

6-11-2016

ENTREPRENEURIAL INFORMATION SEARCH BEHAVIOR FOR OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION: SCALE DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION (SUMMARY)

Alexander Fust

University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, alexander.fust@unisg.ch

Philipp Wustrow

University of St. Gallen, Switzerland

Urs Fueglistaller

University of St. Gallen, Switzerland

Recommended Citation

Fust, Alexander; Wustrow, Philipp; and Fueglistaller, Urs (2016) "ENTREPRENEURIAL INFORMATION SEARCH BEHAVIOR FOR OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION: SCALE DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION (SUMMARY)," *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*: Vol. 36 : Iss. 11 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://digitalknowledge.babson.edu/fer/vol36/iss11/5>

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 editor of Digital Knowledge at Babson. For more information, please contact digitalknowledge@babson.edu.

≈ SUMMARY ≈

**ENTREPRENEURIAL INFORMATION SEARCH
BEHAVIOR FOR OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION:
SCALE DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION**

Alexander Fust, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland
Philipp Wustrow, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland
Urs Fueglistaller, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland

Principal Topics

Despite its relevance, academic understanding of information search behavior and how it contributes to opportunity recognition continues to face important challenges. Among other issues, existing measures suffer from limited abilities to distinguish between different search behaviors. First, some scales only use one item to capture specific search behaviors, even if most methodologists would acknowledge this approach as problematic. Second, most existing scales focus on general individual information search behavior, assuming that it is constant over time and independent of the situation at hand. And third, existing measures likely fail to capture meaningful variations in search behaviors and patterns. To address these issues, we develop and validate a novel scale of entrepreneurial information search behavior. We posit that entrepreneurial information search behaviors can be usefully delineated around three broad categories, namely, passive, active, and systematic search.

Methods

We combined inductive and deductive approaches to generate a pool of 22 candidate items, which we then pre-tested with academic professionals and executives from medical technology companies. We then performed two pilot studies to obtain preliminary evidence of the instrument's validity and to further refine the pool of items. First, we conducted a survey with 211 entrepreneurship students. Four items showed higher loadings across domains and hence were edited after consultation. Second, we performed a content-analysis survey with 51 business students to establish that the candidate items effectively matched their intended search behaviors. Finally, we assessed the measure's structural validity through an online survey conducted with 128 executives from medical technology companies, and which served to validate an 11-item instrument.

Results and Implications

The developed instrument constitutes a valuable measurement tool for entrepreneurship scholars' intent on probing the meaning and impact of information search behaviors in entrepreneurs' efforts to recognize promising opportunities. The instrument enables researchers to investigate outcomes and antecedents of different search behaviors. Likewise, the instrument allows for studying the extent to which such behaviors can be influenced, learned or improved. As such, we believe the developed instrument offers a valuable building block for future studies of the dynamics underpinning opportunity recognition.

CONTACT: Alexander Fust; alexander.fust@unisg.ch; (T): + 41 71 224 71 00; KMU-HSG, Dufourstrasse 40a, 9000 St.Gallen, Switzerland.