NECESSITY DRIVEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR: RECOMBINING RESOURCES TO CREATE SOCIAL VALUE (SUMMARY)

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Summary

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Principal Topic

Non-profit organizations are challenged to transform their administrative focus by restructuring themselves into innovative organizations that are able to take advantage of opportunities. Entrepreneurial activities should be studied and understood in their context, because it provides resources and meaning to the entrepreneurial activities. Most studies in entrepreneurship have opted to just measure the extent of certain practices instead of capturing the range of entrepreneurial varieties. According to Zahra (2005) research is required that takes the context into account when examining the nature and variety of entrepreneurial activities. Purpose of this study is investigating how and why corporate entrepreneurship in non-profit (health) organizations is manifested by describing different sorts of initiatives and relate them to the (organizational) context.

Method

A multiple-case comparative study in nursing homes and home for the elderly in the Netherlands is conducted. Data were collected by interviewing 25 key informants, observation of meetings and studying documentary and archive material. Due to the current underdeveloped stage of entrepreneurial research on the non-profit sector, this explorative study uses theoretical concepts that have proven to be valid in corporate entrepreneurship in profit organizations in order to conceptually frame the data. On the basis of a detailed analysis (within-case and cross-case) of the initiatives we seek patterns and relate them to the various organizational conditions.

Results and Implications

The results show that bricolage seems the main driver of corporate entrepreneurship. This finding extends the notion of bricolage to the non-profit sector and contributes to the debate concerning the role of innovation in the public sector by our increased understanding of the way recombining resources are required to come up with innovations that provide social value. The findings support research by Gawell (2007) who finds that public sector entrepreneurs are driven by necessity. The concept of necessities contributes to our understanding of entrepreneurship as not only acting upon opportunities, but as being convinced of the necessity to realize changes. Necessity driven in this sense is not often mentioned either in mainstream or in public entrepreneurship research and can supplement the discussion of opportunities.

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