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## THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY TO UNDERSTAND HOW OPPORTUNITIES ARE PERCEIVED IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP (SUMMARY)

Nachiket Bhawe

*Carlson School of Management, USA, nbhawe@csom.umn.edu*

Vishal K. Gupta

*University of Nebraska at Omaha, USA*

Trilok Kumar Jain

*Shri Attam Vallabh Jain Institute of Management and Technology, India*

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## SUMMARY

### **THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY TO UNDERSTAND HOW OPPORTUNITIES ARE PERCEIVED IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

*Nachiket Bhawe, Carlson School of Management, USA*

*Vishal K. Gupta, University of Nebraska at Omaha, USA*

*Trilok Kumar Jain, Shri Attam Vallabh Jain Institute of Management and Technology, India*

#### **Principal Topic**

A great deal of interest today centers on social entrepreneurship which is defined as ‘creation of organizations and institutions aimed at creating social value’. Yet, entrepreneurship theories have generally been about risk-oriented profit-seeking individuals who identify market opportunities and exploit them to earn profits. Considering the impact that social entrepreneurs have on economy and society in general, it is important to understand how opportunities are perceived and exploited by social entrepreneurs who are not driven primarily by self-serving considerations. In this qualitative study, we examined a sample of social entrepreneurs to understand how these entrepreneurs perceive a social need and start new social organizations aimed at alleviating this need. Building on our findings, we propose a theoretical framework grounded in prosocial behavior theory (Eisenberg and Miller, 1987; Bolino, Turnley, and Bloodgood, 2002) to explain how opportunities are identified in social entrepreneurship.

#### **Method**

We used a ‘maximum variation context sampling’ strategy to select the organizations that were included in our sample (Patton 1990) to identify shared patterns that cut across cases. A series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with the entrepreneurs and co-workers of nine organizations after an initial pilot study on two organizations. These interviews along with published records and histories of these organizations were analyzed using grounded theory methodology with constant comparative logic (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). While coding this qualitative data, we gradually advanced from initial coding referred to as ‘open coding’ to more conceptual ‘category’ and ‘theoretical’ coding (Patton, 1990).

#### **Results and Implications**

Contrary to the traditional view in entrepreneurship about opportunities being discovered and then exploited, we found that the process of opportunity identification in social entrepreneurship is more complex. We develop a causal model of this process which can be tested by future researchers in this area. Our study provides a unique framework by which perception of opportunity by social entrepreneurs can be studied without being unencumbered by the assumption of a self-seeking entrepreneur. We believe by adopting prosocial behavior perspective, the contraposition between profit and social responsibility in studying entrepreneurship can be better understood.

**CONTACT:** Nachiket Bhawe; nbhawe@csom.umn.edu; (T): 612-626-7281; Carlson School of Management, MN 55455.