QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: CURRENT RESEARCH PRACTICES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE (SUMMARY)

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QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: CURRENT RESEARCH PRACTICES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

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Principal Topic

The entrepreneurial process encompassing all the decisions, functions, and actions associated with the perception of opportunities and creation of organizations to pursue them has generated considerable academic interest (Shane, 2012; Venkataraman et al., 2012). Entrepreneurship research has proliferated in top scholarly journals, with a wide variety of methods being used to shed light on the phenomenon of interest (Streb & Gupta, 2012). An important aspect of the greater methodological diversity in the field is the incursion of qualitative research (Neergard & Ulhoi, 2007). The primary objectives of the present study are to (1) review and assess the methodological aspects of the growing qualitative research in entrepreneurship, (2) offer insights as to the ‘state of the art’ of qualitative methods, and (3) discuss the implications for future development of the field.

Method

The sample for the present review was drawn from top-tier journals publishing empirical entrepreneurship research. The list included three leading general management journals: *Academy of Management Journal*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of Management* (Busenitz et al., 2003; Ireland et al., 2005), articles from two top-tier specialty entrepreneurship journals: *Journal of Business Venturing* and *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* (Stewart & Cotton, 2013), and *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*. All relevant articles during this period were then selected for the current research based on the following criteria: (1) empirical approach was exclusively qualitative–quantitative, mixed-methods and non-empirical (e.g. editorials, book reviews, conceptual pieces) were excluded; and (2) article title or abstract contained keywords germane to entrepreneurship drawn from both Busenitz et al. (2003) and Ireland et al. (2005) list of entrepreneurship search terms (e.g. venture, entrepreneurs) and their corresponding Boolean truncations (e.g. ventur*, entrepren*). In all, 91 articles met our selection criteria. These articles were then coded, and later cross-coded, by three independent coders for several relevant criteria (e.g., core research question, theoretical focus, research design, etc).

Results and Implications

By providing a systematic and thorough review of empirical qualitative research in entrepreneurship, we conclude that the field is rich in many dimensions, and in a relatively short period of time, an identifiable niche has been created. At the same time, we also highlight a number of implications that emerge for entrepreneurship researchers from this study.

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