AN INSIDE JOB: INTRAPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH METHODS

This paper examines the challenges with research methodology in studying intrapreneurship. An examination of current intrapreneurship studies are used to illustrate the diversity of methods approaches taken, and recommendations for future research are provided.

Introduction

Intrapreneurship, also known as corporate entrepreneurship or internal corporate venturing, is entrepreneurship within existing organizations. Entrepreneurship as a field tends to garner more attention, possibly due to the drama of a new venture started by a determined and risk-tolerant visionary; however, intrapreneurship associated with internal innovation is practised on a wide scale and is equally as sublime and deserving of study (Carrier, 1994).

Definitions of intrapreneurship are fairly consistent. Pinochot (1985) is credited with coining the term with his early book *Intrapreneurship*, and defines it as “behaving like an entrepreneur when you’re employed at a large corporation for the benefit of the corporation as a whole”. To others, it is a means to increase corporate success through the creation of new corporate ventures (Hornsby et al., 1990). It is a sub-field of entrepreneurship, consisting of innovative activities within an organization that create new services and products that strengthen the competitive position of the organization (Antoncic and Hisrich, 2003). Intrapreneurship is closely linked with new product/service innovation; being a positive result of these actions (Knight, 1967). The literature includes dimensions of innovativeness; development of novel products, services or processes; risk taking and proactiveness (Morris et al., 1993). As ‘incubative entrepreneurship’, it refers to the creation of semi-autonomous units within the existing organization for the purpose of: sensing external and internal innovative developments; screening and assessing new venture opportunities; and initiating and nurturing new venture developments (Kuratko et al., 1990).

An *intrapreneur* is invariably an individual champion who turns innovation into intrapreneurial activity within an organization. Pinochot (1985) defines an intrapreneur as a “person who focuses on innovation and creativity and transforms a dream or an idea into a profitable venture, by operating with the organizational environment.” They share many of the same personality characteristics as entrepreneurs, but operate under different environmental constraints, reward structures, and failure mechanisms. Intrapreneurs are known to recognize opportunities; champion them from within an organization; make use of resources outside of their control, and take a career risk in the process (Stevenson and Jarillo 1990, Pinochot, 1985). They take ‘initiative from below’ when undertaking something new
The term intrapreneur also refers to an individual designated by management to head up an internal corporate venture (Davis, 1999).

While we may discuss intrapreneurship at the individual level, companies exhibiting entrepreneurial orientation (EO) imbue it as a culture at the organizational level (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). Formal intrapreneurship programs have evolved in the past decades at companies such as IBM, 3M, AT&T, and DuPont; some such as Xerox New Enterprises identify promising new technologies which are brought to market as independent business units (Pinchot, 1985). The “company within a company” model is what distinguishes this from new venture entrepreneurship. Intrapreneurs heading up these organizations may be hired in as general managers, or self-appointed if they have the required leadership qualifications.

Nearly twenty-five years since the term was coined, it is time to take stock of the state of intrapreneurship research methodologies, and examine the success of different approaches. The purpose of this paper is to survey the state of intrapreneurship-oriented research, and discuss methodological challenges. We will then offer commentary and guidance for future research in the discussion section.

Research Challenges

It has been observed that entrepreneurial studies tend to be less sophisticated in sampling frames, hypotheses development, statistical analyses, and dynamic longitudinal analyses than are organizational studies in the more established disciplines (Busenitz et al., 2003). The reasons for this may be grounded in the relative newness of the field; the literature has a short history and much of it is exploratory in nature (Davis, 1999).

The challenges for research in intrapreneurship are similar to entrepreneurship: the subject is a complex interplay of individuals, organizations, economies, and opportunities for capitalizing on innovation. It is a “multidisciplinary jigsaw” characterized by accumulative fragmentalism (Harrison and Lietch, 1996). As a field, it “lacks distinctive boundaries, as no research space has yet been defined in which the application of other disciplines is unproductive or unrevealing... lacking such defining boundaries, the field remains permeable to other disciplines” (Busenitz et al., 2003). Organizational, strategic, economic, innovation, team dynamics and cognitive disciplines may all come into play in studying intrapreneurship. Current intrapreneurship literature can be conceptually defined as intersections between the domains of environments, opportunities, individuals and teams, and their mode of organizing (Busenitz et al., 2003). Such intersections, for example between opportunities and individuals, although complex, arguably form the distinguishing characteristic of what is entrepreneurship theory.

Conducting substantive research in this field requires careful consideration. Researchers must make macro-level choices regarding single vs multi-level facets of study: individual, team, business unit, organization, industry and country. Key methodological considerations include qualitative vs. quantitative, vs. a hybrid combination; sample sizes of firm and individuals within them; single vs. multi-level; longitudinal vs. cross-sectional; industry and country. Particularly, longitudinal timelines need to be carefully considered; some intrapreneurial study efforts are remarkably long-lived and provide much needed continuity.
The interdisciplinary nature of entrepreneurship itself lends itself to a myriad of entry points in theory development. It can be difficult to synthesize theory, make generalizations, and advance the field with such a wide variance in subject matter. We will present a survey of studies from the literature to illustrate this point.

Survey of Studies

Although interest in the specific subject of intrapreneurship is growing (Busenitz, 2003), it remains a scarce source of methodical scientific research involving actual organizations or individuals. A database search was made of peer-reviewed journal studies concerning the aspects of intrapreneurship, corporate venturing and corporate entrepreneurship published during the past twenty-five years. The literature specific to intrapreneurship may be characterized as anecdotally informative, yet relatively lacking in terms of studies based upon accepted methodologies. Most research reflects observations from case studies or contributions from practitioners that have developed intrapreneurial projects (Kuratko 1990). Seven studies were selected based upon the criteria of being comparable and illustrative of methodological choices made, such as, level, study duration and sample size. The seven studies are summarized in Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study (Author/Year)</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Focal Aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kuratko et al. (1990)</td>
<td>Quantitative, multi-level</td>
<td>111 within 1 firm</td>
<td>Intrapreneural factor analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garud and Van de Ven (1992)</td>
<td>Quantitative hybrid; longitudinal (12 years); multi-level</td>
<td>1; medical firm</td>
<td>Hypothesized factors in intrapreneurial activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopford and Baden-Fuller (1993)</td>
<td>Qualitative case study; Longitudinal (5 years); multi-level</td>
<td>7; various industrials (UK)</td>
<td>5 attributes at 3 stages of intrapreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jansen and van Wees (1994)</td>
<td>Qualitative; multi-level</td>
<td>1; telecom firm (Dutch)</td>
<td>Internal transformation; no theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearce and Carland (1996)</td>
<td>Quantitative; single level (upper management)</td>
<td>260; technology companies</td>
<td>Performance with respect to intrapreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis, S. (1999)</td>
<td>Qualitative hybrid, 2 phase</td>
<td>7 sample types (various) of 227 individuals</td>
<td>Decision criteria in the evaluation of potential intrapreneurs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The studies represent a broad cross section of methodologies, sample sizes, industry, geography, and research aspects; and offer a basis for comparison and commentary on relative success with various approaches. However, as each study typically focused on a specific set of attributes (e.g., risk taking propensity with intrapreneurs), the generalizability of these study results is speculative (Davis, 1999). The following sections examine method choices made in these representative studies.

Qualitative Analysis

In their introduction to the special issue on qualitative methods in entrepreneurship research, editors Gartner and Birley (2002, p. 387) observed that, “many of the important questions in entrepreneurship can only be asked through qualitative methods and approaches... we believe that quantitative research has tended to drive out what for us would often seem to be common sense.” However, the editors also remarked that many of the manuscripts submitted offered qualitative description as their only analysis (i.e., they were lacking in theoretical development). This echoes other calls for more robustness in approaches (Nummela, 2006). In underscoring this comment, one of the studies surveyed (Jansen & van Wees, 1994) offered no theories or theoretical development, but provided an informative case study of a Dutch telecom firm’s intrapreneurial transformation.

More than half of the studies surveyed were qualitative and involved case studies. Case study research can bring understanding of a complex issue and can extend experience to what is already known. Yin (1984) defines the case study research method as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.” Critics of the method argue that the small number of cases lacks reliability or generalizability of findings; and that intense exposure can lead to biases. There have been arguments for between 4 and 10 cases for accurate theory generation (Eisenhardt, 1989); although important studies have relied on a single case (Dyer and Wilkins, 1991). Case study is a methodology that has been called upon to reveal entrepreneurs’ underlying cognitve structures (Busenitz et al., 2003).

The study by Christensen (2005) is a good example of a single-firm (Danfoss) embedded case study, which examines how firms encourage intrapreneurship with the five enablers of rewards, management support, resources, organizational structure, and risk identified by Kuratko et al. (1990). According to Christensen (2005), studying intrapreneurship involves at least three levels of analyses: the firm (strategy and performance); employees (interaction); and the use of factors (tracing different enablers) to provide richness and multiple perspectives in behaviour. The methodology included interviews by two researchers (one interviewing, one taking notes), with staff from four positions (non executive), on-site observation of meetings, informal queries, and examination of a range of documents and reports. The analytic process was concerned with coding the...
interviews and classifying the text for content analysis into predetermined categories. The coded interview data were then triangulated with observations and documentation. The voices of the subjects were clearly used to support their addition of communication, culture, and process to the list of intrapreneurial enablers, something that might have been difficult to deduce in advance. In documenting the study, Christensen made extensive use of embedded interview quotations to add qualitative weight to assertions around these entrepreneurial factors. Although the case could be strengthened by more senior level interviews, and is a single Danish firm under study, it nevertheless is insightful and could be used as the basis for further theory generation.

Stopford and Baden-Fuller (1994) examined five attributes of corporate entrepreneurship (proactiveness, aspirations beyond current capability, team orientation, capability to resolve dilemmas, and learning capability) in their ambitious qualitative study. The authors sought to study these factors over three stages of individual sensing, renewal and frame-breaking entrepreneurship, and concluded that a longitudinal method was the only way to conclusively study them. In selecting the subject companies, Stopford and Baden-Fuller considered predominantly U.K. businesses in four industries, finally selecting seven on the basis of data availability, and the fit with a model of maturity and need for competitive response. Unlike Christensen (2005), these seven firms were studied longitudinally over five years, with up to 25 multi-level interviews, including the top management team. Interviewers collected real-time data between 1985-1990 and relied upon internal reports and interviews for evidence of preceding events. They also interviewed buyers, industry associations and government departments to build a broader historical perspective. Cross-level models describe the relationship among variables at different levels of analysis (Klein and Kozlowski, 2000). Stopford and Baden-Fuller (1994) used cross-level constructs, as predictor variables were applied across upper and lower management levels to infer overall firm performance. The multi-level research constructs proved useful in resolving reporting discrepancies between levels in this study, a potential hazard of single level studies. The five-year longitudinal study span was particularly valuable in developing a three phase framework, over time, that could not otherwise be synthesized. The lengthy study process also brought to light the role of “skunkworks” in the innovation cycle, as well as illustrating the evolution of the change process from within. Although the study consisted of mainly UK industrials between 1985-1990, the results added several new entrepreneurial factors to the field, and could reasonably be generalized to similar firms in that time frame.

Quantitative Analysis

Several studies relied on positivist methodologies to test specific hypotheses and conduct factor analysis. Kuratko et al. (1990), for example, conducted a study of 111 mid-level managers from a health industry association using an intrapreneurial assessment instrument (IAI). The instrument tests five hypothesized factors (management support, organizational structure, risk-taking, time availability, reward and resource availability), that were empirically derived from the literature. The subjects were subordinates referred by senior managers that had received prior intrapreneurial training, risking subjectivity, selection. Twenty-eight items were self-reported using a five-point Likert scale, and using a combination of pre- and post-measures, a response rate of 74 percent was achieved. The results of their factor analysis supported a three-factor solution for intrapreneurial conditions (management support, organizational structure, resource availability), rather than the original five. Regarding the contribution to methodology, the authors stated,
the literature on this subject is primarily subjective in that most writers have developed conceptual models that are never empirically tested or make conclusions based upon case studies. An examination of the factors and the items of which these models are composed clearly suggests the lack of clarity that currently exists in the realm of corporate entrepreneurship. (Kuratko et al. 1990, p. 55).

The IAI provided an incremental contribution in the ambient conditions favouring intrapreneurial activities that have been cited by others (Christensen 2005).

The study by Pearce and Carland (1996) attempted to empirically assess the relationship between company performance and high levels of intrapreneurship through innovation. The authors chose to follow the traditional format of a single hypothesis proposal and testing using survey methods, followed by extensive analysis of variance (ANOVA). In this study, a questionnaire on new product introduction, among other factors, was developed and pilot tested. The authors were seeking homogeneity in the subject firm’s industry, and selected electronic and computer companies from a Standard Industrial Code (SIC) database. The mailed survey resulted in 260 usable responses from 39 U.S. states, from top management executives for a net response rate of 49%.

Pearce and Garland (1996) encountered early difficulties with their objective measurement of intrapreneurial intensity, as measured by volume of new product introductions. As new products are not alike, and volume is measured relative to competition, the authors chose to let the subjects make a subjective assessment using a seven point Likert scale. The use of subjective measures when objective indicators are unavailable is debated in the literature (Pearce and Garland, 1996). Next, the polar extreme approach to data partitioning was used to exclude the middle of the scale, reducing the firm data to either “high” or “low” emphasis on product introduction. The authors attempted to resolve the subjective question of each firm’s performance in a similar manner by asking each top manager to self-rate the firm relative to their competition, on factors such as profit and sales growth. Although this method suffered from subjectivity and response bias, nevertheless a quantitative analysis was performed, and the hypothesis linking intrapreneurship intensity to performance was marginally supported (6 of 11 performance measures) by ANOVA. Unfortunately, the results cannot be extrapolated to other contexts due to the study limitations, and with only one hypothesis tested under limited conditions, the opportunity to gain additional insights from the surveyed companies was not fully realized. It would be difficult to draw strong conclusions from this study, but it does serve to illustrate the complexities in multi-dimensional intrapreneurship hypothesis testing, even while controlling for a single industry and point in time.

**Hybrid Model Analysis**

Some studies use qualitative and quantitative analyses in tandem in a mixed-mode approach. The study of Garud and Van de Ven (1992) attempted to assess factors such as trial-and-error process, ambiguity contingency, and action persistence on internal corporate venturing of a single medical firm. Longitudinal data was collected over the course of 12 years using meetings, interviews, questionnaires, and trade publications. It could be termed a hybrid methodology, as hypotheses to test a conceptual model were pre-established; a single
case study was selected; events were qualitatively gathered over a long time span; then coded into five dichotomous variables which were then subjected to regression analysis. The authors identified three periods (agenda setting, expansion, and contraction), from which they could test their hypotheses. Although complex in implementation, the mixed qualitative-quantitative methodologies were self-reinforcing. The span of generalization is not from a sample to a population, but from a set of events to a model of the corporate venture process; as the authors assert that the systematic methods employed are applicable elsewhere (Garud and Van de Ven, 1992). Unfortunately, during the tenure of the research the venture ultimately failed, highlighting one of the risks of longitudinal studies.

In another study designed to determine the decision criteria of potential intrapreneurs, Davis (1999) employed a free-response technique with 227 individuals for the first phase of the study. Free response has been widely used in cognitive psychology to generate category features and was used in the study to generate an unrestrained list of potential attributes (Davis, 1999). According to Davis, the second phase was designed to verify the schemata content from the first; then the attributes were statistically analysed to test a set of predefined research questions. The combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques was used to elicit and test a range of attributes in a way that either method alone might be inherently limiting. Davis (1999, p. 138) asserted that the two-sample methodology improves the reliability of consensual schema content and its generalizability; stating, “Future researchers should consider similar multi-sample approaches to verifying schemata content. Research focusing on sources of variance across organizations is also warranted.” Davis (1999, p, 139) concludes that, “one of the most valuable contributions of this study is the empirically-derived, unrestrained lists of attributes generated... aimed to preserve the richness, vividness and granularity of subordinate levels of categorization.” (p. 319) However, substantial differences were found in the same schemata content elicited from student and managerial samples, underscoring the difficulties in extrapolating between the two, and the limitations of student testing. As a further caution, Davis (1999) notes that due to not restricting the valid selection criteria to “legal” ones during the first phase; such as age, race and gender – participants named criteria that could not be used by actual managers. Davis (1999) recommended that researchers investigate actual decision criteria to avoid exclusion error and better assist managers in improving organizational decisions. The Davis work provides a well-documented example of a hybrid study in intrapreneurship that combined several techniques to test theory.

Discussion

Several themes emerge from this examination: the pervasiveness of case studies and qualitative analysis; key considerations around the selection of single vs. multi-level constructs; number and type of firms studied (n); and the time duration of the analysis.

The multi-year duration of longitudinal studies has several pitfalls as illustrated by these studies. For example, the Stopford and Baden-Fuller (1994) study observed that over a period of five years, the factors under study (such as team orientation and learning capability) changed significantly, depending on which one of three stages the firm was in. Although illuminating, it also points to the hazards of not controlling for this stage when conducting factor research over shorter periods. They also illustrated an observer retention issue with longitudinal data collection, stating, “Moreover, our data are imperfect: the executives did not keep diaries of actions taken over long periods. We had to rely on memory and incomplete
documentation...” (Stopford and Baden-Fuller, 1994, p. 534). Studies lasting a very long time (e.g., 12 years, see Garud and Van de Ven, 1992) are also exposed to hazards of venture failure, environmental setbacks, changing of key participants, and ultimately, loss of relevance.

The choice of sample sizes appears to be linked to a decision to adopt the case study method; and whether the objective is deeper understanding, or generalization to a larger population. It is a question of deep case studies vs. surface ones; some of the most important studies that have advanced the knowledge of organizations and social systems have focused on a single organization (Dyer and Wilkins, 1991). Indeed, the most compelling and insightful studies which surveyed the many complex interactions of intrapreneurship, rested on a single case, at a single time.

Cross-level models, such as that undertaken by Stopford and Baden-Fuller (1994) attempt to link organizational performance to intrapreneurial factors reported at multiple employee levels. These constructs require special consideration, as they typically rest on an assumption of within-unit homogeneity and between-unit variability, among other dependencies (Klein and Koslowski, 2000). For clarity of results, a multi-level approach would be best suited where other complexities are minimized. There also remains the question of observer bias when interviews are conducted across both time and multiple level domains; according to Stopford and Banden-Fuller (1994, p. 534):

We observed that managers’ interpretations of key events provided a sense of history that influenced later events when the initial interpretations were shared among a wider group and sometimes modified in that process... we were unable, however, either to sort out whose perceptions drove susequent changes when more people were involved, or to identify how the manner of interpretation affected choices of action. These are issues deserving much further enquiry.

In dealing with the multi-disciplinary nature of intrapreneurship and subjectivity surrounding data collection, perhaps the most productive example examined in this paper is the hybrid one as demonstrated by Davis (1999). By employing a multi-stage approach, she effectively started with a rich set of empirically derived factors to later test with positivist methodology; however the first phase brought to light some phenomenon bearing further study, that were not initially considered, thus highlighting the idiosyncratic nature of intrapreneurial research.

In examining 55 empirical studies published on international entrepreneurship, Coviello and Jones (2004) found that surveys and interviews were the main form of data collection; five combined qualitative and quantitative approaches; five were longitudinal; and the bulk were conducted in a positivist manner. In a second recent study of 114 articles published on ‘institutional entrepreneurship’, qualitative studies outnumbered quantitative studies by more than two to one (Bernier et al., 2007). This study found an even split between quantitative, qualitative, and hybrid mixed-mode methodologies. There continue to be calls from journal editors for other qualitative approaches; for example, narrative sequence methods (NSM) (Nummela & Welch, 2006). According to Buttris and Wilkinson (2006, p. 157):
While variable-focused, variance-based methods currently dominate theory development, they are atemporal, yet entrepreneurship is what entrepreneurs do over time... a challenge is to link causal mechanisms to show how macro-processes and outcomes emerge from micro-level processes [NSM].

There have been more editorial calls for different epistemological stances in studying entrepreneurship; such as hermeneutic phenomenology, protocol analysis, conjoint analysis, and policy capturing (Nummela, 2006; Busenitz, 2003). We do not wish to weigh into stale qualitative versus quantitative debates, rather, we call upon the field to carefully choose a method that best matches the particular research question. That is, it may be tempting as the field matures to move away from cross-sectional case studies, but if the particular context can further our understanding of theory and practice, such an approach should not be discounted. We do contend that innovative methods like experience sampling methodologies (ESM), where data could be captured from the same persons over a longer period of time, might be particularly fruitful for intrapreneurial research, especially if applied in a multilevel fashion. That is, tracking intrapreneurs, their superiors and subordinates would help to provide some much needed context, in real-time, of how innovative ideas take shape and are influenced by social forces within organizations.

The majority of intrapreneurship literature deals with linking the phenomenon with various organizational factors such as culture, need for innovation, management support, education level and others (Kuratko, 1990; Garud, 1992; Burgelman, 1983; Hisrish 1990). Corporate entrepreneurship would seem to depend both upon the capabilities of operational level participants to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities, and upon the perception of corporate management that there is a need for entrepreneurship at that particular moment (Burgelman, 1983). Companies that foster intrapreneurship may be characterized by those practising enlightened management principles; adopting an entrepreneurial style that avoids bureaucracies; and encouraging innovation among the workforce (Luchsinger and Bagby, 2001). From a methodological perspective, this leads to the challenge of characterizing entrepreneurial orientation (EO) at the organizational level. In building a construct supporting EO, Lumpkin and Dess (1996) identified five factors (innovation, autonomy, risk-taking willingness, competitor aggressiveness and marketplace opportunism). Methods for measuring firm level entrepreneurial activity in recent times utilize a nine-item, 7-point Likert type scale and the three dimensions of risk taking, competitive pro-activeness, and innovativeness (see Covin and Slevin, 1991; Naman and Slevin, 1993; Zhang and Bruning, 2007). Subjective ratings of firm level variables are the most common method for gathering data, with the limitation of self-reporting biases difficult to exclude. Objective measures of external behaviours and use of resources provides a useful alternative view to entrepreneurial activity (Zhang and Bruning, 2007). Study efforts tend to treat organizations in the abstract, as ‘exhibiting EO tendencies’, however the individuals at the heart of the organization may or may not be intrapreneurial in nature.

Who are these intrapreneurs then, that seize initiatives while others don’t? Research focusing specifically on the characteristics of intrapreneurs (as opposed to entrepreneurs and managers) is not extensive, as researchers have not yet identified the decision criteria for that role (Davis, 1999). The lack of descriptive research on the characteristics of intrapreneurs themselves has been cited in the literature (Geisler, 1993; Davis, 1999), as most prior studies have been prescriptive. Indeed, when one of the rules of intrapreneurship is to “come to work each day willing to be fired” (Pinchot, 1985), it would seem that the perceived personal
rewards must be high. For intra/entrepreneurs, the literature supports a high need for achievement (NFA), risk-taking propensity, tolerance for ambiguity, initiative, assertiveness, extensive operating knowledge, and formal education (Davis, 1999). However, intrapreneurs must possess additional capabilities, such as navigating within corporate confines and extensive teaming ability, to be successful. In comparing attributes of traditional managers, entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs, Hisrich (1990) identified nine characteristics including motives, time orientation, risk tolerance, failure mechanisms, and family history among others. These character traits tend to be difficult to measure objectively. There are many examples of successful entrepreneurs originating from discouraged intrapreneurship opportunities inside larger firms (Pinchot 1985). The differences between new venture entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs are subtle, but may be based more on opportunity and resource availability than individual traits. In sum, while intrapreneurial activity has not received the same attention in the popular or academic literatures, we argue that such activity is vital to the state of any economy, and we need to know more about who intrapreneurs are, and why they behave in the manner that they do (given a certain context).

There are implications of this work for management education and future research. While not the primary focus of the paper, it is interesting to note that as business school educators we seem to have wholeheartedly embraced entrepreneurial education and teach such topics/courses as new venture creation at one end of the spectrum and traditional metric based management at the other, with very little, if any, time devoted to the role of intrapreneurs in organizations. There is much empirical evidence to support the view that organization performance is enhanced by intrapreneurial activity, particularly when the need for change is present. After nearly twenty-five years, intrapreneurship continues to be an important field that has been underserved by literature and methods that struggle to capture its interdisciplinary essence: the why and how of individuals taking risks and spawning innovations that lead to organizational results. To further develop the field, researchers are challenged to explore the range of insightful study methods discussed when exploring theories, and engage in a continuing dialogue on methodological issues.

Conclusion

This paper has used an examination of several intrapreneurship studies to illustrate the issues involved with research constructs and methodologies in this nascent subfield. Intrapreneurship, like its cousin entrepreneurship, is a multi-disciplinary phenomenon that operates at the intersection of organizational, strategic, innovation and individual study levels. Identifying entrepreneurial orientation, intrapreneurial presence, and linking such activity to overall firm performance is not an easy task for researchers. The field is still relatively young, and has been served by a variety of approaches including quantitative, qualitative case studies, and hybrid methods. Although longitudinal case studies can be illustrative, generalizability for future theory development remains a challenge. Researchers are encouraged to consider a variety of methodologies in intrapreneurship research, with the goal of advancing theory development and practical relevance in the field. Twenty-five years in, we still do not have an in-depth understanding of who intrapreneurs are (and the wide degree of variation in the answers to this question), how they work through organizational obstacles and find support, and what are the key success/failure factors for intrapreneurial ventures. In knowledge based economies, we posit that the intrapreneur has never been more valuable, and we argue for a commensurate level of research attention and appropriate methodological choices.
References


