

Rethinking Imitation Strategy

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Abstract

While a lack of attention and generally negative perception of imitation in both business academia and business practice has suppressed its use, we argue that imitation in a business context should be positively viewed as necessary and beneficial for various stakeholders. To provide new insight into imitation we synthesize substantive, theoretical, and practical perspectives to develop a new imitation strategy construct. In addition to establishing the boundary of the construct, we also identify key sub-domains within this boundary. Building upon the three perspectives and our new construct, we develop a new conceptual framework of imitation strategy's key antecedents and consequences and offer several exemplar research propositions that provide new insights to the realm of imitation. We expect that changing the current framing of imitation in the way we outline would not only benefit customers, imitators, and imitatees, but also improve social welfare and economic growth.

Keywords: *Imitation; Innovation; Conceptual Paper*

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