

JOURNAL OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT

CALL FOR PAPERS

Entrepreneurial competencies of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)

Special Issue of the Journal of General Management

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Small firms, especially new start-ups, can be very dynamic and entrepreneurial in their pursuit of local and international business opportunities. Some highly innovative small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) create new business opportunities by identifying and developing new product-markets. SMEs can make an important contribution to employment creation, skill development and economic growth particularly as impetus for business growth in stagnant economies. Despite its significance, the notion of entrepreneurial competencies of SMEs, in terms of competencies that could contribute both to superior firm performance and economic performance of specific industries, has largely been neglected in the relevant literature. This special issue seeks to advance research into the fields of general management and entrepreneurship especially how recent start-ups and small firms leverage technology in consumer or industrial markets.

As SMEs pursue and develop business opportunities, they are likely to enhance their capabilities and develop distinct or core competencies to achieve superior economic performance as well as survive competitive threats. In order to understand and capture competencies of SMEs, it is important to examine relevant constructs and address key drivers of entrepreneurship from different research streams. The field of general management can serve to integrate numerous sources of entrepreneurial competencies especially as past studies on SMEs tend to be specialised and fragmented. Scope exists for testing the existing entrepreneurship constructs and for developing new theory or frameworks from established business disciplines (Eng et al. 2015). This special issue attempts to draw on a wide base of management fields to provide a holistic and integrative view of how SMEs succeed and what policies support their sustainability.

At the firm level, prior research has shown the importance of identifying and developing a combination of organisational capabilities to enhance business performance particularly through marketing capabilities (Eng and Spickett-Jones 2009). By developing and nurturing firm specific resources and capabilities SMEs are able to expand and grow their business. A dynamic capability view of competitive advantage offers useful insight into strategic resource allocation (Teece et al. 1997), from which firms can derive entrepreneurial competencies. Consistent with a dynamic view, learning and networking especially in the context of interfirm relationship development have been linked to competence development and enhanced innovativeness (Eng 2009). At the same time, it is important for SMEs to match and/or create new market opportunities through knowledge and intelligence of their business environment. For instance, new start-ups may leverage digital technology to reduce the costs

of risk-taking or innovate through a new business model such as social enterprises (Liu et al., 2015) to exploit a supportive regulatory and financial environment.

Entrepreneurship as firm level behaviour in the corporate entrepreneurship literature promotes three attitudinal dimensions of an entrepreneurial firm's strategic orientation: innovativeness, risk-taking and proactiveness (Casson 1982; Covin and Lumpkin 2011). An entrepreneurial orientation refers to the processes, practices and decision-making activities that lead to a new entry while entrepreneurship is the essential act of new entry (Lumpkin and Dess 1996, p. 136). This conceptualisation of entrepreneurial orientation is linked to entrepreneurial competencies, in that entrepreneurial orientation is extensively researched and a significant predictor of firm performance (Rauch et al. 2009; George and Marino 2011). However, the three established attitudinal dimensions do not account for a firm's external conditions or other strategic firm specific resources such as leadership qualities and human capital issues. In addition, small Internet start-ups are capable of competing across industries and in international markets, and hence more research is needed to revisit competencies of SMEs. Of particular interest is the role and interplay of the above perspectives as a framework of entrepreneurial competencies of SMEs for general management. Thus, the construct of entrepreneurial competencies of SMEs remains to be examined and clarified.

This special issue invites research about SMEs and managerial issues concerning their competitiveness and sustainability. Papers for this special issue may address, for example, the following areas:

1. Measurement and operationalisation of entrepreneurial competencies based on robust construct conceptualisation and scientific techniques.
2. Theory development to integrate the key drivers for the development of entrepreneurial competencies in SMEs.
3. Data-driven entrepreneurship in terms of identifying new dimensions of entrepreneurial competency and developing new business models for SMEs.
4. Case studies about the development and challenges of entrepreneurial competencies especially for SMEs operating in mature, stagnant or volatile markets.
5. Policy research concerning a specific business initiative or government policy, and its impact on entrepreneurial competence development for SMEs.

The above is not an exhaustive list and papers examining novel and creative managerial issues of SMEs and their competencies will be considered. As a practitioner oriented journal, the guest editors invite empirical research through conventional research methods (field surveys, case study), big data and analytics, and emerging methodologies – as long as the choice of methods is not only appropriate for the research questions but also accessible to general managers.

Deadlines and Submission instructions:

To submit your manuscript, please follow the Journal of General Management author guidelines and keep the length of your manuscript no longer than 7,000 words, excluding references, tables and figures. Please email your manuscript to admin@braybrookepress.com or cwhooy@gmail.com (indicate in the subject for this special issue). All papers will undergo a double review process.

Please see guidelines for authors:

<http://www.braybrooke.co.uk/ForAuthors/Guidelinesforauthors/tabid/72/Default.aspx>

In addition to submitting directly to JGM via admin@braybrookepress.com (please indicate your submission for this special issue in the email subject heading), we will host a special issue session at the 11th Asian Academy of Management International Conference 2015, 2nd – 4th October 2015, Penang, Malaysia and invite suitable papers for presentation. Authors invited to the special issue session at the AAMC 2015 will be entitled to 20% discount for the conference registration fees.

Please feel free to contact us (guest editors) if you would like to discuss your ideas.

Deadline for submission of papers: 15th May 2015

Reports from referees sent to authors: 15th July 2015

Submission of revised papers: 15th August 2015*

*NB: This date corresponds to the AAMC 2015 conference deadlines. Authors may be granted a longer revision time period or choose to submit their papers directly to JGM rather than through conference attendance.

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