CHAPTER 5 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Chapter Outline

5.1 Introduction	5.2 Profile of Respondents
5.3 Profile of companies seeking assistance	5.4 Entrepreneurial knowledge of respondents
5.5 Business management knowledge of respondents	5.6 Knowledge of practice disciplines
5.7 Results of statistical analysis	5.8 Summary

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the presentation of the findings as well as the analysis of data obtained from the field research. The purpose of the field research was to measure the respondents in respect of their knowledge of entrepreneurship, business management and the practice disciplines. The findings and analyses are provided under the following headings:

- Results of preliminary discussions and exploratory literature review;
- Profile of respondents;
- Profile of client companies seeking assistance;
- Entrepreneurial knowledge of respondents;
- Business management knowledge of respondents;
- Practice discipline knowledge of respondents.

It is acknowledged that the findings as presented in this chapter could have been influenced by the limitations which were experienced in the research project (see paragraphs 4.5.2 and 4.6). The researcher also did not have access to or critically analysed any reports, written advice or business plans produced by support practitioners for their clients who might have provided a different picture of what knowledge, skills and competencies support practitioners possess.

5.2 RESULTS OF PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS AND EXPLORATORY LITERATURE REVIEW

Exploratory discussions with industry experts Theron (2005), (Bezuidenhout) (2005), Malherbe (2005), Oeder (2005) and Yirenkyi-Boateng (2005) revealed the following:

1. No generally accepted appointment or monitoring and evaluation criteria for support practitioners exist.
2. No specific education and training programmes for support practitioners exist.

3. There is general dissatisfaction with the recently established SAQA Business Advising qualifications.
4. There is general confusion within the industry with regard to the different support practitioner categories, namely, business advisors, business counsellors, business consultants, business coaches and business mentors. This confusion is both in terms of the support practitioner knowledge, skills and competence requirements as well as the outcome expectations of the various practitioner categories.

The exploratory literature investigation revealed the following:

- Successful venture development is obtained through the increase in entrepreneurial performance (Van Vuuren & Nieman 1999; Timmons 1999; Wickham 2002). The Van Vuuren and Nieman (1999) Entrepreneurial Performance Model implies that entrepreneurs and small business owners must have certain knowledge, skills and competencies. For successful venture creation and development, the model proposes that individuals should possess certain personal characteristics as well as entrepreneurial skills and business skills. The model further implies that a combination of the motivation, entrepreneurial skills and business skills are required for entrepreneurial performance. It can thus be assumed that a lack in any one of these factors would not achieve the required results.
- Successful venture development also depends on certain learning requirements with regard to entrepreneurship and small businesses. These learning requirements are discussed in the entrepreneurship literature according to the following themes: venture life cycle stages; the need for growth; and failures and turnarounds (Timmons, 1999; Wickham, 2002; Nieman & Pretorius, 2003).
- A research project focussing on “entrepreneurship mentors” in South Africa (Antonites & Watson, 2001) indicated a need for a more in depth study of support practitioners. The Antonites and Watson (2001)

research aimed at formulating a situational analysis of "entrepreneurship mentors" in South Africa and concluded that an enquiry into competencies and skills were needed. No scientific measurements were however used to identify the needed competencies and skills of "entrepreneurship mentors" other than what respondents themselves indicated as learning needs. This study intended to fill this gap by measuring what knowledge, skills and competencies support practitioners possess against the entrepreneurship, business management and practice discipline criteria as identified in the literature.

- An investigation into the different SAQA business advising qualifications (Further Education and Training Certificate: Small Business Advising [Information Support], NQF level 4; National Certificate: Business Advising, NQF level 5; National Certificate: Business Advising Operations, NQF level 6) also revealed that these qualifications do not address all the learning requirements as discussed in the entrepreneurship, business management and practice discipline literature. It was also established that different employing organisations as well as different professional organisations use different labels (such as business advisor, business counsellor, business consultant, business coach or business mentor) to refer to entrepreneur and small business support practitioners. In some cases there appears to be an overlap between the different practice label categories. The exploratory phase of the study showed that further clarity needed to be gained with regard to the knowledge, skills and competence requirements for support practitioners and this formed the main objective of the literature review.
- The exploratory literature review further revealed that a lack of research existed in South Africa with regard to the knowledge, skills and competence requirements for entrepreneur and small business support practitioners. Although professional organisations for coaches

and mentors exist internationally, a study of their membership criteria revealed that the requirements for practitioners who render services to entrepreneurs and small businesses are sometimes confused with the requirements that apply to other categories of practitioners, such as life coaches and mentors (focusing on the individual) and corporate or executive coaches and mentors (focusing on the individual within the organisation).

- The research focus aimed at entrepreneur and small business support practitioners internationally also appears to be focusing on addressing mainly questions of meaningful support provision to entrepreneurs and small businesses (Deakins & Freel, 1998; Wright & Tao, 2001; Sullivan, 2000) rather than on the ability of the practitioner to provide such support.

5.3 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

5.3.1 Respondents per Province

A total of 83 responses were received. The respondents per province are provided in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Respondents per province

Province	N	%
Northern Province	23	27.71
Mpumalanga	10	12.05
Gauteng	20	24.10
Northwest Province	0	0
Free State	0	0
Northern Province	0	0
Western Cape	18	21.69
Eastern Cape	9	10.84
Kwazulu/Natal	3	3.61
Total	N = 83	100

Table 5.1 indicates that no responses were received from the following provinces: Northwest, Free State and the Northern Cape. The reason for this is ascribed to the fact that no data of service providers operating in the Northwest province was available. The Northern Cape and Free State provinces had one service provider each with one practitioner per service provider. Both these practitioners failed to respond to the questionnaire that was sent to them.

5.3.2 Biographical Data of Respondents

The biographical data is obtained from the first section of the questionnaire and is presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Biographical data of respondents

Biographical details	N	%
Age:		
22 years – 30 years	19	22.89
31 years – 40 years	28	33.73
41 years – 50 years	23	27.71
50+ years	11	13.25
	N= 81	
Gender		
Female	24	29.62
Male	57	70.37
	N= 81	
Race		
African	44	53.01
White	28	33.73
Coloured	10	12.04
	N= 82	
Previous Director/Owner of business		
Yes	45	55.56
No	36	44.44
	N= 81	
Educational Qualifications		
Not Matric/std 10	3	3.61
Matric/std 10	12	14.45
Diploma	16	19.27
Degree	33	39.75
PG Diploma/ Honours Degree	5	6.02
Master's Degree	11	13.25
Doctorate	2	2.40
	N= 82	
Type of Formal Qualifications		
Entrepreneurship	1	1.31
Business management	49	64.47
Practice disciplines	1	1.31
Professional qualifications	14	18.42
Other	11	14.47
	N= 76	
Other Education & Training programmes		
Entrepreneurship	46	22.77
Business Management	64	31.68
Practice Disciplines	64	31.68
	N= 174	

Table 5.2 shows that the majority of respondents (74.69%) are over the age of 30 years and this result seems to indicate that respondents have, in terms of age at least, reached a good level of maturity. Males (70.37%) seem to dominate as support practitioners. The Indian race group was not represented in the study, which might be an indication that this race group has not yet made the support practitioner industry a career focus. The large percentage of African respondents (53.01%) might be a reflection of where the focus of support interventions is in the country. The fact that a large percentage of respondents (44.44%) have neither previous director nor previous owner experience of businesses appears to indicate that these respondents might lack a certain level of work experience which may hamper their effectiveness as support practitioners.

With regard to the educational qualifications of practitioners, Table 5.2 reveals that only 18.06% of respondents do not have a diploma or higher qualification. This result is encouraging as it shows that an effort is made to recruit practitioners who are at least in possession of a tertiary qualification.

It was necessary to distinguish between the different types of qualifications that practitioners possess as the study objective was to measure the entrepreneurial, business management and practice discipline knowledge of practitioners. Entrepreneurship qualifications are diplomas or degrees that have the designation *Entrepreneurship*. Business management qualifications include qualifications within the business management field, for example, Management, Human Resources, Marketing, Financial and Accounting. The practice discipline qualifications are qualifications in the areas of Business Advising, Business Coaching, Business Counselling, Business Consulting and Business Mentoring. Professional qualifications as indicated by respondents are mainly in the areas of Engineering, Information Technology and Project Management. The “Other” qualification type includes the Arts and Humanity disciplines as well as Education. Table 5.2 shows that although respondents appear to be lacking tertiary qualifications in Entrepreneurship and the Practice Disciplines, they might

be making up for this by following other education and training programmes to gain the required knowledge. The number of qualifications indicated in the “Other education and training” category, however, does not refer to the number of respondents with that type of qualification, but rather to the number of qualifications indicated by all respondents in the category. This would then imply that some respondents do not have any qualifications in one or more of the three knowledge areas of entrepreneurship, business management and the practice disciplines.

5.3.3 Most Common Practice Categories that Respondents are Known by and their Years of Experience

Support practitioners are known by different labels, which are referred to as practice categories, namely Business Advisor, Business Counsellor, Business Coach, Business Consultant and Business Mentor. Table 5.3 presents the findings of the practice categories that respondents indicated they are most commonly known by as well as their years of experience within each practice category.

Table 5.3 Most common practice categories and years of experience

Practice categories and years of experience	N of total respondents (83)	% of total respondents	N of practice category	% of practice category
Business Advisor	**58**	**69.87**		
Years of Experience:				
up to 2 years			19	32
3-5 years			15	25.85
6-10 years			18	31.02
11+ years			6	10.33
			N = 58	100
Business Counsellor	**17**	**20.48**		
Years of Experience:				
up to 2 years			5	29.41
3-5 years			2	11.76
6-10 years			8	41.18
11+ years			2	11.76
			N = 17	100
Business Coach	**15**	**18.07**		
Years of Experience:				
up to 2 years			3	20
3-5 years			6	40
6-10 years			4	26.67
11+ years			2	13.33
			N = 15	100
Business Consultant	**29**	**34.93**		
Years of Experience:				
up to 2 years			12	41.38
3-5 years			5	17.24
6-10 years			9	31.05
11+ years			3	10.35
			N = 29	100
Business Mentor	**27**	**32.53**		
Years of Experience:				
up to 2 years			5	18.52
3-5 years			13	48.15
6-10 years			5	18.52
11+ years			4	14.81
			N = 27	100

It can be deduced from Table 5.3 that most respondents are known by more than one practice category. The majority of respondents (69.87%), however, appear to be known as Business Advisors, which can be ascribed to the label that was assigned to practitioners attached to Local Business Service Centres and the IBA (Institute of Business Advisors). Since the entry of other service providers to the industry, such as Khula and Business Partners, in the past five years, the label of Business Mentors became more popular and this is reflected in the 66.67% of Mentors that indicated that they have up to 5 years of experience. Table 5.3 also shows that Business Counsellor and Business Coach are not popular labels within the industry. It is unclear, however, whether this result is a reflection on the types of service rendered by these practice categories or only a reflection on the popularity of the particular label. Table 5.3 further shows that the majority of respondents within all practice categories have more than 2 years of experience which should be a positive indication of the ability of practitioners to provide support.

5.3.4 Industry Experience

The industry experience of respondents is presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Industry experience of respondents

Industry	Number of respondents having experience (N=83)	% of total number of responses
Professional services (accounting, consulting, etc.)	35	42.16
Other industry experience	30	36.14
Construction (including all trades)	15	18.07
Retail	15	18.07
Manufacturing (consumer or durable goods)	13	15.66
Hospitality (hotel, tourism, restaurant)	11	13.25
Consumer services (hairdressing, selling, etc.)	9	10.84
Mining, extraction, oil	7	8.43
Transportation	6	7.22
Wholesale	6	7.22

Table 5.4 merely serves a descriptive function to provide an indication of the industry experience of respondents. It is evident that the majority of respondents have experience in the professional industry category (42.16%) as well as experience in the “Other” industry category (36.14%). The “Other” category in Table 5.4 refers to industries or sectors such as education, banking, information technology and telecommunications. Table 5.4 indicates that fewer respondents have experience in the mining industry (8.43%), the transportation industry (7.22%) and the wholesale industry (7.22%). It is not possible, however, to make an adequate deduction of the suitability of respondents to provide support by using the data in Table 5.4 as the study did not focus on the industries within which they currently render services.

5.3.5 Percentage of Time Spent on Different Tasks/Activities

Table 5.5 gives an indication of the percentage of time that respondents spend daily on different tasks/activities.

Table 5.5 Percentage of time that respondents spend on different tasks/activities

Task/activity	% of time spent on each task/activity								Total number of responses per category	
	1-15%		16-30%		31-50%		51+%			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	% of total sample n= 83
Advising clients	25	33.78	25	33.78	16	21.62	8	10.18	74	89.15
Report writing	63	90	7	10					70	84.33
Referral of clients (e.g. signposting)	50	76.92	15	23.07					65	78.31
Business planning	44	69.84	15	23.80	4	6.34			63	75.90
Visiting businesses (clients)	51	80.95	10	15.87	2	3.17			63	75.90
Research	42	70	18	30					60	72.28
Meeting attendance	51	87.93	7	12.06					58	69.87
Interviewing clients	48	84.21	8	14.03			1	1.75	57	68.67
Evaluating business plans and reports	52	91.22	4	7.01	1	1.75			57	68.67
Presenting training programmes	30	68.18	13	29.54			1	2.27	44	53.01
Supervision of peers	32	86.48	4	10.81			1	2.70	37	44.57
Turnaround activities	28	96.55	1	3.45					29	34.93
Doing due diligence investigations	25	100							25	30.12
Other	4	30.76	3	23.07	3	23.07	3	23.07	13	15.66

The percentages as indicated under the "% of time" category in Table 5.5 are calculated from the number of respondents for that particular task/activity category. The percentages that are indicated in the last column are calculated from the total number of respondents in the sample.

Table 5.5 provides an indication of the number of respondents from the total sample and the amount of time they spend on the different tasks/activities (last two columns). Table 5.5 also gives an indication of the percentage of time respondents spend on different tasks/activities. The data on the different tasks or activities that respondents spend their time on reflects the nature of their work. Table 5.5 indicates that respondents have a wide spread of tasks/activities that they spend time on. Other than the advising category, where 21.62% of respondents indicated that they spend almost half their time on this task/activity, none of the other tasks/activities appear to dominate the time of respondents. The data also indicates that respondents might be more generalists than specialists and thus the lack of domination of a particular task/activity. Table 5.5 shows that although the response rate per task/activity category is generally over 50%, fewer respondents spend time doing due diligence investigations (44.56%), supervision of peers (34.93%) and turnaround activities (34.93%).

5.3.6 Percentage of Time Spent on Different Practice Disciplines

The percentage of time that respondents spend on the different practice disciplines is indicated in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Number of responses and the percentage of time that they spend on the different practice disciplines

Task/activity	% of time (total daily activity) spent on each task/activity								Total number of responses per category	
	1-15%		16-30%		31-50%		51+%			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	% of total sample n= 83
Advising	16	20.77	34	44.15	20	25.97	7	9.09	77	92.77
Counselling	25	35.71	33	47.14	10	14.28	2	2.85	70	84.33
Coaching	36	49.31	21	28.76	13	17.80	3	4.10	73	87.95
Consulting	21	33.87	30	48.38	8	12.90	3	4.83	62	74.69
Mentoring	24	35.29	33	48.52	7	10.29	4	5.88	68	81.92

Table 5.6 provides an indication of the number of respondents from the total sample and the amount of time they spend on the different practice disciplines (last two columns). Table 5.6 also gives an indication of the percentage of time respondents are spending on the different practice disciplines. The percentages as indicated under the “% of time” category in Table 5.5 are calculated from the number of respondents for that particular task/activity category. The percentages as indicated in the last column are calculated from the total number of respondents in the sample.

Most of the respondents (92.77%) spend time on advising and fewer respondents (74.69%) spend time on consulting. Respondents who indicated that they spend time on advising, counselling and coaching seem to be spread mainly over the first three percentage categories. Respondents who indicated that they spend time on consulting and mentoring seem to be concentrated on the first two percentage categories. This result indicates that a higher number of respondents spend more time on the practice disciplines, advising, counselling and coaching

than on consulting and mentoring, especially if the spread of respondents within the different percentage time categories is taken into account.

5.4 PROFILE OF COMPANIES SEEKING ASSISTANCE

The type of companies that seek assistance from support practitioners as well as the complexity of problems that they experience determines the knowledge competencies that are required for meaningful support. This section provides a description of the types of businesses respondents are dealing with.

5.4.1 Frequency with which Respondents Deal with Different Types of Businesses

Question 15.2 required respondents to indicate how often they deal with different types of businesses. The results are presented in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 Frequency with which responses deal with different types of businesses

Business Type	**Frequency of contact**							
	Most often		**Often**		**Rarely**		**Very rarely**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Pre-start ventures	36	43.37	19	22.89	13	15.66	8	9.63
Start-up ventures	38	45.78	21	25.30	11	13.25	1	1.20
Growth companies	11	13.25	34	40.96	25	30.12	5	6.02
Mature companies	7	8.43	21	25.30	25	30.12	20	24.09
Companies experiencing some type of trouble	20	24.09	29	34.93	15	18.07	10	12.04
Total (n only)	112		124		89		44	

Table 5.7 seems to indicate that respondents deal more with pre-start companies, start-up companies and companies experiencing some type of trouble. Respondents appear to deal less with mature and growth companies.

This result may be a reflection of initiatives in the country with regard to new venture creation. It appears, however, that support practitioners might have a limited impact on the reduction of failure rates of start-up as they do not seem to focus enough on assisting companies to grow (see Table 5.7).

5.4.2 Types of Problems that Companies Experience which Seek Assistance

The types of problems that companies experience which seek assistance from support practitioners has an influence on the knowledge that they should possess. Table 5.8 presents the type of problems that companies experience when they seek assistance form support practitioners as well as the frequency of contact these companies have with practitioners.

Table 5.8 Problems and frequency of contact with companies seeking assistance

Types of problems	**Frequency of contact**							
	Most often		**Often**		**Rarely**		**Very rarely**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Funding	56	67.46	10	12.04	2	2.40	6	7.22
Marketing	25	30.12	31	37.34	15	18.07	5	6.02
Business Planning	43	51.80	25	30.12	5	6.02	2	2.40
Human Resources	7	8.43	28	33.73	25	30.12	14	16.86
Cash Flows	40	48.19	22	26.50	10	12.04	4	4.81
Product Development	9	10.84	23	27.71	25	30.12	17	20.48
Financial Management	34	40.96	29	34.93	6	7.22	5	6.02

The results reflected in Table 5.8 show that respondents are mostly required to render services in the areas of funding, marketing, business planning, cash flows and financial management. This result seems to confirm the deduction that respondents render mostly professional types of services to clients. The results

in Table 5.8 also show that respondents are approached less to provide services in the areas of human resources and product development than to deal with other types of company problems. This result also appears to confirm that respondents are required to function more as generalists than specialists.

5.5 ENTREPRENEURIAL KNOWLEDGE OF RESPONDENTS

Section two of the questionnaire focuses on measuring entrepreneurial knowledge. The following constructs emanating from the questionnaire are used to discuss the entrepreneurial knowledge of respondents:

- entrepreneurial considerations;
- entrepreneurial characteristics;
- knowledge of screening tools and methodologies;
- knowledge of factors/elements of viability.

5.5.1 Entrepreneurial Considerations

Question 13 required the respondents to provide reasons why they would either consider or not consider the individual mentioned in the case study as an entrepreneur. The different category responses were divided into positive and negative considerations and are provided in Table 5.9. These considerations are the motivations that respondents provided for either considering or not considering the individual as indicated in the case study as entrepreneurial.

Table 5.9 Reasons for considering/not considering the individual as entrepreneurial

Positive considerations			**Negative considerations**		
	N	%		N	%
Ability to identify business opportunities	30	18.07	Indecision	33	19.88
Possession of potential for development or training	24	14.46	Lack of focus	13	7.83
Desire to try	19	11.45	Political motivation	10	6.02
Leadership qualities	13	7.83	Opportunistic (as opposed to looking for opportunities)	9	5.42
			Lack of initiative/ passion	6	3.61
			Unrelated work history	4	2.41
			Non-ability to make a contribution	3	1.81
			Available business options not related to experience	2	1.20
N	86			80	

The percentages indicated were calculated from the number of responses for each individual category against the total number of responses. The fact that more negative than positive considerations were mentioned can possibly be ascribed to the nature of the case study.

Most of the positive responses mentioned were based on the individual's ability to identify business opportunities, while the most negative responses were based on the indecision of the individual. Although the responses in Table 5.9 provide some indication of the considerations that respondents regard as entrepreneurial, it must be remembered that the responses are based on the case study. The entrepreneurial considerations, "political motivation" and "opportunistic", scored the third and fourth highest out of the nine negative consideration categories. It appears from this result that respondents do not regard individuals who enter into

business by using political contacts (as depicted in the case study) as entrepreneurial. The opportunistic behaviour in such situations appears also to be viewed in a negative light.

5.5.2 Knowledge of Entrepreneurial Characteristics

The possession of entrepreneurial characteristics ensures that individuals exhibit the required behaviours for successful venture development. Support practitioners who are knowledgeable of what characteristics are required would be able to provide meaningful support to entrepreneurs and small business owners. Responses were coded into seven categories which were derived from the Timmons (1999:221) discussion on the "Six Dominant Themes of Entrepreneurial Characteristics". These themes and their corresponding attitudes and behaviour as discussed by Timmons (1999:221) are:

1. Commitment and determination – tenacity and decisiveness, able to de-commit/commit quickly; discipline; persistence in solving problems; willingness to undertake personal sacrifice; total immersion;
2. Leadership – self-starter; high standards; team builder and hero maker; integrity and reliability; superior learner and teacher; patience and urgency;
3. Opportunity obsession – having intimate knowledge of customer's needs; market driven; obsessed with value creation and enhancement;
4. Tolerance of risks, ambiguity, and uncertainty – calculated risk taker; risk minimizer; risk sharer; tolerance of uncertainty and lack of structure; tolerance of stress and conflict; ability to resolve conflict and integrate solutions;
5. Creativity, self-reliance, and ability to adapt – non-conventional, open minded, lateral thinker; restlessness with status quo; ability to adapt and change; ability to learn quickly; lack of fear of failure; ability to conceptualize;

6. Motivation to excel – goal-and-results orientation; drive to achieve and grow; low need of status and power; interpersonally supporting; aware of weaknesses and strengths; having perspective and sense of humour.

Table 5.10 depicts the responses to each of the identified entrepreneurial characteristics which respondents regarded as entrepreneurial.

Table 5.10 Number of times entrepreneurial characteristics were mentioned per practice category

Entrepreneurial Characteristics	Practice categories										N responses per characteristic	
	Business Advisor		Business Counsellor		Business Coach		Business Consultant		Business Mentor			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Commitment & determination	31	24.03	11	24.44	15	32.60	23	34.85	16	25	96	27.42
Leadership	6	4.65	2	4.44	4	8.69	5	7.58	6	9.38	23	6.57
Opportunity obsession	14	10.85	5	11.11	5	10.61	7	10.61	9	14.06	40	11.42
Risk taking	17	13.18	8	17.77	5	10.86	7	10.61	8	12.50	45	12.85
Creativity/ adaptability	17	13.18	4	8.88	4	8.69	5	7.58	4	6.25	34	9.71
Achievement motivation	16	12.40	9	20	8	17.39	7	10.61	8	12.50	48	13.71
Other	28	21.71	6	13.33	5	10.86	12	18.18	13	20.31	64	18.28
Totals	129		45		46		66		64		350	

The percentages within each response category were calculated against the total number of responses per column. The “other” category included characteristics mentioned by respondents which could not be coded into the six categories as identified by Timmons (1999), such as saving money to start a business, attending a training course and the ability to do financial calculations.

Table 5.10 shows that the responses per category generally appear to be low especially if the total number of respondents is measured against the number of the responses per category. Characteristics that fall within the commitment and determination category were mentioned most for all practice categories. Leadership characteristics were least mentioned for all practice categories. This result can be a reflection of respondents’ interpretation of the case study or might also be ascribed to the fact that leadership is not really regarded as an entrepreneurial characteristic by respondents.

Table 5.10 shows that the response per category generally appears to be low especially if the total number of respondents (n=83) is measured against the number of the responses per category. This was an open-ended question, which means that respondents were not limited to indicating only one characteristic. The results seem to show that some respondents were either unable to identify more than one characteristic or more than one characteristic type and thus a deduction can be made that respondents appear to have limited knowledge of characteristics associated with being entrepreneurial.

5.5.3 Knowledge of Screening Tools/Methodologies

Knowledge of screening tools and methodologies is an indication of the practitioner’s ability to evaluate the client’s entrepreneurial potential as well as the nature and complexity of problems that their clients are facing. Knowledge of intervention methodologies enables the practitioner to determine an appropriate intervention approach and structure. Table.5.11 depicts the type of screening

tools/methodologies as identified by respondents and the different categories indicate the focus of these screening tools/methodologies.

Table 5.11 Types of screening tool mentioned by respondents within the different practice categories

Type of screening tool	Practice categories										N responses	
	Business Advisor		Business Counsellor		Business Coach		Business Consultant		Business Mentor			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Screening tools/ methodologies (entrepreneur focused)	19	24.05	7	25	6	27.27	7	15.55	9	22.50	48	22.42
Idea/opportunity/ business/viability screening	3	3.80	1	3.57	1	4.55	-		3	7.50	8	3.73
SWOT/problem solving	8	10.13	3	10.71	2	9.09	4	8.88	4	10	21	9.81
Industry/market/ customer focus	18	22.78	6	21.43	5	22.73	14	31.11	10	25	53	24.76
Financial focus	10	12.66	2	7.14	-	-	8	17.77	3	7.5	23	10.74
Product/service focus	4	5.06	1	3.57	1	4.55	3	6.66	2	5	11	5.14
Common sense	2	2.53	-	-	-	-	2	4.44	1	2.50	5	2.33
Feasibility studies	4	5.06	1	3.57	1	4.55	2	4.44	-	-	8	3.73
Business planning	7	8.86	6	21.43	5	22.73	4	8.88	5	12.5	27	12.61
Other types of screening tools/methodologies	4	5.06	1	3.57	1	4.55	1	2.22	3	7.57	10	4.67
Totals	79		28		22		45		40		214	

The percentages within each response category were calculated against the total number of responses per column. Table 5.11 shows that respondents mostly mentioned screening tools or methodologies that focus on the industry/market/customer (24.76%), entrepreneur (22.42%) and business planning (12.61%). Lower responses for the screening tools/methodologies that focus on the idea/opportunity, product/services as well as feasibility studies were mentioned overall as well as within the different practice categories. The type of screening tools/methodologies mentioned by respondents could possibly have been influenced by the nature of the case study although the question required them to indicate the characteristics they regard as entrepreneurial.

5.5.4 Knowledge of Factors/Elements of Viability

Question 13.4 required respondents to describe three key factors or elements that they would consider as crucial in the evaluation of viability. Responses were coded into eight categories which were derived from the Venture Opportunity Profile Criteria as discussed by Timmons (1999:119):

1. Industry/Markets (screening of the market, market structure, market size, growth rate, market capacity, market share and cost structure);
2. Economics (includes profits after tax, ROI potential, capital requirements, internal rate of return potential, free cash flow characteristics, sales growth, asset intensity, gross margins, time to breakeven − cash flow, time to breakeven − Profit and Loss);
3. Harvest Issues (value-added potential, valuation multiples and comparables, exit mechanism and strategy, capital market context);
4. Competitive Advantage issues (fixed and variable costs, control over costs, prices and distribution, barriers to entry, response/lead time, legal issues, contractual advantage, contacts and networks, key people);
5. Management Team (entrepreneurial team, industry and technical experience, integrity, intellectual honesty);

6. Fatal Flaw issues;
7. Personal criteria (goals and fit, upside/downside issues, opportunity costs, desirability, risk/reward tolerance, stress tolerance);
8. Strategic differentiation (degree of fit, team, service management, timing, technology, flexibility, opportunity orientation, pricing, distribution channels, room for error).

Table 5.12 depicts the responses with regard to factors and elements of viability identified by respondents.

Table 5.12 Number of times the different factors/elements of viability were mentioned by respondents within the different practice categories

Factors/ elements of viability	**Practice category**										**N responses**	
	Business Advisor		Business Counsellor		Business Coach		Business Consultant		Business Mentor			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Industry & Markets	32	28.57	10	29.41	9	27.27	17	28.81	14	22.58	82	27.33
Economics	23	20.53	5	14.70	6	18.18	10	16.94	12	19.35	56	18.67
Harvest issues	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Competitive advantage issues	31	27.67	7	20.58	7	21.21	11	18.64	12	19.35	68	22.67
Management team	5	4.46	3	8.82	1	3.03	2	3.38	3	4.83	14	4.67
Fatal flaw issues	1	0.89	-	-	-	-	1	1.69	1	1.69	3	1
Personal criteria	12	10.71	1	2.94	2	6.06	3	5.08	6	9.67	24	8
Strategic differentiation	8	7.14	8	23.52	8	24.24	15	25.42	14	22.58	53	17.67
Total	112		34		33		59		62		300	

The percentages within each response category were calculated against the total number of responses per column. Table 5.12 indicates that no responses were received in the category “harvest issues” and that very few responses were also received in the categories “fatal flaw issues”, “management team” and “personal criteria”. This result might be a reflection of the knowledge level of respondents with regard to factors/elements of viability but it is also possible that respondents were influenced by the nature of the case study which might have highlighted certain factors/elements more than others.

5.6 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE OF RESPONDENTS

This study sought to measure the business management knowledge of respondents by measuring their knowledge of business plan elements (question 13.5) as well as their knowledge of the functions of the business plan (question 13.6). Each is reported in the following paragraphs.

5.6.1 Knowledge of Business Plan Elements

Question 13.5 required respondents to indicate which major elements they would include in the business plan. A total of 419 responses were received for this question. The different responses were content analysed and then coded into eight categories. These categories were compiled from relevant literature (Timmons, 1999:374; Wickham, 2001:192; Hisrich & Peters, 2002:232). Table.5.13 depicts the business plan element responses.

Table 5.13 Major business plan elements as identified by respondents

Business plan elements	Practice category										N responses	
	Business Advisor		Business Counsellor		Business Coach		Business Consultant		Business Mentor			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Industry analysis	5	3.16	-		1	2.04	5	6.02	3	3.94	14	3.34
Description of venture	20	12.65	7	13.20	5	10.20	5	6.02	8	10.52	45	10.73
Operation/ production planning	11	6.96	5	9.43	5	10.20	8	9.63	9	11.84	38	9.06
Organisational planning	13	8.22	6	11.32	9	18.36	11	13.25	8	10.52	47	11.21
Marketing	43	27.21	14	26.41	11	22.44	23	27.71	17	22.36	108	25.77
Risk assessment	12	7.59	5	9.43	3	6.12	6	7.22	6	7.89	32	7.63
Financial viability	47	29.74	14	26.41	11	22.44	23	27.71	20	26.31	115	27.44
Other	7	4.43	2	3.77	4	8.16	2	2.40	5	6.57	20	4.77
N	158		53		49		83		76		419	

Table 5.13 provides an indication of the number of responses for each business plan element within each of the practice categories. The percentages within each response category were calculated against the total number of responses per column.

The results depicted in Table 5.13 show that the majority responses for the group were received for the categories financials (27.44%) and marketing (25.77%). Financials refer to elements such as cash flows and costing issues while marketing includes elements such as advertising and customer issues. Very low responses were received for the other business plan element categories and this might be an indication that respondents either do not consider the whole range of business plan elements as discussed in the literature or might lack knowledge with regard to business plan elements.

5.6.2 Knowledge of Business Plan Functions

The respondents were requested in question 13.6 to indicate what they regard as the functions of the business plan. A total of 238 responses were received for this question. Responses were content analysed and then coded in five categories. These coding categories were derived from relevant literature (Wickham, 2001:191; Hisrich & Peters, 2002:225). Table 5.14 depicts the business plan functions as mentioned by respondents.

Table 5.14 Key functions of a business plan as perceived by respondents

Business plan functions	Practice category										N responses	
	Business Advisor		Business Counsellor		Business Coach		Business Consultant		Business Mentor			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Determine viability	12	11.42	3	10.34	4	14.81	5	11.90	9	22.50	33	13.58
Guidance in organisation planning/serve as analysis tool	41	39.04	13	44.82	9	33.33	20	47.61	13	32.50	96	39.51
Financing tool	22	20.95	5	17.24	6	22.22	6	14.28	6	15	45	18.52
Communication tool	28	26.66	6	20.68	7	25.92	10	23.80	10	25	61	25.10
Other	2	1.90	2	6.89	1	3.70	1	2.38	2	5	8	3.29
N	105		29		27		42		40		243	

Table 5.14 indicates the percentages of each response category which were derived from the total number of responses per column. The function that was mentioned most by respondents was the business plan being used for organisation planning and an analysis tool (39.50% of responses). Each of the different practice categories also reflect a higher response for this business plan function as against the other functions mentioned. The category, “guidance in organisation planning and analyses tool”, includes elements such as the business plan serving as a route map or direction indicator of the organisation’s performance.

The fact that the other business plan function elements received such relatively low responses suggests that respondents might either lack knowledge with regard to the range of business plan functions or consider the function of a business plan in a limited sense.

5.7 KNOWLEDGE OF PRACTICE DISCIPLINES

The different practice disciplines are defined in Chapter Three and refer to Advising, Counselling, Coaching, Consulting and Mentoring. Table 5.6 shows that respondents spend time on all the different practice disciplines. This is not an indication, however, of whether respondents actually possess the required level of knowledge of the different practice disciplines. The results with regard to the education and training qualifications (Table 5.2) already showed that respondents might lack knowledge of the practice disciplines. This section presents the results of the responses to the questions on assigned roles/tasks, methodologies followed to determine the nature of the company’s problems, advice offered to clients and reasons for either following or not following a particular practice discipline approach.

5.7.1 Roles and Tasks Assigned to Clients

Question 13.7 required respondents to indicate what roles and tasks they would assign to the “client” mentioned in the case study. Table.5.15 depicts the different roles and tasks that respondents indicated they would assign to the clients mentioned in the case study.

Table 5.15 Roles/Tasks to be executed as mentioned by respondents within the different practice categories

Type of roles/tasks that are assigned to clients	Practice category										N = Number of responses	
	Business Advisor		Business Counsellor		Business Coach		Business Consultant		Business Mentor			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Client to write business plan	5	7.93	-	-	2	11.11	4	12.12	1	3.70	12	7.54
Client to do market research	21	33.33	3	16.66	4	22.22	9	27.27	7	25.92	44	27.67
Financial or budget focus	6	9.52	1	5.55	1	5.55	3	9.09	2	7.40	13	8.18
Management/HR focus	-		1	5.55	-		-		-		1	0.63
Client to seek clarity on business idea	5	7.93	1	5.55	1	5.55	4	12.12	1	3.70	12	7.55
Client to do evaluation of strengths and weaknesses	8	12.69	2	11.11	1	5.55	3	9.09	2	7.40	16	10.06
Client to do training	12	19.04	5	27.77	3	16.66	8	24.24	6	22.22	34	21.38
Client and practitioner to tackle issues together	5	7.93	5	27.77	6	33.33	2	6.06	6	22.22	24	15.09
Other	1	1.58	-		-		-		2	7.40	3	1.89
N	63		18		18		33		27		159	

Table 5.15 indicates the percentages of each response category which were derived from the total number of responses per column. Table 5.15 indicates that the type of roles/tasks mentioned most by respondents falls in the categories that require clients to do market research (27.67% of all responses) and clients to do training/obtain more information (21.38% of all responses). The low response in the category, “client and practitioner to tackle issues together” (15.09% of all responses), seems to indicate that respondents do not naturally resolve problems jointly with clients. This result seems to contradict the high percentage of respondents (see Table 5.6) who indicated that they spend time on the different practice disciplines such as Coaching (87.95%), Counselling (84.33%), Mentoring (81.92%) and Consulting (74.69%). Each of these practice disciplines requires some form of engagement with clients.

5.7.2 Knowledge of Methodologies to Determine the Nature of Problems that Companies Experience

Question 14.1 required respondents to indicate what methodology they would use to determine the nature of the company’s problems mentioned in the second case study. The focuses of the methodologies mentioned by respondents are depicted in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16 Methodologies mentioned by respondents when determining a company's problems

Types of Methodologies	Practice category										N responses	
	Business Advisor		Business Counsellor		Business Coach		Business Consultant		Business Mentor			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Financial/budget focus	15	17.85	6	31.57	6	27.27	9	20.93	5	22.72	41	21.58
Customer/ market/sales focus	8	9.52	1	5.26	3	13.63	7	16.27	3	13.63	22	11.58
Production focus	5	5.95	1	5.26	2	9.09	3	6.97	3	13.63	14	7.37
Internal HR focus	8	9.52	2	10.52	1	4.54	8	18.60	2	9.09	21	11.05
Business planning focus	4	4.76	2	10.52	2	9.09	4	9.30	3	13.63	15	7.89
Lead entrepreneur/team focus	8	9.52	1	5.26	2	9.09	5	11.62	3	13.63	19	10
Quality assurance focus	8	9.52	1	5.26	-		2	4.65	-		11	5.78
Historical analyses	19	22.61	3	15.78	4	18.18	5	11.62	2	9.09	33	17.37
Location focus	1	1.19	-		1	4.54	-		-		2	1.05
Other methodologies	8	9.52	2	10.52	1	4.54	-		1	4.54	12	6.32
N	84		19		22		43		22		190	

Table 5.16 indicate the percentages of each response category which were derived from the total number of responses per column. The responses as indicated in Table 5.16 show a bias for using methodologies that have a finance or budgetary focus (21.58%) as well as a focus on historical analyses (17.37%). The same corresponding results with regard to these two categories are also reflected within each of the practice categories. Fewer responses were indicated for the categories that focus on the internal organisational issues such as production (7.37%), business planning (7.81%) and quality assurance (5.78%). The results indicate that respondents might focus on only specific or a limited range of areas when attempting to determine the nature of a company's problems. This result also seems to correlate with the deduction made in paragraph 5.2.4 that respondents appear mostly to be providing professional services due to their industry experience. This type of service also seems to be more in line with the practice disciplines of Advising and Consulting.

5.7.3 The Provision of Advice to Clients

Question 14.3 required respondents to indicate what advice they would provide to the clients as presented in the case study. Responses were grouped into eight categories that were arbitrarily derived. The types of advice are depicted in Table 5.17.

Table 5.17 Types of advice provided by respondents within the different practice categories

Type of advice offered to clients	Practice category										N responses	
	Business Advisor		Business Counsellor		Business Coach		Business Consultant		Business Mentor			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Strategic planning focus	28	36.36	6	42.85	5	41.66	12	31.57	11	39.28	62	36.69
Client/ market focus	4	5.19	-		-		3	7.89	1	3.57	8	4.73
Production focus	6	7.79	1	7.14	1	8.33	8	21.05	4	14.28	20	11.83
Financial focus	8	10.38	-		-		3	7.89	1	3.57	12	7.10
Quality focus	12	15.58	2	14.28	1	8.33	6	15.78	4	14.28	25	14.79
Internal HR focus	12	12.58	2	14.28	1	8.33	4	10.52	2	7.14	21	12.43
Resources focus	1	1.29	2	14.28	1	8.33	1	2.63	2	7.14	7	4.14
Other	6	7.79	1	7.14	3	25	1	2.63	3	10.71	14	8.28
N	77		14		12		38		28		169	

Table 5.17 indicates the percentages of each response category which were derived from the total number of responses per column. The type of advice as indicated in the table is related to the case study problem. Advice that has a quality focus was mentioned second highest (14.29% of all responses) while Table 5.16 reflects that respondents mentioned fewer methodologies that have a quality focus when determining the nature of a company's problems. The dichotomy in the answers can possibly be ascribed to the fact that some respondents might just have chosen to mention only one or two of the most common type of methodologies that they use. This result seems to indicate that respondents are possibly able to spot quality assurance problems.

Table 5.17 shows that the majority responses were to provide advice that was in the area of strategic planning. Table 5.17 also shows a low response rate for the other categories of this question, such as client/market focus (4.73%), financial focus (7.10%) and resources focus (4.14%). This can possibly also be ascribed to respondents limiting their answers to only one or two responses rather than the later mentioned responses being a reflection of the lack of ability of respondents to offer appropriate advice to clients. This deduction is supported by the higher responses for methodologies mentioned by respondents of a financial and client/market focus as indicated in Table 5.16.

5.7.4 Likelihood of Respondents Following a Particular Practice Discipline

Question 14.4.1 – 14.4.5 requested that respondents indicate the likelihood of their following a particular practice discipline approach with the clients as mentioned in the case study. Table 5.18 presents the results of the likelihood of respondents following a particular practice discipline.

Table 5.18 Likelihood of respondents following a particular practice discipline approach

Practice discipline	Likelihood of following practice discipline approach							
	Very likely		Somewhat Likely		Somewhat Unlikely		Very unlikely	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Advising	45	54.21	19	22.89	3	3.61	8	9.63
Coaching	25	30.12	24	28.91	7	8.43	19	22.89
Counselling	33	39.75	23	27.71	9	10.84	10	12.04
Consulting	33	39.75	20	24.09	5	6.02	15	18.07
Mentoring	36	43.37	19	22.89	9	10.84	8	9.63

Table 5.18 shows that respondents are more likely to follow an Advising approach than any of the other practice disciplines. This result seems to confirm the findings in paragraph 5.6.1 and 5.6.2, which indicated that respondents appear to be functioning more as Business Advisors than any of the other practice categories. Although Table 5.10 indicates that respondents are also likely to follow any of the other practice disciplines, none of the results thus far appear to support whether respondents have knowledge of the other practice disciplines.

5.7.5 Reasons for Following/Not Following a Particular Practice Discipline when Dealing with Clients

The motivations that respondents provide for following or not following a particular practice discipline approach are an indication that the practitioner knows which circumstances best suit a particular approach. This knowledge allows the practitioner to provide meaningful and relevant support. Table 5.19 presents the reasons that respondents provided for either following or not following a particular practice discipline approach in providing assistance to the

clients as mentioned in the case study. The responses were coded into seven categories:

- Approach assists to address specific problems;
- Approach assists with development/re-skilling /handholding;
- Approach allows for joint exploration of solutions/alternatives;
- Approach can be used with other practice disciplines;
- Not appropriate approach to follow in this situation;
- Client not ready for approach;
- Practitioner unable to provide this service.

Table 5.19 Reasons for following/not following a particular practice discipline approach

Practice disciplines	Reasons for following or not following practice discipline													
	Approach assists to address specific problems		Approach assists with Development/ re-skilling/ hand-holding		Approach allows for joint exploration of solutions/ alternatives		Approach can be used with other practice disciplines		Not appropriate approach to follow for this situation		Client not ready for approach		Practitioner unable to provide this service	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Advising	48	57.83	2	2.40	4	4.81	3	3.61	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coaching	19	22.89	16	19.27	7	8.43	2	2.40	13	15.66	6	7.22	2	2.40
Counselling	30	36.14	7	8.43	12	14.45	0	0	8	9.63	2	2.40	2	2.40
Consulting	38	45.78	2	2.40	4	4.81	1	1.20	12	14.45	0	0	1	1.20
Mentoring	21	25.30	2	2.40	16	19.27	3	3.61	8	9.63	4	4.81	1	1.20

The following deductions are made from the data in Table 5.19:

- Most responses indicated as reasons for following a particular practice discipline approach were in the advisor category, namely, approach assists to address specific problems. The response category, assists to address specific problems, also scored a larger response compared to the other response categories which can be an indication that practitioners are of the view that all the practice disciplines can assist to address specific entrepreneurial and business management problems;
- Coaching and mentoring are more development focused. Thus it was expected that the response category, approach assists with development/re-skilling/handholding, should have attracted more responses for the practice disciplines coaching and mentoring. The low responses for the mentoring practice discipline with regard to the response category, development/re-skilling/handholding, seem to indicate that respondents do not view mentoring as a development intervention;
- Coaching, counselling and mentoring have more to do with the involvement of the client in exploring alternatives and solutions. Thus a higher response rate in the response category, approach allows for joint exploration of alternatives and solutions were expected for the practice disciplines coaching, counselling and mentoring. The data in Table 5.19 fairly confirms this expectation;

The results in Table 5.19 indicate that although support practitioners might be cognisant to involve clients in the problem solving process, practitioners appear not to fully understand what the objective of each practice discipline is and might lack adequate knowledge of the practice disciplines to apply them appropriately to specific problem situations.

5.8 RESULTS OF STATISTICAL ANALYSES

The statistical analyses assisted with the testing of the hypotheses. The hypotheses seek to measure:

- the importance that support practitioners attach to different business issues (Ho1 – Ho3);
- the frequency of contact that support practitioners have with different venture types (Ho4 – Ho6);
- the frequency that support practitioners deal with different company problems (Ho7 – Ho9).

The hypotheses also seek to measure whether differences exist among support practitioners:

- for the total group (Ho1; Ho4; Ho7);
- between the different practice categories (Ho2; Ho5; Ho8);
- within each of the practice categories (Ho3; Ho6; Ho9).

The measurement of the different hypotheses was done by applying two statistical tests:

- Friedman two-way analysis test, which measured differences among the total group as well as differences within each of the practice categories;
- Kruskal-Wallis test which measured differences between the practice categories.

The statistical tests also served to determine the ranking of the different variables for the total group as well as within the categories.

5.8.1 Ranking The Importance Of Different Business Issues To The Venture

This section presents the results of the tests applied to measure differences in responses of the support practitioners' ranking of important business issues for

the total group, between the practice categories and within each practice categories.

5.8.1.1 Testing for differences within the total group and their ranking of important business issues

The null hypothesis, Ho1: All business issues are ranked with similar importance (no difference) by support practitioners (total group), is focused on in this section.

Table 5.20 Means, standard deviations, rankings and significant differences of business issues in terms of importance (total group)

Business issues	n	mean	Std dev	ranking	Differences between ranked business issues							
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Customers	71	3.80	0.435	1								
Business plan	71	3.72	0.512	2								
Product/service of the company	71	3.66	0.631	3								
The entrepreneur/ team	71	3.54	0.694	4								
Making money	71	3.41	0.838	5								
Relationships within the company	71	3.39	0.707	6	*							
Funding	71	3.27	0.774	7	*	*						
Competition	71	3.14	0.883	8	*	*	*					
					* - indicates significance at 95% on how support practitioners rank business issues							

Table 5.20 indicate that support practitioners as a total group ranked customers as the most important business issue and competition as the least important business issue. Table 5.20 shows that significant differences at the 95% level (see also Table 5.22) were found on how support practitioners as a group ranked the following business issues in terms of importance:

- customers as a business issue is ranked significantly more important compared to the business issues, relationships within the company, funding and competition;
- business plan as a business issue is ranked significantly more important compared to the business issues, funding and competition;
- products/services as a business issue is ranked significantly more important compared to the business issue, competition.

Table 5.20 also indicate significant differences at the 95% level (see also Table 5.22) of how support practitioners as a group view the importance of the business plan compared to funding and competition.

Significant differences at the 95% level is also indicated in Table 5.20 (see also Table 5.22) of how support practitioners as a total group view the importance of the business issue products/services compared to competition.

5.8.1.2 Testing for differences within and between the practice categories and their ranking of important business issues

This section focuses on the null hypotheses:

- Ho2: All business issues are ranked with similar importance (no difference) by the different practice categories
- Ho3: All business issues are ranked with similar importance (no difference) by the different practice categories

Table 5.21 Ranking of business issues per practice category (where 1 is most important and 8 is least important)

Business issues	Practice categories				Ranking for Total group
	Business Advisor	Business Counsellor & Coach	Business Consultant	Business Mentor	
Funding	8	6	7	3	7
Business plan	3	4	2	2	2
Products/ services	2	1	4	5	3
Relationships	6	7	6	6	6
Making money	4	5	2	7	5
The entrepreneur/ team	5	2	5	3	4
Customers	1	3	1	1	1
Competition	7	8	8	8	8

Table 5.21 indicate that all practice categories, except business counsellor and coach, ranked customers as the most important business issue. Table 5.21 shows that the business mentor category view funding as a more important business issue than any of the other practice categories. The business mentor category also differs with the total group in the ranking of funding as an important business issue. Table 5.21 further shows some agreement in the ranking of competition and relationships within the company as important business issues which seem to suggest that these business issues are viewed by support practitioners as less important.

Table 5.22 Comparisons of the means and standard deviations of important business issues within and between the practice categories

Business issues	Means and Standard deviations per practice category								Kruskal-Wallis	P-values between groups
	Business Advisor		Business Counsellor/ Coach		Business Consultant		Business Mentor			
	n	mean (std dev)	n	mean (std dev)	n	mean (std dev)	n	mean (std dev)		
Funding	27	3.11 (0.847)	7	3.14 (0.690)	12	3.25 (0.621)	26	3.45 (0.779)	4.30	0.2307
Business Plan	27	3.74 (0.446)	7	3.29 (0.756)	12	3.67 (0.651)	26	3.83 (0.381)	5.63	0.1309
Products/ services	27	3.78 (0.506)	7	4.00 (0.000)	12	3.67 (0.492)	26	3.46 (0.833)	4.67	0.1977
Relationships	27	3.56 (0.506)	7	2.86 (1.069)	12	3.42 (0.513)	26	3.38 (0.824)	3.34	0.3415
Making money	27	3.63 (0.629)	7	3.29 (0.756)	12	3.75 (0.452)	26	3.04 (0.824)	6.84	0.0771
The entrepreneur/ team	27	3.59 (0.501)	7	3.71 (0.756)	12	3.50 (0.674)	26	3.46 (0.884)	1.10	0.7775
Customers	27	3.89 (0.320)	7	3.57 (0.535)	12	3.75 (0.452)	26	3.83 (0.482)	4.81	0.1862
Competition	27	3.44 (0.641)	7	2.71 (1.380)	12	3.08 (0.669)	26	2.92 (0.999)	4.56	0.2073
P-value for total group: <0.0001		P-value <0.0235		P-value <0.1692		P-value <0.1745		P-value <0.0050		

Table 5.22 shows the means and standard deviations of the different business issues for each of the practice categories. The Kruskal-Wallis test was applied to measure differences between each of the respondent category groups and their ranking of important business issues. No significant differences were found between the groups and their ranking of the importance of each of the business issues (see table 5.22).

The P-values indicated in Table 5.22 indicate whether significant differences exist between the categories for each variable. P-values that are smaller than 0.01 indicate that there are significant differences at the 99% level. P-values of lower than 0.05 indicate that there are significant differences at the 95% level.

The P-value <0.0001 for the total group indicate a very high significance at 99% of how support practitioners rank the different business issues. This indicates towards high variations in the ranking of the importance of business issues within the total group of respondents.

The Friedman test was also applied to test for differences in the ranking of important business issues within each group (see Table 5.22). No significant differences within the business counsellor/business coach category was found (P-value = <0.1692) as well as within the business consultant category (P-value = 0.1745). Significant differences were however found within the business advisor category (P-value = 0.0235) and within the business mentor category (P-value =< 0.0050).

Within the business advisor category, significant differences at the 95% significance level was found on how support practitioners within this category ranked the importance of the business issue customers, compared to the business issue, funding. This test result is in line with the test result for the total group and their ranking of these two business issues (see table 5.20).

Significant difference at the 99% significance level was found within the business mentor category on the ranking of the following business issues:

- customers was ranked significantly more important as a business issue compared to the business issue, making money;
- business plan was ranked significantly more important as a business issue compared to the business issue, making money.

This result shows a much higher variation within the business mentor category in the ranking of customers as an important business issue compared to making money, than variation within the total group (see Table 5.20) and the ranking of these two business issues. Based on the results showed in Table 5.22, it appears that support practitioners within the business mentor category view customers as a business issue, much more important than making money.

Within the business mentor category significant differences was also found at the 95% significance level on the ranking of the following business issues:

- customers as a business issue was ranked significantly more important compared to the business issue, competition;
- business plan as a business issue was ranked significantly more important compared to the business issue, competition.

This result is inline with the ranking within the total group of customers as a business issue compared to the business issue, competition and business plan as a business issue compared to the business issue, competition (see Tables 5.20 and 5.21).

5.8.2 Ranking The Frequency Of Contact Between Respondents And Different Venture Types

This section presents the results of the tests applied to measure differences in responses of the support practitioners' ranking of their frequency of contact with

different venture types for the total group, between the practice categories and within each practice categories.

5.8.2.1 Testing for differences within the total group and their ranking of important business issues

This section focuses on the null hypothesis, Ho4: The frequency of contact with different venture types is the same for all support practitioners.

Table 5.23 Means, standard deviations, rankings and significant differences of frequency of contact between respondents and different venture types (Total group)

Venture type	n	Mean	std dev	Ranking	Significant differences between rankings				
					1	2	3	4	5
Start-up	71	3.27	0.925	1					
Pre-start	71	3.06	1.054	2					
Companies experiencing some type of trouble	71	2.83	0.985	3					
Growth companies	71	2.68	0.807	4	*				
Mature companies	71	2.20	0.965	5	*	*	*		
					*- indicates significance at 95% on how support practitioners rank their frequency of contact with different ventures				

The ranking order in Table 5.23 indicate that respondents have more frequent contact with start-up ventures and less frequent contact with mature companies. Respondents also indicated that they have more frequent contact with companies experiencing some kind of trouble than with growth companies.
Table 5.23 indicate significant differences at the 95% level for:

- support practitioner contact with start-up companies was ranked significantly more important compared to contact with growth companies and mature companies;
- support practitioner contact with pre-start companies was ranked significantly more important compared to contact with mature companies;
- support practitioner contact with companies experiencing some type of trouble was ranked significantly more important compared to contact with mature companies.

5.8.2.2 Testing for differences within and between the practice categories and with regard to their ranking of frequency of contact with different venture types

This section focus on the null hypotheses:

- Ho5: The frequency of contact with different venture types is the same between the different practice categories
- Ho6: The frequency of contact with different venture types is the same for support practitioners within each of the practice categories

Table 5.24 Ranking of frequency of contact with different venture types per practice category

Type of venture	Practice categories				Ranking for total group
	Business Advisor	Business Counsellor & Coach	Business Consultant	Business Mentor	
Pre-Start	2	5	2	2	2
Start-up	1	3	1	1	1
Growth companies	4	2	4	4	4
Mature companies	5	4	5	5	5
Companies experiencing some type of trouble	3	1	2	3	3

From Table 5.24 the following are clear:

- The rankings indicate that the business advisor, business consultant and business mentor categories have more frequent contact with start-up ventures.
- The business counsellor/business coach category has more frequent contact with companies experiencing some type of trouble.
- The business advisor, business consultant and business mentor categories reveal a similarity with the total group in their ranking of frequency of contact with different venture types.

Table 5.25 Comparisons of the means and standard deviations of frequency of contact with different venture types within and between the practice categories

Business issues	**Means and Standard deviations per practice category**								**Kruskal -Wallis**	**P-values between groups**
	Business Advisor		**Business Counsellor & Coach**		**Business Consultant**		**Business Mentor**			
	n	**mean (std dev)**	**n**	**mean (std dev)**	**n**	**mean (std dev)**	**N**	**mean (std dev)**		
Pre-start	28	3.26 (1.023)	7	2.43 (0.976)	13	2.83 (1.267)	27	3.17 (0.963)	5.46	0.1412
Start-up	28	3.37 (0.839)	7	2.71 (1.380)	13	3.17 (1.030)	26	3.42 (0.776)	2.01	0.5711
Growth companies	29	2.63 (0.792)	7	3.14 (0.690)	12	2.83 (0.718)	26	2.54 (0.884)	3.35	0.3409
Mature companies	27	2.19 (1.001)	7	2.57 (0.535)	13	2.33 (0.985)	25	2.04 (1.042)	2.72	0.4366
Companies experiencing some type of trouble	28	2.81 (0.962)	7	3.43 (0.787)	13	2.92 (0.996)	25	2.67 (1.050)	3.86	0.2769
P-value for total group: <0.0001	P-value <0.0002		P-value <0.4338			P-value <0.0733		P-value <0.0013		

Table 5.25 shows comparisons of the means and standard deviations of the different practice categories and their frequency of contact with different venture types. The P-value (<0.0001) for the total group (see Table 5.25) shows that significant differences at the 99% level exist for the total group and their frequency of contact with different venture types. This means that support practitioners as a total group do not have the same frequency of contact with different venture types.

Table 5.25 shows that no significant differences were found between the different practice categories and their ranking of frequency of contact with different venture types.

The P-values for each of the practice categories (see Table 5.25) indicate that significant differences exist within the business advisor and business mentor categories with regard to the type of ventures they have more frequent contact with. Within the business advisor category significant differences at the 95% significance level was found the following:

- The mean ranked significantly higher for support practitioner contact with pre-start ventures compared to contact with mature companies.
- The mean ranked significantly higher for support practitioner contact with start-up companies compared to contact with mature companies.

Significant differences at the 95% significance level were also found within the business mentor category for the following:

- The mean ranked significantly higher for support practitioner contact with pre-start ventures compared to contact with mature companies.
- The mean ranked significantly higher for support practitioner contact with start-up ventures compared to contact with mature companies.

5.8.3 Ranking the Frequency of Contact with Different Company Problems

This section presents the results of the tests applied to measure differences in responses of the support practitioners' ranking of frequency of contact with different company problems for the total group between the practice categories and within each practice categories.

5.8.3.1 Testing for differences within the total group and their ranking of frequency of contact with different company problems

This section focuses on the null hypothesis, Ho7: The frequency of contact with different company problems is the same for all support practitioners.

Table 5.26 Means, standard deviations, rankings and significant differences of encountering different company problems that respondents are dealing with (Total group)

Type of problems	N	mean	std dev	Ranking	Significant differences between rankings						
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Funding	72	3.61	0.849	1							
2 Business planning	72	3.47	0.731	2							
3 Cash flows	72	3.26	0.904	3							
4 Financial management	72	3.24	0.880	4							
5 Marketing	72	2.94	0.886	5	*	*					
6 Human resources	72	2.38	0.911	6	*	*		*	*		
7 Product development	72	2.35	0.967	7	*	*	*	*	*		
					*- indicates significance at 95% on how support practitioners rank their frequency of contact with different ventures						

Table 5.26 shows the results for the total group of respondents and their frequency of encountering different company problems. The rankings in Table 5.26 show that most companies that seek assistance from respondents have a funding related problem. Business planning was indicated as the second-most type of assistance sought while product development was the type of assistance sought least.

While funding was ranked by the group as the least important business issue (see Table 5.20), the results in Table 5.26 show that respondents deal more frequently with funding related problems. The discrepancy between the support practitioners' view of what are important business issues within a venture and the actual problems they are required to deal with might negatively influence their service quality.

A discrepancy also exists between the ranking of products as an important business issue (see Table 5.20) and product development as a frequent problem (see Table 5.26). The reason for this discrepancy can possibly be that support practitioners view products/services as a business issue differently from product development as a company problem.

Respondents are consistent, however, in their ranking of the business plan as an important business issue (see Table 5.20) and business planning as a frequent problem (see Table 5.26). The fact that funding is not considered as an important business issue, however, might negatively influence the support practitioners' ability to consider all relevant issues in the compilation of business plans.

Table 5.26 shows that significant differences at the 95% level were found for the following:

- Support practitioner contact with funding related problems ranked significantly higher compared to contact with marketing, human resources and product development related problems.

- Support practitioner contact with business planning related problems ranked significantly higher compared to contact with marketing, human resources and product development related problems.
- Support practitioner contact with cash flow related problems ranked significantly higher compared to contact with product development related problems.
- Support practitioner contact with financial management related problems ranked significantly higher compared to contact with human resources and product development related problems.
- Support practitioner contact with marketing related problems ranked significantly higher compared to contact with human resources and product related problems.

5.8.3.2 Testing for differences within and between the practice categories and their ranking of frequency of encountering different company problems

This section focuses on the null hypotheses:

- Ho8: The frequency of contact with different company problems is the same between the practice categories.
- Ho9: The frequency of contact with different company problems is the same for support practitioners within each of the practice categories.

Table 5.27 encountering different company problems

Type of assistance	Practice categories				Ranking: Total group
	Business Advisor	Business Counsellor & Coach	Business Consultant	Business Mentor	
Funding	1	1	1	1	1
Marketing	5	6	5	5	5
Business planning	2	3	2	2	2
Human resources	7	5	6	6	6
Cash flows	4	1	4	3	3
Product development	6	7	7	7	7
Financial management	3	4	3	4	4

Table 5.27 shows that all practice categories ranked funding as the company problem they most frequently deal with. This ranking corresponds with the ranking for the total group, which is an indication that clients are either seeking start-up capital or capital for one or other operational requirement. Almost a similar type of ranking between the total group and each practice category was obtained for business planning (except for the business counsellor/business advisor category). The ranking of funding and business planning appears to be a reflection of what is happening in practice where clients who are in need of funding are often required to submit business plans to financial institutions together with their funding applications.

Table 5.27 indicates that the business counsellor/coach group is the only group which ranked cash flows as the problem they most frequently encounter. This result might be an indication that the business counsellor/coach group provide their clients with assistance to deal with internal financial issues rather than the provision of assistance to apply for funding.

Table 5.28 Comparisons of the means and standard deviations of frequency of encountering different company problems within and between the practice categories

Business issues	Means and Standard deviations per practice category								Kruskal -Wallis	P-values between groups
	Business Advisor		Business Counsellor & Coach		Business Consultant		Business Mentor			
	N	mean (std dev)	n	mean (std dev)	n	mean (std dev)	n	mean (std dev)		
Funding	28	3.86 (0.448)	7	3.00 (1.414)	12	3.82 (0.405)	26	3.44 (1.044)	5.61	0.1324
Marketing	29	3.00 0.861)	7	2.57 (0.976)	13	3.09 (0.539)	26	2.92 (1.038)	2.10	0.5517
Business planning	29	3.64 (0.559)	7	2.86 (1.215)	11	3.45 (0.688)	27	3.48 (0.714)	4.13	0.2482
Human resources	28	2.18 (0.905)	7	2.71 (1.113)	13	2.45 (0.820)	25	2.44 (0.917)	2.50	0.4744
Cash flows	28	3.25 (0.887)	7	3.00 (1.155)	13	3.36 (0.674)	27	3.28 (0.980)	0.81	0.8481
Product development	28	2.32 (0.945)	7	2.29 (1.113)	13	2.36 (0.809)	25	2.36 (0.898)	0.16	0.9835
Financial management	28	3.36 (0.826)	7	2.71 (1.254)	13	3.36 (0.674)	25	3.16 (0.898)	2.38	0.4979
P-value for group: <0.0001		P-value <0.0001		P-value <0.6319		P-value <0.0013		P-value <0.0001		

Table 5.28 shows that no significant differences were found between the different practice categories in relation to the type of problems they are dealing with.

The P-value (0.0001) for the total group (see Table 5.28) shows significant differences at the 99% level for the total group and their frequency of encountering different company problems. The P-values for the different practice categories (see Table 5.28) also indicate significant differences at the 95% level within the business advisor and business mentor categories and their ranking of frequency of contact with different company problems. This result is an indication that support practitioners within these two practice categories have a high variation between them in terms of the type of problems they deal with. Table 5.28 also shows significant differences at the 95% level for support practitioners within the business consultant category and their ranking of frequency of contact with different company problems.

Table 5.28 further indicates differences at the 95% significance level within the business advisor category for the following:

- The mean ranked significantly higher for support practitioner contact with funding related problems compared to contact with marketing, human resources and product related problems.
- The mean ranked significantly higher for support practitioner contact with business planning related problems compared to contact with human resources and product development related problems.
- The mean ranked significantly higher for support practitioner contact with marketing related problems compared to contact with human resource related problems.
- The mean ranked significantly higher for support practitioner contact with financial management related problems compared to contact with human resources and product development related problems.

Within the business consultant category significant differences at the 95% significance level were found for the following:

- The mean ranked significantly higher for support practitioner contact with funding related problems compared to contact with human resource and product development related problems.

Within the business mentor category significant differences at the 95% significance level were found for the following:

- The mean ranked significantly higher for support practitioner contact with funding related problems compared to contact with human resource and product development related problems.
- The mean ranked significantly higher for support practitioner contact with business planning related problems compared to contact with human resource and product development related problems.
- The mean ranked significantly higher for support practitioner contact with cash flow related problems compared to contact with human resource and product development related problems.

5.9 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings of the field research as well as the results of the statistical analyses.