EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF KEY WORDS AND COLLOCATIONS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH 1989-2007 (SUMMARY)

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SUMMARY

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Principal Topic

This study explores the development of central entrepreneurship concepts in research articles over time (1989-2007) in four major entrepreneurship journals: Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice (ETP), Journal of Business Venturing (JBV), Small Business Economics (SBE), Entrepreneurship and Regional Development (ERD). We use a semantic approach (Cruse, 1986; Pustejovski, 1995) for the analysis of the research text.

Method

We collected and converted 3074 PDF files to text files. Out of these files 2779 were actual research articles. We calculated frequencies of words and collocations to explore where/when words/constructs first occur, and how they spread. For example how often “opportunity” is mentioned in these journals year 1992 (i.e. count) or how often the words “environmental strategy” are mentioned together (i.e. collocate). Collocations and word counts are calculated with the Leximancer.

Results and Implications

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the debate surrounding the extent of and need for convergence in the field of entrepreneurship. In this way we may be able to inform researchers and funding agencies as to why entrepreneurship is not making as much progress in terms of normal science progression as some may desire. By focusing on development patterns of words and collocation of words, we hope to uncover some rules by which science is progressing. By the virtue of the longitudinal nature of this research we assess how these rules change over time. Most attempts to summarise the development of the field have, up until recently, been conceptual or literature reviews based on convenience sampling of articles. While indicative of research developments, these have suffered from limited replicability. Some recent efforts have been made to add rigor to the study of entrepreneurship research by studying co-citation patterns. However such studies need to second guess the meaning of the articles themselves, and they omit the actual content of articles. Our study draws attention to how meaning in articles develops over a significant period of time, in four central journals of entrepreneurship research.

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