
Editorial

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This special issue of the *IJODE* aims to present reflections from research findings to foster our understanding of the implications of organisational design in early-stage venture development in very small enterprises (VSEs), small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and even in larger organisations. This collection of articles explores from various conceptual angles and empirical perspectives (venture growth, entrepreneurial transformation, and competitive advantage), how entrepreneurial ventures address organisational design and development issues from having to balance their need for external knowledge and support with internal action coordination (Foss et al., 2014). This tension may represent a genuine challenge for entrepreneurial ventures as they do not readily possess abundant resources, competences and organisational capabilities. These may drive them away from successfully striking the appropriate balance in meeting organisational design and while maintaining entrepreneurial development objectives.

Research about organisational design issues is becoming increasingly relevant to VSEs and SMEs entrepreneurial ventures. It is well-known that, from the time of their inception, VSEs rely extensively on various types of support from both formal (e.g.,

business support providers, incubators, etc.) and informal networks to complement their internal capabilities and supply missing competences and capabilities. Yet, little research has been conducted on the role organisational design plays at these early stages, where the entrepreneurial team must negotiate, for instance, trade-offs between entrepreneurial actions, aimed at developing new products and services, and administrative actions, more oriented toward day-to-day management tasks. At different scales, perhaps, are these organisational design trade-offs similar or different for VSEs, SMEs, and even within larger organisations, for those related to resolving tensions between external entrepreneurial supports versus internal activity coordination? Is organisational design in an entrepreneurial context a search for a fixed outcome or an evolving activity set as the venture develops? What interorganisational design dependency and coordination issues may need to be balanced for VSEs, SMEs and larger ventures, and within business ecosystems, at the early design and development stages? These are only some of the questions that are being raised and examined in the five contributions found in this special issue.

The first article by Christophe Schmitt, Julien Husson and Didier Nobile is looking conceptually and methodologically at the role of design in entrepreneurial thinking. The article attempts to bridge the gap between the current practice in entrepreneurship and what it ought to be required to integrate a design approach into entrepreneurship research. The readers get a glimpse as to the underlying antecedents as to why the role of design has thus far been widely neglected in entrepreneurship research and practice, and how it could be otherwise, and what it brings to the table. The central argument is that entrepreneurial development should move away from the rationalisation of the entrepreneurial actions using predetermined scenarios (e.g., market studies, financing and business plans), to a design thinking process which would aim to strengthen the entrepreneurial scenario more interactively with stakeholders. The design process envisioned is supported by entrepreneurial cognitions (e.g., Sarasvathy, 2003), as a useful element to translate a vision that integrates both internal and external representations of the entrepreneurial project. The proposal is thought-provoking as it requires a way of conducting research which is challenging to current practice in entrepreneurship research, hence to include cognitive aspects, and to place researchers as actors in the process with the use of novel qualitative and quantitative methodological frameworks.

The second article by Zam-Zam Abdirahman and Loïc Sauvée is looking at the role of management systems as non-technological innovations and of their impacts on organisational designs in VSEs and SMEs. The authors provide an overview of non-technological innovation typologies and of their relevance for organisational design content and process, two topics not typically examined in conjunction. Indeed, younger ventures may experience challenges in the form of ‘cognitive gaps’ (McAdams and McClelland, 2002) which make it difficult for VSEs and the SMEs to identify the cognitive resources required among the available resource pool to address complex management problems and issues. As such, non-technological management system designs may help substitute for these ‘cognitive gaps’ by providing the capability required to tackle organisational changes needed in these types of context. Implications are drawn from three managerial perspectives of importance to VSEs and SMEs at the early stages of the entrepreneurial project definition:

- 1 the role of external agents (e.g., consultants) involved in the area of management skill development and implementation

- 2 the appropriate balance to strike between external and internal needs regarding non-technological innovations
- 3 the precise roles of managing director(s) when it comes to management system innovations.

While the first two contributions to the special issue delineated some conceptual boundaries to our understanding of the notions to entrepreneurial development in regards to the organisational design, the next three articles offer insightful empirical contributions using qualitative approaches in the conduct of case study research.

In the third article, Céline Bérard and Séverine Saleilles examine the problem of growing sustainable entrepreneurial ventures by combining the distinguishing features of the 'idealistic Davids' and 'greening Goliaths', as introduced by Hockerts and Wüstenhagen (2010): into 'high-growth Davids' that would combine both sets of features. The readers will explore two key findings. On the one hand, the venture examined grew a skilled staff to take on the challenge to develop into a hybrid of the features of both Davids and Goliaths, and on the other hand, it became a learning organisation by engaging into both exploration and exploitation (March, 1991). These entrepreneurial design developments within a high-growth context are more easily said than done as reported from the detailed case study analysis, given sustainable organisational design characteristics require resolving key tensions between, as Parrish (2010) puts it: 'perpetual reasoning' and 'exploitative reasoning'.

The intricacy of intrapreneurship with organisational design within larger R&D telecommunication organisations is the topic of the fourth article by Jacques Brook. This article draws from the findings of two case studies and brings to the surface a number of interesting learning points for both researchers and managers alike; which suggests there is a gap between theory and practice regarding the organisational design of industrial R&D. In particular, for an entrepreneurial transformation to be successful in delivering a value system, a number of conditions must be met. While it appears that an ambidextrous structure is more appropriate to meet intrapreneurship objectives, it should be supported by lateral processes to integrate exploration and exploitation activities across the organisation. In addition, these lateral processes ought to be aligned not only at the executive, hence, strategic levels which have proven insufficient, but the alignment is also required at the tactical and operational levels.

The special issue closes with the fifth article by Joëlle Ensminger which provides a design science approach to examining entrepreneurship within an ecosystem as a source of competitive advantage. The epistemological position taken to examine this case study is one rooted within the 'science of the artificial' paradigm (Avenier, 2010), thus suggesting a novel outlook in the study of organisational design in entrepreneurship, based on a participant observation approach of a case in the development of an intelligent road and network communication system. The business modelling process is considered the artefact that is central to the exploration of a new entrepreneurial ecosystem viewed as a new organisational design. The key strategic issue related to the organisational design concerns the trusting collaborative innovation, that is, the capability of ventures within a business ecosystem to renew their business model to ensure a competitive advantage.

Collectively, the contributions from the various authors in this special issue highlight the importance of deepening our understanding of organisational design in general

(Greenwood and Miller, 2010), and also specifically in entrepreneurial development, across a broad set of organisations and topics of interest to scholars in the field of entrepreneurship, to entrepreneurial teams in entrepreneurial ventures, or to management consultants and institutional members in business support provider organisations. Not directly examined within this special issue, and left as possible follow up research are the roles of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial teams: as designers (Sarasvathy, 2003), as followers of an entrepreneurial method (Sarasvathy and Venkataraman, 2011) and as problem finders and solvers (Nickerson et al., 2012). This special issue is also useful to illustrate the potential of a new strand for fruitful research that considers the importance of organisational design in entrepreneurial development for both theory formulation and practice.

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