Notice of the Final Oral Examination for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of

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“Cleaning up the big muddy: psychological ownership and its effect on entrepreneurial persistence”

Peter B. Gustavson School of Business

Tuesday, July 7, 2020
12:00 P.M.
Conducted Remotely

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Graham Brown, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Stacey Fitzsimmons, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, UVic (Member)
Dr. Douglas Baer, Department of Sociology, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Peter Sherer, Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. C. Peter Constabel, Department of Biology, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Research has shown that persistence is an important predictor of entrepreneurial success. However, our understanding of why entrepreneurs persist is fragmented and conflicted. I propose that psychological ownership can provide a holistic understanding of why entrepreneurs persist and thus psychological ownership can resolve the theoretical tension that exists when explaining entrepreneurial persistence. To this end, I provide four hypotheses that link psychological ownership to project, psychological, social and structural determinants that compel entrepreneurs to persist. In order to test my hypotheses, I conducted mediated moderation tests on data collected from 229 entrepreneurs. The results of this study indicates that psychological ownership predicts entrepreneurial persistence. In addition, the results suggest that there is tentative support for the notion that psychological ownership can provide a holistic explanation for entrepreneurial persistence. I am cautiously optimistic that future research that addresses the limitations of this study will provide compelling evidence that shows the ability of psychological ownership to consolidate the four determinants of entrepreneurial persistence. I conclude by highlighting the importance of reducing commitment through psychological ownership when persistence is unwarranted.