Preface

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Biographical notes: Amjad Hadjikhani is a Professor of Marketing at the Department of Business Studies, Uppsala University. His research interests cover different fields of industrial, consumer and international marketing. He has published several books and articles in a large number of scientific journals. In addition to the membership of editorial boards of a number of international journals he has also acted as special guest editor for several international scientific journals.

A common and interesting connection in the articles in this issue is the organisation and environmental change and firms' different strategy to grow and develop their businesses. Interestingly, the themes have occupied the attention of researcher in decades. The pioneer researcher, Penrose (1959), in her study of organisation growth, perceives managing the organisational and environmental changes as crucial holding in inbuilt behaviour for the survival. In her contribution she divides the organisation into two groups, those who will take care of bureaucratic procedure and those who are to change the organisation for development of new vision and market expectation. The view was later developed by the study of Thompson (1967) when studying inter- and intra-organisational strategic actions of the firms to challenge the change and growth. The author connects the issue of change and growth to the complexity and dynamism. In this sense, as also followed by the authors in this issue, firms periodically need to change their market strategy in response to issues such as increasing internal efficiency to generate new opportunities, technological developments and socio-political or market crises (see also Sarin et al., 2012). For decades, researchers have recognised the critical importance of these changes for the reason of complexity and dynamism. The dynamism, smooth or critical change, is accompanied with critical perceptions of the firms' internal or/and external change. As the papers in this issue disclose, organisational and environmental change occurs at high rate in modern businesses. While organisational change can be a strategic purposeful action for being ahead of others enforced for increasing internal efficiency and adaptation towards changing environment, it can also be enforced by environmental change requiring change in the firms' organisation and market strategy. In both conditions the dynamism in the change requires complex behaviour. In line with the thoughts of the authors in this issue, authors such as Matthews et al. (2011) expose the complexity and radical changes in the environment impose the firms for active strategic change in their organisations. As some papers will also disclose, sometimes the decisions for change are maladaptive, driving the firms for alternative courses far from the desired expectation and outcomes. Specifically in these days decisions and actions in the firms do not follow smooth and rational paths. The decisions are based on expectation assisted by prevalent knowledge. But, as some authors in this issue explore, issues are often unclear and ill-defined with conflicts of interests, and single decisions are rarely made in isolation but rather as a complex flow of problems and solutions. Further, the knowledge supports the smooth changes in the expectation for inter- and intra-organisational amend cannot sustain the managerial needs for radical changes. However, firms must manage these complexities in the changes to overcome strategies for their growth.

The theme of change and growth is treated in these papers in various and heterogeneous ways. One dominant theoretical view is relationship network and clustering. The concept employed by the majority is the knowledge. The empirical phenomenon that has captured the attention for strategy towards growth and change is different. While some refer to intra-organisational behaviour like entrepreneurship or merging and acquisition as a strategic challenge for the growth of the firms, others study the change from an environmental perspective when the changes are moving from smooth to crises. The empirical evidence in these contributions covers countries in Asia, Europe and the USA. Some contributors elaborate thoughts on the process of change and its impact on the strategic growth of the firm, whereas others discuss purely the firms' management behaviour for increasing efficiency needed for growth and survival. Interestingly, the different authors employ different kinds of methodology. Some employ case studies to go deeper and find analytical views not explained by available theories; others develop hypotheses and employ statistical measures to test the ideas. In the following a general outline is developed to give an idea about the papers and how each paper is attached to the matter of change and growth: in other words, how each specific contribution of the authors is vital for the firms' growth.

First paper concerns foreign market investment in the internationalisation process model. Strategic management for growth in this model is constructed on the assumption of firms' experiential knowledge. The assumption of the model, as the authors explain, is that firms know that they do not know about the environmental changes and seek for knowledge to maintain stable change in their investments. The paper is based on the view that firms do not know that they do not know how the environment will change. It raises the simple question: if international firms can really gather knowledge about the future, why then are they always faced with critical problems? Unlike the view of studies on the internationalisation process that firms 'know what they do not know', this paper is concerned with the unknown. It discusses the idea that firms in their foreign market relationships do not know that they do not know; therefore their commitment always faces crises when the environmental change is drastic. With this theoretical assumption, the paper presents one case study. The process of internationalisation of a Swedish firm in different foreign markets is analysed and new theoretical views are developed.

Second paper, in line with first paper, concerns relationship view but refers to the economic aspect. The paper examines the Thai exporters and USA's importer relationship perceptions. An interesting issue in this paper is the contribution of the authors for how the firms have managed the new changing environment, i.e., the globalisation of the firms. Further, the authors claim for methodological implication for studying the new world of business. The paper describes the data collection process for an e-mail based survey to analyse Thai exporters' perceptions of US importers. The study tests the transaction cost analysis (TCA) framework, a salient subject in this industry, through a modified questionnaire previously administered on US-based exporters using regular mail. However, the correlations between the TCA variables justify the popularity of continued usage of the TCA framework in relational exchanges. The paper concludes by offering theoretical explanations behind the low response rate and provides suggestions for improvements.

Third paper explicitly refers to the network view to explain the change and the forces behind brands. Similar to the first paper, this study concerns the critical issues that affect the firms' behaviour. The authors claim that brands and brand loyalty are crucial for the growth or decline of the firms. In this concern they explain that social networks are increasingly becoming a dynamic force in firm or brand reputation management. Managing social networks is, however, not without cost and thus it is reasonable to assume that larger companies would have better defined strategies for social network reputation management than smaller ones. The research in this paper explores this assumption by presenting the results of the social network activities of 144 companies taken from the two major world stock markets representing North America (NYSE) and the London Exchange (FTSE). Results support the notion that larger companies are slightly more responsive to the change, but smaller firms seem to respond more quickly to the changes. The authors suggest that Intimacy-Loyalty influenced and these relationships could hold up better under periods of brand disruptions.

Assessing the intra-organisational behaviour, the fourth paper concerns the interesting aspect of efficiency in the firms' transportation. Transportation costs are frequently cited as an important determinant of trade costs. The literature has hitherto paid little attention to the endogenous nexus between transportation costs and trade. In this paper, the impact of transportation costs on trade is re-examined by incorporating alternative determinants of transportation costs and trade in a gravity model of bilateral trade in nine Asian countries. The authors find that technology and cultural factors tend to stimulate bilateral trade between member countries. These findings are robust to different measures, econometric methods and period coverage.

In last paper, authors perceive the need for growth as a challenge for the firms' managers. Similar to the statement of Penrose (1959), the study concerns entrepreneurship as fundamental for the survival and growth of the firms. For the analytical frame, the view employed is network and clustering. The paper measures challenges related to the business of entrepreneurs in the micro-enterprise sector. The authors review academic literature and primary data collection and analysis of entrepreneurs in three empirical fields of leather shoes, *Petha* sweet and silver ornaments clusters in Western Uttar Pradesh, India. For their contribution to the growth of entrepreneurs, the data analysis validates and advocates focused efforts to improve the present status of firms in the micro-enterprise sector.

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