



Literature Review on International Opportunities in IE and Beyond

**Some Major Decisions To Be Made and Actions Taken on the Way
from an Initial Idea to a Published Study**

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IE as a Research Field to Be Reviewed

- **Cross-disciplinary field**
 - combines international business and entrepreneurship
- **Widening thematic scope over the years**
 - From international new ventures to a wide variety of international entrepreneurial behaviors
- **Definition of IE**
 - “The discovery, enactment, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities - across national borders - to create future goods and services” (Oviatt and McDougall 2005, p. 540).
 - Opportunity-focus
 - Border-crossing nature
 - The concept of **international opportunity** holds a particular promise in developing the IE field further (Mainela et al., 2014)



Conducting a Concept-Focused Literature Review

– Major questions I have personally been wondering about

- How to decide about the scope and focus of a review?
 - Many enough but not too many
- How to make justice to the individual papers cited?
 - Exercising interpretation
- How to “package” the contribution of a review study?
 - To model or not to model

Mainela, Tuija, Puhakka, Vesa & Servais, Per (2014). The concept of international opportunity in international entrepreneurship: a review and a research agenda. International Journal of Management Reviews, 16(1), 105-129.



How to decide about the scope and focus of a review?

Table 3. Identified IE articles published on the period 1989–2012

Journal	Reviews/editorials	IE non IO	IO in IE	Total
Academy of Management Journal	1	2	1	4
Academy of Management Review			1	1
Entrepreneurship and Regional Development		3	1	4
Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	3	8	4	15
European Management Journal	1	5	4	10
Harvard Business Review			1	1
Industrial Marketing Management			1	1
International Business Review	3	11	12	26
International Marketing Review	2	1	7	10
International Small Business Journal		2		2
Journal of Business Venturing	6	10	6	22
Journal of International Business Studies	2	10	7	19
Journal of International Entrepreneurship	4	6	8	18
Journal of International Management	2	1	3	6
Journal of International Marketing	1	4	3	8
Journal of Management	1			1
Journal of Management Studies		1	2	3
Journal of Small Business Management		1	1	2
Journal of World Business	1	7	11	19
Long Range Planning			1	1
Management International Review	1	1	1	3
Organization Studies		1		1
Small Business Economics	3	6	3	12
Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal	1	1		2
Strategic Management Journal	1	2	1	4
	33	83	79	195

– Being comprehensive

- Scope of IE literature search
 - Keyword-based search vs. manual search
 - Wide coverage of outlets vs. top journals
 - From the start of the field vs. last decade(s)
 - McDougall 1989
- Relevant conceptual focus in IE
 - Seminal concepts vs. emerging concepts
 - Oviatt & McDougall 1994; Oviatt & McDougall 2005
 - Shane & Venkataraman 2000; Eckhart & Shane 2003
 - Schumpeter 1934, Kirzner 1973

– Narrowing down (to IO in IE)

- Ensuring belongingness to the IE field
 - Examining the conceptual bases
- Reading through the studies to record the concept use
 - Articles incorporating (appropriately and sufficiently) the core concept into their studies i.e., with meaning



How to make justice to the individual papers cited?

Table 1. Conceptualizations of opportunities

Conceptualization	Determining characteristics
Innovation opportunity	Creates disequilibrium in markets Is driven by motivation to entrepreneurial action Starts with economic invention by entrepreneur Manifests as novel resource combination
Arbitrage opportunity	Creates equilibrium in markets Is driven by entrepreneurs alert to market information Starts with noting of demand-supply inefficiencies Manifests as new markets
Opportunity discovery	Produces a complex entity Involves active search behavior Exploits rational decision making under risky conditions
Opportunity creation	Constructs a flexible activity Enactment in everyday entrepreneurial practice Develops through social interaction under true uncertainty



Understanding the purpose of the authors

- What are the studies all about (as a whole)?
 - Research objectives, theoretical frameworks, contributions

Classifying a study in terms of your conceptual framing

- Explicit definitions of the concept
- Theoretical discussion of the concept
- Empirical application of the concept

Being systematic in the analysis

- Going back and forth
- Having co-authors to discuss with

Achieving a plausible description of the state of knowledge

- Streams of research (capturing the specificities of IE research in relation to IO)
- Gaps in knowledge



Table 4. Analysis procedure

Phase	Task	Description
Mapping	Open coding	Studying the articles from inside; coding to categories emerging from the data
	Emic, data-driven codes	
	Etic, theory-led codes	Studying the articles from outside; coding to categories derived from the previous research
	Axial coding	Examination of interrelationships between the codes to find the unifying ideas of groups of research
Appraisal	Selective coding	Examination of the concepts within the groups to define approaches to opportunities in IE research
	Evaluation	Evaluation of the articles with respect to their validity and relevance to the study
	Extraction and collation	Collecting and ordering the key results of the articles
Synthesis	Grouping	Clustering together equivalent research
	Identification of research streams	Describing each stream by identification of common elements, concepts and results
	Narrative of each research stream on international opportunities	Making narrative account of the elements and contribution of each research stream



How to “package” the contribution of a review study?

- **Description of the state of the art**
 - Focusing on the findings of the previous research
 - Possibly addressing (and critiquing) theories and methods
- **Interesting/innovative classification of research**
 - Creating a typology of research on chosen dimensions
- **Conceptual model of the phenomenon under study**
 - Continuing from the state of the art
- **Research agenda**
 - Assessing the manner and extent with which IE research leverages in terms of uncovering some focal aspect
 - Suggesting how the future research could go for filling some important research gaps
 - series of research questions and strategies



Concluding Remarks

- There is quite an amount of research to be reviewed over the last 30 years
 - This creates particular possibilities for focused reviews
- IE is a very lively field that seems to have achieved established position within both IB and E
 - This opens up more opportunities for reviews relying on or targeting either of its root fields