LINKING RESOURCE ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES TO RESOURCE-BASED ADVANTAGE: BRICOLAGE AND THE RESOURCE-BASED VIEW (SUMMARY)

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SUMMARY

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Principal Topic

The resource-based view (RBV) of the firm focuses on the role of resources in determining strategic advantage of a firm (Barney 1991; Alvarez & Barney, 2002). Yet traditional RBV literature has been less concerned with how these resources are acquired and developed. Alternatively, recent research has explored the resource development processes of entrepreneurial firms through bricolage (Strauss 1967) defined as “making do by applying combinations of the resources at hand to new problems and opportunities” (Baker and Nelson 2005). Our contribution is to study the link between bricolage and the RBV – a firm’s resource position.

We investigate the level of bricolage within a firm’s resource development process and its resource advantage/disadvantage position. We argue that firms engaging in higher levels of bricolage will be better at overcoming obstacles and working around barriers to progress. As such we propose: (i) firms employing moderate and higher levels of bricolage (bricoleurs) will tend to have less areas of resource disadvantage; and will tend to more quickly overcome their most important sources of resource disadvantages. Owing to the idiosyncratic nature of this process, high and moderate bricoleurs may develop resource advantages that are difficult to copy (Ciborra 2002). As such we propose: higher levels of bricolage will tend to lead to some resource advantages that can be less quickly imitated by competitors.

Method

These hypotheses are tested using a survey of 1,108 entrepreneurial start-ups (nascent and young firms < 3 years old). To generate a random sample of such firms, we conducted a screening phone survey of 30,193 randomly selected households (using the PSED methodology, Reynolds 2007). This process yielded 1,988 eligible cases. The full length interviews were completed by 1,108 respondents, representing a response rate of 55.7%.

Results and Implications

Initial results indicate that higher levels of bricolage behaviour are associated with fewer disadvantages and also have a positive effect on the firm’s key resource advantage as hypothesised. The paper will provide an important theoretical link between the processes of resource development and resource-based advantages of young and nascent firms.

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