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## **Editorial**

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In March 2013, the Interdisciplinary European Conference on Entrepreneurship Research (IECER) was coordinated the first time by Kerstin Wagner (HTW Chur, Switzerland) and Frank Lasch (Montpellier Business School, France) with the support of the local organisers from Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Brescia, Italy. This 11th edition of the IECER marked the transition from the founders of the conference, Michael Dowling (University of Regensburg) and Jürgen Schmude (Ludwig-Maximilians Universität München, Germany), to the two new academic coordinators Kerstin Wagner and Frank Lasch. In ten years, Michael Dowling and Jürgen Schmude have established the conference as one of the leading conferences on interdisciplinary entrepreneurship research in Europe, providing researchers from a variety of disciplines the opportunity discuss their latest research advancements. Conceived as a high quality forum of entrepreneurship debate, the conference is held every year between February and March selecting on average 45 research papers (<http://www.iecer.eu> and <http://www.iecer.fr>). Hosted in Regensburg, IECER has also travelled to different locations across Europe (Amsterdam, Montpellier, Lisbon, Munich, Chur) in the past years.

In 2007, *IJESB* granted the first special issue to the annual IECER. Today, seven IECER special issues have been published by the journal, thus becoming a major publication outlet for research presented at the conference. This special issue stems from the 2013 IECER conference in Brescia, Italy, which attracted more than 50 entrepreneurship scholars from Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Switzerland and the UK.

Research presented at the conference explored the overall theme 'Entrepreneurial challenges in the 21st century: current research and future avenues'. Keynote speaker was Roy Thurik from Erasmus University Rotterdam and Montpellier Business School addressing the issue 'Behaviour and bio-markers: In search of the entrepreneurial gene'. The best paper awards went to the papers entitled 'Explaining new firm creation in Europe: a multi-level analysis based upon data of individuals, regions and countries' by

Christian Hundt and Rolf Sternberg as well as 'Families as active monitors of firm performance' by David Audretsch, Marcel Hülsbeck and Erik Lehmann.

This issue presents a selection of papers presented at the conference which we summarise briefly in the following. The first four papers deal with firm development or opportunity exploitation using the firm as the unit of analysis.

The first paper ('Limited in-house resources and the use of official foreign trade promotion by small businesses' by Hauser and Werner) explores entrepreneurial internationalisation and the particular role of foreign trade promotion schemes in Germany. Adopting a resource-based view, participation patterns of enterprises in foreign trade promotion schemes are analysed. The sample includes 615 German enterprises across all sectors. Controlling for firm size, the results reveal that: small businesses use foreign trade promotion programmes to a lesser extent than large firms; and that the lack of specialised in-house resources of small firms hamper the effective use of foreign trade support measures.

Paradoxically, public promotion schemes are designed to counter-balance such small firm specific resource gaps. The findings present important implications for entrepreneurship support policy targeted to facilitate firms going international.

The two following papers put the emphasis on innovation:

- 1 to understand the effect of R&D and licencing strategies of new venture growth ('Do R&D and licencing strategies influence start-ups' growth?' by Pereira, Leitão and Devezas)
- 2 to explore the role of management innovation for firm performance ('Exploring the link between technical and management innovation: the moderating effects of firm size and type of innovation' by Le Roy, Robert and Giuliani).

Pereira et al. use a sample of 818 high-tech and medium high-tech and find positive effects of R&D intensity and in-licensing on start-ups growth. Their study contribute to revealing the role played by patent transactions, namely in-licensing and out-licensing activities which can influence firm growth, especially when considering small and young start-ups.

Le Roy et al. examine if technical product/process innovation and management innovation produce complementary effects on firm performance. Using a sample of 20,542 French firms, they find that technical innovation is positively linked to management innovation. Controlling for firm size, they show that the link between technical and management innovation is stronger for small firms.

The fourth paper explores new venturing in a perspective of value creation and its exploitation to define modern and performing business models ('Sources of entrepreneurial value creation: a business model approach' by Gurău, Lasch and Dana). Various sources of entrepreneurial value creation are analysed and value-related processes discussed. Using primary data from 34 successful start-ups, the paper adopts a critical view of the existing models to identify and describe three major sources of value creation (innovative, relational and circumstantial entrepreneurship). Root processes which support their exploitation are described (innovation, marketing, market research and market reactivity).

The last two papers use the individual as unit of analysis and focus on: entrepreneurial behaviour (corporate entrepreneurship); and reasons for the choice of the entry mode into entrepreneurship (self-employment).

The fifth paper of the issue focuses on entrepreneurship as a career choice and analyses personality driven decisions to explain entrepreneurial entry in form of self-employment ('Non-cognitive skills, occupational choices, and entrepreneurship: an empirical analysis of entrepreneurs' career choices' by Sorgner). The sample contains 46,489 observations of which ten percent refer to self-employed individuals in Germany. The paper finds that entrepreneurial personalities are more likely to be attracted by Holland's occupations (artistic, investigative, enterprising, and social), and less likely by realistic and conventional occupations.

The last paper looks at entrepreneurial behaviour in firms and focuses on employees ('Measuring corporate entrepreneurship culture' by Bau and Wagner). Using data on 301 Swiss employees from a Swiss health insurance company, the authors develop and assess a new index measuring organisational, culture-related and market-related factors that influence the employees' abilities to intrapreneurial behaviour. Based on factor analysis, they identify four key factors (leadership quality and effectiveness; cooperation, information and innovation; product and market knowledge; tasks and responsibility). The paper contributes to the literature with a new tool to measure employee perception. From a practical perspective, this new index provides insight for a better understanding of corporate entrepreneurship culture to be taken into account when designing effective interventions.

The special issue concludes with a book review of L-P. Dana (2014) 'Asian Models of Entrepreneurship from the Indian Ocean and Nepal to the Japanese Archipelago', Second edition, World Scientific Publishing. Reviewed by Vanessa Ratten, Associate Professor (Entrepreneurship and Innovation), La Trobe University.

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