
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Susanne Royer is a Professor for Strategic and International Management and a Director of the International Institute of Management at the University of Flensburg, Germany. She also is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Management, Faculty of Business of the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia. She received her PhD from the Faculty for Business Administration and Economics of the University of Paderborn, Germany. Her research interests include strategic alliances, changing forms of value net organisation, as well as strategic issues in e-business.

I am delighted to present this issue of the *International Journal of Globalisation and Small Business (IJGSB)*. The goal of *IJGSB* is to explore opportunities and threats of globalisation for small businesses as well as small businesses' strategic options in an increasingly global world. Further, the objectives of the journal are directed at establishing an effective channel of communication between policy makers, government agencies, academic and research institutions and persons concerned with the complex role of small business in society. The international dimension is emphasised in order to overcome cultural and national barriers and to meet the needs of accelerating technological and other changes in the global economy from the perspective of small businesses.

This issue consists of five interesting papers from the field of small business in the context of globalisation and a book review about a book on *Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises and the Global Economy* edited by Gerald I. Susman. The journal further offers a forum for practitioners as well as students to communicate current issues and findings. Therefore there is one rubric 'Insights from the Classroom' and another one delivering 'Insights from Practice'. With these contributions and the other selected papers, this issue of *IJGSB* once again provides a basis for further discussions of current problems of SMEs worldwide.

In the first paper Marion Festing shows implications for international Human Resource Management (HRM) research and practice caused by the globalisation of SMEs. Her paper gives a comprehensive overview of selected research results on international HRM in SMES thereby showing the state of the art of a field not well researched up to now. Specificities of SMEs are implicitly compared to Multi National Enterprises (MNEs) that are the classical focus of research on international HRM. It becomes obvious that SMEs are not just smaller versions of MNEs but that different

logics are inherent with regard to human resource development and related learning processes. With more and more smaller players acting in an international and global arena such an overview delivers valuable starting points for more investigation on this relevant topic. Next to the relevance of the SME founder's profile with regard to designing the process of internationalisation the paper discusses recruitment, selection and retention with special emphasis on international managers. Further, the core problem of SMEs in terms of limited resources is addressed and related to HRM. Building on this practical implications and avenues for future research are outlined.

Hans H. Bass and Robert Ernst-Siebert focus on SMEs in the German maritime industry with regard to innovation, internationalisation and employment. In their paper the authors report the results of an empirical study. They choose SMEs in the German maritime industry as their object of interest since SMEs in this sector show higher-than-average innovative activities. While the overall development of the maritime industry is showing decreasing employment, the identified innovations in SMEs in this industry lead to new employment. Bass and Ernst-Siebert see innovation and internationalisation often happening at the same time in this industry. Again the limited resources of SMEs are highlighted, here the focus especially lies on the lack of financial resources provided by externals. The authors identify this lack of access to financial resources as the main barrier to the realisation of innovative potential for SMEs and their capacity to create employment. The same factors, as well as difficult access to distribution channels, are seen as obstacles to internationalisation.

The following paper by Sara Thorgen has the title 'A glimpse of benefits of long-term relationships for innovation' and thus deals with innovation again; however, with a more general focus than the paper by Bass and Ernst-Siebert. Sara Thorgen investigates the often suggested facilitating role of interorganisational relationships for innovative performance. With the help of a qualitative study of SMEs she further investigates how and why some organisations bring in the same partners in different innovative processes. The results suggest that the use of existing relationships has certain relevant benefits for innovative performance which are the effective use of indirect links, better conditions for unspecified exchanges, the provision of a fast lane to essentialities via known values and firm characteristics and the improved dialogue and positive surprises, as well as elicited partner enthusiasm guided by altruism.

Susanne Royer and Uwe Stratmann posit the question whether independent entrepreneurs are an obsolete model in the European automotive repair and service markets. These markets are still characterised by many independent small repairers. However various indicators suggest that this classical entrepreneurial model is challenged. This paper describes these challenges and identifies three generic organisational models that are coexisting, that is the entrepreneurial, the partnership and the integrated model. Building on a resource-based thinking framework and additional thoughts from transaction cost economics the competitive potential of these different forms of value net organisation is analysed. Data for the analysis are obtained from a study conducted by the International Car Distribution Programme (ICDP) containing 200 interviews with independent repairers and further expert interviews with franchisors, part distributors, original equipment suppliers and fleet customers. The results indicate that entrepreneurs who are completely independent and not integrated in some sort of network will increasingly be those not surviving in the fierce competitive environment

due to the lack of relevant resources. However, entrepreneurial spirit is regarded as a valuable resource especially by private customers thus being the trigger for a variety of franchised systems that aim to combine the advantages of hierarchy and entrepreneurship.

SherRhonda Gibbs, Jennifer Sequeira and Mary M. White's paper is on 'Social networks and technology adoption in small business' and thus well related to the paper by Sara Thorgen. The authors in this paper address a gap in the literature by investigating the impact of social networks on technology adoption in small firms. By bringing together the work of others on this topic the authors provide a valuable basis for future research in this relevant area. The conceptual model they develop achieves an integration of key adoption attributes (i.e. organisational readiness, compatibility, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and top management support) with social network concepts (i.e. extra-firm networks, network density and network type) in order to determine their relationship with technology adoption.

Following are the Insights from the Classroom for this issue. As outlined before IJGSB aims to serve as a forum for the results from the classroom. In this case some results of a distance learning project between the University of Lodz, Poland, the Radboud University of Nijmegen (The Netherlands) and the University of Flensburg (Germany) held in summer 2006 are reported. This distance learning project dealt with different aspects of the cooperation, competition and innovation of small firms. The aim of this course was the production of papers in teams consisting of Polish, Dutch and German students. The participants cooperated via video conferences and worked together on an e-platform. One of the students papers was selected for publication in this issue of IJGSB thus giving future practitioners with a special interest in SMEs the possibility to give insights into their understanding of globalisation and small business. Joanna Kujawa, Anke Sadowski, Katrin Scheffler and Ali Yusuf in their contribution investigate culture and networks in the 3-CIP network – located between the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland. In their paper, they identify and analyse challenging factors for such cross-border cooperation.

In the newly introduced rubric 'Insights from practice' John Whiteman posits the question if dealer protection in the European car market is good for customers. To give answers to this interesting and relevant question he starts by a description of how cars are sold in the European Union highlighting that while the car manufacturing sector is already highly consolidated the distribution side still is very fragmented. These insights provide further background information in the context of the topic of the paper by Royer and Stratmann outlined previously. While there are no SMEs in the area of car production there are smaller entities often cooperating in franchised organisations in the area of selling cars. The market structure on this side of the market is analysed by John Whiteman. It becomes obvious that such a market analysis is not a simple matter since "defects in competition may take some time to identify and remedy and consumers may suffer in the meantime. Hence some degree of dealer protection can be seen as a sort of safety valve".

The final pages of this issue contain a book review of an interesting book from the field. Tade Peters reviews the book *Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises and the Global Economy* edited by Gerald I. Susman (Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., Cheltenham and Northampton, 2007).

Hopefully you will enjoy this issue of the *IJGSB*. We would be grateful not only for interesting papers submitted to the journal in future, but we also welcome helpful comments and suggestions concerning our journal, for example, with regard to relevant topics for future Special Issues. Thanks to the reviewers for their efforts with regard to this issue of *IJGSB*.