
Editorial

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The international macro-economic scenario has changed tremendously over the last 30 years. As far as developed countries are concerned, the service sector currently accounts for over 70% of the overall gross domestic product. Moreover, the importance of services has also been growing for developing countries, in which this sector accounts for more than half of the economic activity to date.

The concept of 'service' embraces a number of industries, such as: hotels and tourism; professional and business services; government; utilities; information; real estate. Many of these industries have been the subject of increasing, although not conclusive, research attention over the years. This is why we proposed to the *International Journal of Globalisation and Small Business* a special issue aimed at exploring the peculiarities and challenges of service firms in the globalised economy. Our goal was to collect a number of valuable papers which analyse the various aspects of the service firms' governance and management.

In response to the call, we received 19 full abstracts, developed by 45 different authors. Of these, 17 author teams were invited to submit full papers, seven full papers were received and, following the double-blind review process, six were selected for inclusion in this special issue.

Topics cover corporate governance, service innovation, internationalisation and diversification. The following is a brief overview of each of the selected papers.

Pechlaner and Volgger examine the linkages between the governance of tourism service firms and the governance of destination management organisations. Using a qualitative case study focused on the tourist destination of Seis am Schlern/Siusi allo Sciliar in the autonomous province of Bolzano-South Tyrol, these authors identify weak ties between the corporate governance of service firms and the corporate governance of destination management organisations and between the corporate governance of service firms and their formal power as destination actors. The specific form of destination governance – a collaborative one characterised by voluntarism with destination management organisations acting under the legal form of associations and very democratic decision making – is considered by Pechlaner and Volgger to be responsible for the depicted weak interactions between service firms and destination management organisations.

Silvestrelli analyses the synergies between tourism and cultural heritage. In particular, she shows that heritage preservation can lead to tourism innovation by generating new forms of hospitality. An emblematic example of how the requalification of a cultural asset can contribute to tourism innovation is the *albergo diffuso*, a typical ‘made in Italy’ form of hospitality.

By focusing on soft-service firms and specifically on the container port industry, Parola, Satta, Persico and Di Bella investigate the antecedents of service firms’ entry choice. In particular, these authors study all the foreign entry choices assumed by container-port MNEs in the time period 2002–2010. The results confirm the mainstream theories and emphasise the explanatory role of some internal determinants (full control entry mode is preferred in the case of, for example, the availability of remarkable financial and managerial resources, and the relevance of market knowledge), also partially confirming the relevance of external antecedents in affecting FDI options (full control entry mode is preferred, for example, in the case of great home country size). Moreover, cross-cultural factors appear as noticeable determinants of internationalising strategies.

Calza, Profumo and Tutore explore the mutual influence existing between corporate ownership structure and firms’ environmental performance in order to identify those types of shareholders able to stimulate firms’ green performance. By focusing on the European energy industry and analysing 28 firms, their results show that firms with more diffuse ownership present the worst environmental performance, while greater stakes held by institutional investors or by the state do not seem to be related to firms’ green performance.

Delbufalo, Appolloni and Cerruti analyse the determinants of performance in Italian management consulting firms. Interestingly, their results show a positive relationship between service diversification and performance, a curvilinear relationship between geographic diversification and performance, and a negative and highly significant relationship between the leverage ratio and performance of management consulting firms.

Differently from the other papers of this special issue, the paper by Abatecola, Caputo, Mari and Poggesi is a theoretical work that discusses how the literature on real estate management has been evolving over time. By adopting a systematic literature review method, these authors analyse the evolution of that particular bundle of operations mainly known as corporate real estate management and focus on some real estate management issues (e.g., project management) that have received only minor attention in past surveys.