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CHARTING THE GROWTH OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A CITATION ANALYSIS OF FER CONTENT, 1981-2008 (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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Principal Topic

*Frontiers in Entrepreneurship Research* published a total of 3395 articles and summaries of research in its proceedings volumes between 1981 and 2008. This research analyses the authors, topics and institutions included in *FER* and describes the inter-relationships between contributing scholars. This research contributes to the continuing discussions about the nature of entrepreneurship conducted by both entrepreneurship scholars and information scientists. Previous entrepreneurship research by Grégoire, Noël, Déry and Béchard, (2006) explored the conceptual convergence in the field. Other researchers (Reader & Watkins, 2006; Schildt, Zahra & Sillanpaa, 2006; Zahra, 2005) have examined the social nature of entrepreneurship research, communities within entrepreneurship, and the relationship between entrepreneurship and other disciplines. This project expands on work by information science researchers explaining the growth of research specialties (Morris & Vander Veer Martens, 2008; Casillas & Acedo, 2007) and the intellectual structure of disciplines (Ramos-Rodriguez & Ruiz-Navarro, 2004).

Method

Data were collected from the 3395 items included in *FER* from 1981 to 2008. The data collected included information about type of content (article, summary, interactive paper), authorship characteristics (single or multi authored, number of authors), institutional collaboration (single, multiple) and country collaboration (single or multiple). The dataset also includes information about authors’ institutional affiliation (school name, country, state (if US)) and topical information about each article. The multitude of topics included in *FER* was condensed into 22 categories.

Results and Implications

Collaboration is a key component of the research published in *FER* – 75% of articles are multi-authored and 20% of those articles are inter-country collaborations. Research has been contributed by 940 institutions in 63 countries; 40% of those institutions have contributed only one article. The results also show the growth of *FER* as a research vehicle: the initial volume in 1981 contained 39 articles; the 2008 volume contained 200+ articles and summaries. The top five topics covered in *FER* since 1981 are (in descending order): characteristics of entrepreneurs; start-ups, venture capital, management, and strategy. This research provides a clearer understanding of where entrepreneurship research takes place, and the topical preferences within entrepreneurship as shown in *FER*. It also highlights the growing contributions of international authors and the nature of collaborative research within the field of entrepreneurship.

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