded small business owners:

'A lot of the cottage firms that are around here, they'll put a couple of bottles in a presentation

pack and people taste it, like it, go online and order more’ (Ben)

‘It does help that we have so many gastro pubs with celebrity chefs in this area ...’ (Ben)

Theme 6: Let them find us

Story providing – this aspect illustrated the need by owner/entrepreneur to be ‘discovered’ by people and thereby in turn co creating value in providing a story of discovery;

‘We’re at the exclusive end of craft (premium product/price); not easily available, you’ve got to look to find us’ (Nick)

‘We’re unusual and unique ... people are interested in the unique experience of something (not often) seen in the UK... it’s just not done to walk around a vineyard in France’ (Judith)

Our own way of doing ... the meaning of marketing in this context seemed to mean and express a set of activities, intentions and use of financial resource:

‘All our business is by referral (from existing customers) we attend trade shows but it’s more about being seen than getting more business’ (Mel)

‘We’re clear about what we want to do... if there are gaps we want to fill we decide ... customers might offer inspiration for names, but we never use them’ (Nick)

Location and place – this aspect was about proximity to other known tourist or visitor areas and added to the story-providing element of discovery:

‘We’re definitely a tourist business, being so close to the Abbey (Tintern) and the view from the top of the vineyard is spectacular’ (Judith)

‘It does help that we have so many gastro pubs with celebrity chefs in this area...and the Abergavenny Food Festival, (and other food/drink festivals) that draws people in too’ (Ben)

Theme 7: I don’t want to grow up (yet ... maybe? never!)

When asked where they saw the future of the business, most were reluctant to move away from what they were already doing, or the way that they are doing it. This was perceived as issues of control, risk, loss of enjoyment, creativity and profitability. It was also a reflection of the involvement of key actors.

Resources – this mainly focussed on the finances and time restraints of the business:

‘We’re starting to do more online and pushing it into magazines (food and drink) but y’know under the current climate we don’t want to expand too soon ... we don’t know what’s around the corner ... we want to re-invest back into the business; only me (Ben) working in the business I do everything’

Aspiration/motivation and lifestyle choice – this focused on the maintenance of lifestyle, but also reflected the aspiration to get better at what they do while still maintaining their ‘smallness’.

‘We want to carry out doing what we’re doing building the business ... but obviously not too big that we’re not craft anymore – we want the clarity of brewing awesome beer’ (Nick)

Control, risk and reward – when discussing new business opportunities or possible future opportunities, interviewees were measured about the impact on existing business.

‘Growing the business to serve supermarkets ... it devalues the product ... but also control... I don’t want it. I don’t want to be a busy fool. I’d rather carry on ... doing positive business’ (Nick)

‘we’re a very flat organisation – this is the first time we’ve appointed a non-executive director to help us with this new opportunity’ (Mel)

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the generated data suggests that there are aspects of marketing authenticity as

espoused by Gilmore and Pine (2007) and Beverland (2009). However, there is also evidence of small firms marketing exhibited by their reluctance to engage in what the owner/entrepreneurs in the study perceive as marketing or in their language 'advertising' which they state is 'not worthwhile'; i.e., it does not appear to result in any business. There are however, forms of administrative marketing (AM) approaches being used which contradicts their view of marketing, for example, websites, and use of promotional channels for example festivals, fairs and shows, as well as establishing a brand identity. This is not in any way formalised, purposeful, nor measured, however. This oversight in control is explained as a lack of resource, time, money and only one 'full time' member of staff – the owner/entrepreneur.

There was a distinct lack of established objectives in relation to how the individual owner/entrepreneurs viewed the future of the business or its growth. Plans were very much based upon an innate desire by the individual owner/entrepreneur to 'carry on doing what I do', but maybe on a slightly larger scale nothing that would affect enjoyment of the business or threaten their profits. The way in which the case study firms carry out the operation of their business is by utilising the resources at hand (internally and externally) and exemplifies an effectual approach to business development. As Dew *et al.* (2009) identify, small firms 'use prior knowledge and experience as well as learning by doing, to make their way through the complexities and challenges that they face day to day while also conscious of making the most of, within reason what comes next'.

The analysis also suggests that the owner/entrepreneurs use immediate networks and/or communities to leverage the resources internally and externally to their organisation. Dew *et al.* (2009) posit 'entrepreneurial experts frame decisions using an 'effectual' logic. That is, they identify potential markets, focus more on building the venture as a whole, pay less attention to predictive information, worry more about making do with resources in hand to invest only what

they could afford to lose, and emphasize stitching together networks of partnerships'. Using information and feedback from such networks, small firm owner/entrepreneurs make decisions based on an 'affordable loss context'. Such decisions are sometimes rational and often emotional that provides therefore evidence of risk evaluation. This evaluation of risk is opposite to new entrepreneurs as Dew *et al.* (2009) explain that novices use a 'predictive frame' and tend to 'go by the textbook'.

The fact that many of the owner/entrepreneurs enjoy a number of attributes that running a small firm brings is also of interest. For example, the exercising of their creativity, the acknowledgement that others envy their lifestyle, and that they produce what they want to their own tastes suggests that they take a dual stance, seeing themselves as autonomous individuals in their business but also involved and influenced by a wider social community(ies). In this duality, the owner/entrepreneur is both 'entrepreneur and consumer' (Deacon, 2008) and therefore mirrors the consumers need to 'seek something more than a consumptive experience' (Cova, 1997). The owner/entrepreneurs are instead seeking a shared emotive experience in order to become individual and differentiated from others while also seeking the re-creation of social links, Willmott and Nelson (2005) refer to these as 'communities of interest' or 'communities of practice' (CoI, CoP). This suggests that the owner/entrepreneurs pursue their own self-constructed reality within and outside of their business. Gilmore and Pine (2007) view authenticity as a quality that is inherent in a person, object or process, and because it is inherent, it is neither negotiable nor achievable it cannot be stripped away nor appropriated – the person, object or process either is or is not [authentic]. Peterson (1997) cited by Vanini and Williams (2009) explores the fabrication of authenticity by profit-seekers, and in deconstructing it argues that it is a socially constructed phenomenon that shifts across time and space. Personal authenticity is both an individuals' expe-

rience of authenticity (i.e., 'self-authenticity') and the interpersonal dynamics surrounding the formation and maintenance of authentic social identities and personas (Vannini and Williams, 2009). Phenomenologically authenticity is an affective, cognitive, narrative and self-reflective experience (see Golomb, 1995 cited by Vannini and Williams, 2009) but also as an individual and collective practice a project of the self (Giddens, 1991), that is subject to intrapersonal and interpersonal assessment. Classic ethnographic accounts of groups (Firth, 1981), with shared interests and/or values, have shown that concerns with authenticity lie at the roots of group membership, group collective identity and values, personal and social identity formation and maintenance, and status (see for example, Coco and Woodward 2007; Levitt and Hiestand 2004; Moore 2004; Riley and Cahill 2005; Williams 2006; Williams and Copes 2005).

This engagement with various social groups, by the owner/entrepreneurs suggests that marketing authenticity goes beyond the production or representation of what customers perceive as authentic and that the owner/entrepreneur in the process of going to market uses it to validate themselves within their social context(s); i.e., group collective identity, that provides social identity formation, maintenance and status. The owner/entrepreneurs in this study simultaneously act and engage within several socially constructed contexts (groups), which appear to build and validate the authenticity of the owner/entrepreneurs. They do this through everyday business practice and everyday life. For example:

- Other owner/entrepreneurs, experts and local businesses, for whom the entrepreneur looks to for confirmation of good practice and quality, are the 'entrepreneurial social context'.
- Family, friends, the local community, fellow entrepreneurs and customers are the 'social network context.'
- Finally, the 'consumer social context', those social groups engaged with through the selling of their products.

This combination of 'socially-constructed' engagement and effectuation assists in the consideration and evaluation of risk, and decision-making that maintains their business and their own personal authentic self.

The way in which the owner/entrepreneurs' in this study carry out what could be termed 'Entrepreneurial Marketing Authenticity' (EMA) is manifested in the way they promote their product(s) and their engagement with three identified socially constructed networks. The engagement they have with these groups informs guides and assists in the decision making of the business, and appears to be in essence, entrepreneurial effectuation. The language used in context by the owner/entrepreneurs suggests that this engagement is used to assess the level(s) of risk involved in any given opportunity that has been identified and/or presented.

This exploratory research suggests therefore, that authenticity in a marketing entrepreneurship interface context may be something other than that of the 'self constructed reality' of the consumer. The study also suggests that the owner/entrepreneur has his or her own 'self-constructed reality' that is different to and does not always coincide with the realities of others. Therefore, further investigation is required of the concept of 'entrepreneurial marketing authenticity' (EMA), which, it is suggested, sits within the fourth perspective of MEI, proposed by Hansen and Eggers (2010). It is a concept that is distinct to the interface, evolves out of the combination of entrepreneurship and marketing, and is subsequently a component of contextual marketing, as espoused by Deacon and Harris (2011).

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