IDENTIFYING THE INTELLECTUAL CORE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH: A LATENT SEMANTICS ANALYSIS BASED APPROACH (SUMMARY)

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IDENTIFYING THE INTELLECTUAL CORE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH: A LATENT SEMANTICS ANALYSIS BASED APPROACH

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Principal Topics

Over the past three decades, entrepreneurship has evolved into a distinctive scholarly domain (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Shane 2012). As a relatively young discipline, entrepreneurship research is diverse, fragmented, and lacks clearly defined boundaries (Schildt, Zahra, and Sillanpaa, 2006). The continuing success and healthy development of entrepreneurship as an academic discipline depends on a better understanding of the intellectual core and structure of the field. Although entrepreneurship researchers recognize the need for a better understanding of the field, there is a lack of empirical studies that explore the identity and structure of the field as a scholarly domain (Shane 2012; Luor et al., 2014). This paper seeks to address a gap in our understanding of the field by empirically examining a large body of research that has appeared in a top journal in the field, Journal of Business Venturing (JBV), from 1985 to 2014.

Method

This study uses Latent Semantics (LSA) as the method of analysis. We analyze abstracts of research articles from JBV in the last 30 years. The approach consists of four major steps: 1) use of natural language processing techniques to extract terms from the abstracts; 2) construction of the term-by-document matrix to impose structure on the corpus; 3) use of singular value decomposition to group the abstracts into clusters; and 4) labeling of the resulting clusters to identify major topics of research. The abstracts are divided into 10-year periods.

Results and Implications

LSA results indicate meaningful clusters for each 10-year period. For 1985-1994, we identified nine clusters. For 1995-2004, there were 11 clusters. For 2005-2014, we identified 13 clusters. The strongest clusters from 1985-1994 include entrepreneurship as a subfield of strategic management, contextual and cultural influences on entrepreneurship, and venture capitalist involvement in new business development. From 1995-2004, the field seems to have shifted to emphasize organizational emergence, cognitive aspects of entrepreneurs, and new venture performance. From 2005-2014, topics include identification of opportunities, high-technology entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurial finance. The shifting of cluster importance and addition/deletion of topical areas suggest a narrative of entrepreneurship as a research domain that is clearly developing into a distinct academic discipline.

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