

# My Research Interests

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As a researcher, I seek to discern what characteristics, traits, or learned capacities most contribute to human development and organizational performance. In particular, I am an avid student of the value theory known as *formal axiology*—that is, the logic of values. The theory of formal axiology was first developed by the late Dr. Robert S. Hartman. The work he began is carried on today by members of the Robert S. Hartman Institute of Formal and Applied Axiology. I am a member of the board of directors of the Hartman Institute and co-editor of the *Journal of Formal Axiology: Theory and Practice*.

My dissertation research involved the assessment of the judgment of founders of start-up technology ventures in Silicon Valley. I used the method of axiological hermeneutics to better understand how entrepreneurs receive and respond to feedback.

My future research agenda includes the exploration of ways in which formal axiology may provide insight into entrepreneurs' cognitive structures and how axiological coaching might influence the growth of entrepreneurs' metacognitive awareness of their own habitual evaluative thought processes. I intend to join the current conversation around entrepreneurial cognition that is frequently being discussed in the pages of the *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, and elsewhere.

The research that I am continuing to conduct with start-up entrepreneurs may also be profitably applied to serial entrepreneurs, executives of established businesses, and leaders of various social, governmental, and not-for-profit organizations, and to other professionals.

My broader interests include: hermeneutics as a method, leadership, business ethics, sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and the history of the social sciences as “science.”

In an article published in *Direct Marketing: An International Journal*, I argue that the theory of sustainability ought to be used as a construct by which to understand consumers' responses to direct marketing. I propose that consumer goodwill is an abundant, renewable resource unless it is over-harvested.

In my first article for the *Journal of Formal Axiology: Theory and Practice*, I compare and contrast the value theories espoused by Milton Rokeach and Robert S. Hartman, the founder of formal axiology. In my most recent article there, I enter an ongoing debate amongst axiologists about the mathematical foundations of the theory of formal axiology. I argue that, being an axiomatic theory, formal axiology need not depend on mathematics for its justification.

The three articles just mentioned can be downloaded from my personal website:

<http://cliffordhurst.com/research.html>.

One of my professors at Fielding Graduate University is a scholar of philosophical hermeneutics. As one outcome of an advanced doctoral seminar which I took under her guidance, she has brought up the possibility of us co-authoring a book on hermeneutics as a method. I look forward to being able to pursue that possibility more seriously in the near future, as soon as our careers allow us time to pursue it.

Another professor at Fielding, an anthropologist, has offered to do more in-depth longitudinal research of entrepreneurs with me for purposes of possible publication, as well.

I am early in the start-up stage of a new business venture that is intended to productize the sorts of consulting/coaching services that I have provided as a consultant for many years. If successful, this new business will provide rich data for use in quantitative research about what habits of mind distinguish entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs and more successful entrepreneurs from less successful ones.

In addition to serving on the board of the Hartman Institute, I am a member of the SVForum, The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE), USASBE, and the Academy of Management.

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