6-7-2008

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS AS A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY: A SUPPLEMENTARY PERSPECTIVE ON EFFECTUATION THEORY (SUMMARY)

Suna Sørensen
*University of Southern Denmark, Denmark, sso@sam.sdu.dk*

Astrid Heidemann Lassen
*Aalborg University, Denmark*

---

**Recommended Citation**

Sørensen, Suna and Lassen, Astrid Heidemann (2008) "THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS AS A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY: A SUPPLEMENTARY PERSPECTIVE ON EFFECTUATION THEORY (SUMMARY)," *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*: Vol. 28: Iss. 17, Article 1. Available at: http://digitalknowledge.babson.edu/fer/vol28/iss17/1

This Summary is brought to you for free and open access by the Entrepreneurship at Babson at Digital Knowledge at Babson. It has been accepted for inclusion in Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research by an authorized administrator of Digital Knowledge at Babson. For more information, please contact digitalknowledge@babson.edu.
SUMMARY

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS AS A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY: A SUPPLEMENTARY PERSPECTIVE ON EFFECTUATION THEORY

Suna Sørensen, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark
Astrid Heidemann Lassen, Aalborg University, Denmark

Principal Topic

One perspective which is seldom applied to the entrepreneurial process is the identity perspective in spite of the fact that this perspective represents a widely accepted value-adding contribution in organisational research. The question of identity is somewhat recognized in effectuation theory of entrepreneurship, which implicitly suggests that individuals from the beginning of the entrepreneurial process hold a clear and coherent perception of who they are. A key rationale of newer identity theory is however that various psychological, economical and sociological characteristics of modern society cause individuals to strive for a coherent self-perception, but they seldom reach this. Thus, identity confusion can be expected to highly influence the effectuation activities of the entrepreneurial process, and the entrepreneurial performance. The lacking integration of the identity perspective in entrepreneurship research causes a gap of knowledge on how the enterprising individual creates and re-creates his/her identity along with developing a new organisation. Thus, further research is needed, and the present paper takes a step in this direction by addressing the question: How does the identity perspective add to the understanding of entrepreneurial processes?

Method

A qualitative research methodology is applied. 10 narratives are developed based on in-depth interviews with ten student entrepreneurs in the period 2005/2006. The logic of data construction is inspired by Grounded Theory.

Results and Implications

Theoretically, we find that the entrepreneurial identity cannot be seen as a given mean of effectuation since individuals often do not hold a coherent and stable understanding hereof when entering the entrepreneurial process. Consequently, their entrepreneurial effectuation is not just a matter of exploiting contingencies through the interactions with others in order to reach the resources needed to grow the entrepreneurial process. The individuals also exploit contingencies of the social world, which he or she also is enacted through, in order to reach a more coherent understanding of who they are as entrepreneurs, and whether they are at all potential entrepreneurs. Thus, the outcome of the paper is a supplementary theoretically conceptual framework on effectuation theory, which integrates the search for a coherent identity associated with the entrepreneurial process.

CONTACT: Suna Sørensen; sso@sam.sdu.dk; (T): +45 65501468; (F): +45 65501357; Department of Entrepreneurship and Relationship Management; University of Southern Denmark; Engstien 1, 6000 Kolding, Denmark.