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## Editorial

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### Fernando A.F. Ferreira

School of Management and Technology,  
Polytechnic Institute of Santarém,  
Complexo Andaluz, Apartado 295,  
2001-904 Santarém, Portugal

and

Fogelman College of Business and Economics,  
University of Memphis,  
Memphis, TN 38152-3120, USA  
E-mail: fernando.ferreira@esg.ipsantarem.pt  
E-mail: fernando.ferreira@memphis.edu

### Carla S.E. Marques

Department of Economics, Sociology and Management,  
University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro,  
Avenida Almeida Lucena, 1,  
5000-660 Vila Real, Portugal  
E-mail: smarques@utad.pt

**Biographical notes:** Fernando A.F. Ferreira is an Adjunct Professor and Vice-President of the Scientific Council at the School of Management and Technology of the Polytechnic Institute of Santarém, Portugal, and Adjunct Research Professor at the University of Memphis, TN, USA. He holds a PhD in Quantitative Methods Applied to Economics and Management (2008) from the Faculty of Economics of the University of Algarve, Portugal. In 2009, he was granted with a *Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation* fellowship for Post-Doctoral studies at the Fogelman College of Business and Economics of the University of Memphis. He is Associate Editor of the *Journal of Information and Operations Management* (JIOM), and Editorial Board Member of the *International Journal of Innovation and Learning* (IJIL), *International Journal of Intercultural Information Management* (IJIIM), *International Journal of Information and Operations Management Education* (IJIOME) and *International Journal of Learning and Change* (IJLC). His main research interests are banking and multiple criteria decision analysis.

Carla S.E. Marques is an Assistant Professor of Management at the Department of Economics, Sociology and Management, University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD), Vila Real, Portugal. In her PhD in Management Science (UTAD, 2005), she evaluated Portuguese industrial firms' innovation strategies. She is the Coordinator of the 'Innovation, Markets and Organisation' research group at UTAD's Centre for Transdisciplinary Development Studies (CETRAD). Her research on innovation and entrepreneurship has been presented at numerous international conferences and published in international journals such as *Service Business*, *Journal of Business Research*, *International Journal of Management and Enterprise Development*, *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal* and *Management Research*. She is

a regular reviewer for the *Ibero-American Academy of Management (IAM)*, *USASBE Meeting*, *European Journal of Innovation Management* and *International Journal of Management and Information Technology*. Her research interests include innovation, management of change and entrepreneurship.

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Presently, it is widely known that innovation, in broad terms, is a possible solution to the difficulties brought about by the global, complex and hostile economy we live in. It is important to note, however, that the search for possible solutions for business growth (e.g., innovative strategies, models and tools) is not without its own difficulties. Nonetheless, in a highly competitive and globalised business environment, firms cannot generate sustainable growth without innovating. If building and consolidating competitiveness is a strategic aim, then innovation (technological and non-technological) and corporate entrepreneurship are strategic imperatives for companies in global, complex and hostile economies.

In this special issue of *International Journal of Business Competition and Growth*, we aim to explore the conception of business models and competition tools that might assist us in supporting decisions and overcoming growth hindrances. We are confident that the studies offered contribute to better understand and discuss these issues.

The first contribution is entitled 'Factors of competitiveness in the Spanish hotel industry', by Pérez-Bustamante, Álvarez Castaño and González-Busto, and reviews the strategic factors for competitive hotel management. An empirical analysis on a sample of 288 Spanish hotels is carried out, and the results contribute to a better understanding of the role played by tangible and intangible resources for hotels. According to the authors, intangible assets were found to play a more strategic role than tangible assets, and human resources are also a key component of a hotel's competitiveness, regardless of its strategy.

The second paper, 'China and Japan's turbulent affair: why must it continue?' by Grainger, is focused on the impact of the relationship between China and Japan on the development of the global community in the 21st century. The study presents six factors perceived to be critical for reinforcing growth between China and Japan, and, as stated by the author, the outcomes will primarily evolve from growing trust and leadership, and include governments and nationals putting behind them their past and working together to create future opportunities in business, including solving problems in energy access and resource development.

The third paper, 'Multilocal research strategies of SMEs: choices of governance', by Marcone, aims to verify if, inside small entrepreneurial multinationals, corporate entrepreneurship promotes the development of the firm's knowledge-based capital, and if it encourages the extension (diversification) of technological trajectories of the various international units. To accomplish this objective, the author tests her hypotheses using multi-source data from a sample of 85 Italian SMEs belonging to the sectors of mechanics and electronics, and operating in dynamic international business markets. Her findings provide new challenges for theoretical treatments of small and medium enterprises, practitioners and policy-makers.

The fourth contribution is entitled ‘Design and competitiveness in a Portuguese SME in the footwear industry: a case study’, by Monteiro Barata and Batista, and provides an overview of recent developments in the Portuguese footwear industry based on a case study approach. The authors conclude that production and operations management are used not only as means of cost optimisation but also as specific drivers of differentiation, particularly in achieving above-average reputation in the business of subcontracting. Also according to the authors, this conduct has been supported by continued investment in design ‘people’ with a view to ‘innovation by design’ – either in their own products or in customer service (subcontracting).

Our fifth paper, ‘The Rasch model applied to the attitudes towards change and innovation in commercial enterprises in the Canary Islands: a comparison with other sectors’, by Febles and Acosta, assesses the attitudes of Canary Island enterprises towards innovation through a comparison among sectors. In doing so, the authors explore degrees of innovation according to prevailing attitudes, not only analysing the importance placed on it, but also evaluating its disruptive or incremental nature. On the basis of an application of the Rasch Model, the authors observe a generalised rejection of innovation that involves creating and developing new products, services or new markets vs. incremental innovation. The authors also underline significant differences in progressive innovation, particularly in the organisational aspects of the processes.

On the basis of these studies, we can suggest directions for future research:

- *at microlevel*: analyse how corporate entrepreneurship promotes the development of companies’ knowledge-based capital, and propose a new corporate entrepreneurship model; study non-technological innovation (e.g., design, organisational and marketing), and its impact on performance and competitiveness of companies in different sectors and countries
- *at macrolevel*: analyse the impact of innovation (technological vs. non-technological) on regional/national development (e.g., creation of qualified employment), by sectors, in complex and hostiles economies.

We are grateful to the IJBCG Editors for this opportunity and we are confident that you will appreciate the reading of these papers.