

Resilience and competitiveness of SMEs

Welcome to issue 27 (2), January 2019, which is a special issue on “Resilience and competitiveness of SMEs”. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in the economy and society, not just because of their ability to innovate and the fact that their performance affects a large degree of the country’s economic growth, industrial output, export and GDP but also because of the large number of people they employ and the jobs created that reduce poverty, which leads to social stability and economic development (Boateng and Abdulrahman, 2013; Singh *et al.*, 2008; Aziz and Mahmood, 2011; Ahmad and Xavier, 2012; Muller *et al.*, 2016; Badulescu, 2010; Cunningham, 2011; Watson, 2011; Neumark *et al.*, 2011; Wu and Chua, 2012).

In spite of the vital role played by SMEs in social–economic development of both developed and developing countries, scholars, such as Levy (1993), Mead and Liedholm (1998); Berger and Udell, 2002), point out that SMEs are also beset with problems which impede their growth. According to Conz *et al.* (2017), SMEs face new challenges in their mission to be successful in an increasingly complex operating environment, within which they encounter unpredictable events at the economic, social and institutional levels, testing SMEs’ capacity to respond to these to the firm’s advantage (Conz *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, there is a growing mandate to create SMEs which have the capacity to survive, adapt and even grow in the face of turbulent change and an unpredictable environment, and this is where resilience as a concept becomes critical (Ates and Bititci, 2011; Sheffi, 2005, 2006).

There are a number of important drivers and determinants in the evolution towards resilient, sustainable enterprises, ranging from SMEs’ organisational behaviour and characteristics (Moore and Manring, 2009) to factors such as changing market trends, changing technologies and emerging new management and organisational techniques (Gunasekaran *et al.*, 2011). Similarly, there are a number of different major areas of strategy development adopted by SMEs aiming to improve their competitive position in domestic and global markets (Singh *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, this special issue brings together research on the determinants of resilience and competitiveness of SMEs, focussing on both internal and external factors that may affect SMEs’ sustainability and growth.

The first article by Mahfuzur Rahman and John Mendy is a good place to begin this special issue, as the authors evaluate people-related resilience and non-resilience barriers of SMEs’ internationalisation from a developing country’s perspective. The authors combine resilience and non-resilience factors in a model to evaluate their contribution, especially in the under explored area of non-resilience from a developing-country-contextual perspective that seeks to encourage international entrepreneurship. The results reveal that both resilience- and non-resilience-related barriers are significant to SMEs’ internationalisation and therefore international entrepreneurship.

In the next article, Naznin Tabassum, Sujana Shafique, Anastasia Konstantopoulou and Ahmad Arslan provide a framework with the antecedents of women managers’ resilience in SMEs. In addition to the framework, the authors highlight a number of practical implications leading to a resilience toolkit for HR managers of organisations aiming to



I would like to thank the authors for choosing IJOA to disseminate their work. I would also like to express my gratitude to the reviewers and the members of the editorial team for their help and support with producing this issue.

develop and promote resilience in their women managers and aspiring managers. Then Tony Wall and Lawrence Bellamy explore the owner–manager resources for resilience in his article.

In the article that follows, Pedro Pablo Cardoso Castro analysed the potential of the Viable System Model compared to conventional management tools as a framework to guide organisational adaptive response and resilience in times of instability and change in complex environments. Then, in their article Ioannis Rizomyliotis, Anastasia Konstantopoulou, Kleopatra Konstantoulaki and Raghad Badahdah focus on ways of improving SMEs' competitiveness, with the use of Instagram influencer advertising and electronic word of mouth.

Finally, the last two articles of the special issue look at different determinants of SMEs' business success and the strategy-formation process. Robert Kozielski is looking at the determinants of SMEs' success, based on a comparative analysis between SMEs and large companies, and provides insights into the ability of SMEs to cope with competitors on the increasingly competitive market and their ability to build long-term success. Then, Lawrence Bellamy, Nii Amoo, Kieran Mervyn and Jacqueline Hiddlestone-Mumford evaluate the use of the tools and techniques of strategy and strategic analysis within SMEs as part of the strategy formation process to positively influence success, when measured by growth.

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