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OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION (OR) AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN THE MILITARY (SUMMARY)

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SUMMARY

OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION (OR) AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN THE MILITARY

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Principal Topic

Transitioning from the Cold War to the War on Terror necessitates organizational changes to make the military more effective, efficient and agile. A stronger entrepreneurial orientation can facilitate these changes. Opportunity recognition (OR) is a key part of acting entrepreneurially. In the military, entrepreneurial behavior and OR can occur at the level of the military business unit, i.e., a distinctive military unit, with its own budget and mission to provide a service or perform a function.

Military opportunities exist to increase benefits or reduce costs through greater added value, new products or services or technology exploitation. Military opportunities involve meeting mission needs through creative combinations of resources to deliver more effective mission performance and/or more efficient delivery. Our key research question is, “How does OR in military business units influence their organizational performance?”

Method

The paper is conceptual and was developed based on a literature review, knowledge and experience of the authors, and conversations with military and Department of Defense personnel. A series of propositions was developed to guide further research.

Results and Implications

Military OR is identification of a better way to solve a problem, reduce risk, achieve mission effectiveness or increase efficiency. OR is an implicit part of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and is related to three key components. The proactiveness, innovativeness and risk taking dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation are related positively to OR in the military. Military performance is measured by mission achievement, including efficiency and organizational agility. OR is positively related to mission achievement, organizational efficiency and organizational agility. As military performance is mediated by OR, organizational and environmental factors can moderate the impact of the relationship between EO and performance. Military OR mediates the relationship between EO and organizational performance. Organizational and environmental contextual variables will moderate the relationship between EO and OR and between OR and organizational performance in a military business unit.

Now, more than ever, military business units are directed toward recognition of new opportunities for organizational performance. OR could be enhanced by creating active search mechanisms, increasing alertness to opportunities, building social networks and introducing opportunity reward mechanisms.

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