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## **Editorial**

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### **Hans Ruediger Kaufmann**

University of Applied Management Studies,  
200 Neckarauer Street, 68163 Mannheim, Germany  
Email: Hans-Ruediger.Kaufmann@hdwm.org

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The papers selected for this special issue were presented at the 7th EuroMed Academy of Business Conference organised by the University of Agder/Norway and underwent, thereafter, a further peer review for inclusion. At this stage, I would like to thank all authors and reviewers for making this guest edition possible. The continuously amended papers inform both, current theory streams, located in the contextual scope of the journal, as well as practitioners' strategic and operational decision making on global trendsetting developments in turbulent and crisis environments. The 'managerial/entrepreneurial toolset' to master these new developments illustrated in this guest edition relate to: approaches to successfully embrace higher levels of complexity; new competences and values required from international managers and entrepreneurs related, for example, to sustainability and trust; the pivotal role of education in imparting developing and imparting these new competences and values; the necessity to rely on and utilise the resources and interplay of various stakeholders to commonly combat crisis; successfully incorporating online developments and tools into corporate, especially marketing strategies.

As desired solutions to the current multifaceted challenges are very complex and affected by a multilayered interaction of macro political, economic or social factors, meso-organisational/B2B clusters or micro-individual levels, the chosen papers include multidisciplinary perspectives leading to innovative solutions, research methodologies and strategies to maintain or improve levels of global competitiveness. In this context, the paper by Basile, Scozzese and Ferri regards the firm as a complex adaptive system requiring management to develop different behaviours in a turbulent environment to achieve survival through the creation and/or maintenance of relationships with numerous and heterogeneous stakeholders. The paper answers its following main research questions: can complexity theory fill the gaps of other theories when dealing with the dynamism of organisations/brand in turbulent environments? Does learning about organisations and networks as adaptive systems help scholars and managers in their processes as decision-makers?

Against this backdrop, especially, but not only economies in crisis, cannot afford any longer to forgo or lose entrepreneurial resources. In this regard, Sultan's paper explains the nature and dynamics of women entrepreneurship in the Arab conflict region of Palestine having combined quantitative and qualitative research methods. The author focuses on small enterprises mainly engaged in consumer oriented business activities. The paper elicits constraints for female entrepreneurs related to culture, a lack of support services and access to finance. The paper can serve as an informative basis for political decision makers to eliminate still existing barriers for women entrepreneurs in Palestine.

Furthermore, the often vulnerable small and medium sized enterprises are recommended to apply more analytic and strategic approaches in this dynamic competitive situation characterised by high levels of uncertainty. Addressing this topic, Broccardo, Giacosa, Culasso and Ferraris' research, based on a mixed criterion and applying a survey method, resulted in a differentiated use of budgets as to the respective corporate governance of family firms and non-family firms in the Italian setting. The study concludes that both categories of companies adopt the budget in their management control process and still perceive it a fundamental tool but with different levels of importance. Whilst in non-family firms the use of budgets seems to be on an advanced level, in family firms it still is in an early stage. In addition to budgets, the authors suggest further useful strategies to the firms.

In this context of change, universities carry the lion share of responsibility to develop leaders and entrepreneurs who are equipped with newly required competences. Göhlich and Bremser's exploratory qualitative paper contributes to close the gap as to culturally effective leadership qualities by researching on how school systems influence leadership styles and management preferences of German managers working in a French environment and vice versa. The paper focuses on the effect of teaching differentiated values and cultural meta cognition in the respective countries' school systems.

The following paper by Pucci implies that universities, especially in crisis situations, might be suggested to turn to a more applied science rather than pure science approach. Pucci, based on the entrepreneurial university paradigm assesses the determinants and strengths of entrepreneurial orientation in academia, in particular regarding the life sciences teaching staff of the Italian University of Siena. Based on logistic regression modelling, the author investigated the relationship between scientific productivity and level of engagement with industry. The paper concludes that engagement with industry decreases with increasing scientific reputation.

Values relating to sustainability and trust as well as concerted networking and partnering strategies crystallise as 'anchors' in this turbulent global 'sea' of change leading to increasing popularity of the term co-creation. Shams and Lombardi's paper contribute to the contemporary understanding of interrelations and interdependence among the stakeholders from sports-tourism, destination marketing and socio-economic development in the setting of Tasmania. The authors illustrate how relationship marketing steers the mutual value of cooperating stakeholders alongside their interdependence and multifarious socio-economic goals, towards a win-win outcome and socio-economic value co-creation for all associated stakeholders.

Value co-creation by a number of stakeholders is also the underlying theme of Homlong and Springler's paper. Homlong and Springler contend to differentiate economic approaches as to less developed economies by factors such as space, time and the specific structural and institutional settings of regions and nations. The authors investigate the potential of tourism for regional development by integrating heterodox economic models with critical economic geography approaches. They critically reflect on the effects of the promotion of the tourism sector in Cambodia on social and economic development. The paper concludes to enhance the effect of tourism by promoting education and the development of specific skills.

Focusing in this context on cooperation in industrial clusters, Krivorotov, Kalina, Belyaeva and Erypalov call to apply new innovative methodologies and frameworks to better understand sustainability concepts. The authors developed an integrative optimisation model on raising competitiveness levels of industrial clusters by a

sustainable innovation approach applying matrix resource modelling and select and prioritise strategic actions.

In a similar vein, Cantele, Vernizzi and Ricciardi present an innovative and recently established form of Italian inter firm-networking based on the Italian 'contratto di rete' (business-network contract) by a comparative study method having conducted interviews in three best cases. The authors discuss the conditions under which the network contract can be leveraged to improve the ability to raise the level of global competitiveness with the participating firms re-defining their roles and identity. Success factors common to the cases, such as reciprocal trust are provided.

In terms of value co-creation, Benmiled-Cherif, Kaufmann and Manarioti focus on the corporate/brand – consumer nexus. Co-creation being an emerging dynamic concept in the academic stream of consumer-brand relationship suggests an active and integrative role of the consumer in the brand building process. The focus of the study is on brand communities in social networks such as Facebook. Derived from an extended study of the brand Axe in a transnational context (France and Tunisia), the authors, by applying a netnography approach, propose a new typology of co-creation. For further research, the authors suggest to validate a model relating brand love with major long term co-creation.

In the same context, the conceptual paper of Bilro and Loureiro synthesises the main constructs discussed by a systematic literature review proposes a framework for online brand management. Trust is positioned as the most important asset in managing brands online. The findings imply a relationship between trust, perceived risk, brand name and consumer purchase intentions.

Furthermore, relating to the required dedication to online related strategies, Schinzel's paper investigates the relationship between national cultural identity and e-recruitment services of public and private companies in Luxembourg. She conducted a case study applying a mixed method approach. The paper concludes that, although new technologies and tools become available, HR managers are still reluctant to use e-recruitment and provides online recruitment inhibitors.

Focusing on integrating online trends into higher education marketing strategies, El Nemar and Vrontis, in their conceptual paper, develop an initial framework comprising the factors that influence students when choosing a university in Lebanon. The authors were guided in this still exploratory research phase by Kotler and Fox's (1995) model on the student decision-making process and Hossler et al.'s (1999) combination model differentiating segmentations of influential factor that lead students to make a decision on university selection. The authors synthesise the models and suggest testing two dimensions: university marketing programs and social media factors.

I sincerely hope that this special issue is both, enjoyable and useful for the readers and informs both theory and practice.

## References

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