
Preface

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Biographical notes: John A. Parnell presently serves as the William Henry Belk Distinguished Professor in Management at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. He is the author of over 100 basic and applied research papers, published presentations, and cases in strategic management and related areas. He earned the BSBA, MBA, and MA (Adult Education) degrees from East Carolina University, the Ed.D. degree from Campbell University, and the PhD degree in Strategic Management from The University of Memphis. Dr. Parnell was the recipient of a Fulbright research award in Egypt in 1995 and has also lectured in a number of countries, including extensive recent involvement in China and Mexico.

This special issue of the *International Journal of Management and Decision Making* examines 'Perspectives on competitive strategies and performance'. The eight refereed papers included herein differ in their theoretical underpinnings, specific issues of emphasis, and survey designs. However, there are a number of noteworthy relationships among them as well.

Three of the papers are conceptual. Furrer, Krug, Sudharshan and Thomas propose a global strategy framework based on the resource based view (RBV) of the firm. Their work is comprehensive and opens a number of future research avenues. Jenkins proposes an RBV-based framework for competition in multi-product consumer markets. Jenkins supports this model with examples from the airline and automobile industries. Lester examines the relationship between a firm's strategy and its position in the organisational life cycle. Lester proposes that performance is a function of a fit between strategy, OLC, structure, and firm resources.

Five of the papers are empirical. Wolff and Pett's contribution synthesises several key issues. The authors surveyed only export-active SMEs and examined their competitive patterns within the RBV.

Two of the empirical papers focus on the nature of and emphasis on strategic planning. Both contributions support the role of strategic planning and examined manufacturing firms. However, O'Regan and Ghobadian's paper considered small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the UK, whereas Shrader, Chacko, Herrmann, and Mulford surveyed firms in the USA and did not limit the sample to SMEs.

There are also two empirical papers that examine the banking industry, although their samples and perspectives differ markedly. Okeahalam's paper is based in the structure-conduct-performance (SCP) perspective and examines banks in Southern

Africa. In contrast, Hatten, James, and Meyer adopted a strategic choice perspective and surveyed banks in the USA.

Collectively, these papers offer significant contributions to our knowledge of the competitive strategy-performance nexus. However, differences among the papers in both theoretical perspective and survey design highlight the need for additional research in this stream. It is hoped that this special issue not only advances the field but also serves to encourage further investigation.