SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMICS:
AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP JOURNAL

CALLFORPAPERS

“AMBIDEXTROUS ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEMS:
ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENSITY AND KNOWLEDGE
MANAGEMENT VIEWS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR
THEORY AND PRACTICE”

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Research Purpose

Although there has been intense debate on how to define entrepreneurship, many authors concur with Stevenson, Roberts, and Grousbeck (1989) that entrepreneurship may vary in terms of extent and the number of times it occurs. Morris and Sexton (1998) refer to the varying levels of entrepreneurship as Entrepreneurial Intensity (EI). They view EI as a function of the frequency and degree of entrepreneurship. Frequency of entrepreneurship is usually connected to the number of times a firm acts entrepreneurially, while the degree of entrepreneurship could be assessed by dimensions like innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness. The EI, therefore, refers to the variable nature of entrepreneurship within an established enterprise and organizational context. Although management scholars considered EI in a firm context, entrepreneurship can indeed take place both in various global entrepreneurial ecosystems and in different organizational environments, which are likely to range from growing independent multinationals to academic organisations (Acs et al., 2014; Adnerand Kapoor, 2010; Audretsch and Thurik, 2004). Within these different environments, the definition of Stevenson, Roberts, and Grousbeck (1989) enforces, since the required process and inputs are similar, even if the outputs change. Although authors when dealing with EI use to distinguish between corporate and academic entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship, the similarities between these contexts are generally greater than the differences (Del Giudice et al., 2013; Leiden and Link, 2015). Even though entrepreneurship and innovation are inherently unpredictable, chaotic and creating ambiguity, the entrepreneurial intensity can nevertheless be managed.

As a matter of fact entrepreneurial intensity reflects the number of innovations introduced by the firm, the number of new production processes it started, or the number of new markets which it entered. Particularly, the ability to act entrepreneurially appeared in management studies as connected to organizational ambidexterity. Organization theory scholars refer broadly to organizational ambidexterity as an organization’s ability to pursue two competing objectives at the same time, such as manufacturing efficiency and flexibility (Adler et al., 1999) or differentiation and low-cost strategic positioning (Porter, 1996). March’s (1991) article is frequently cited as the catalyst for the current interest in the concept. March proposes that exploitation and exploration are two fundamentally different learning activities between which firms divide their attention and resources. There is, therefore, an emerging consensus to frame organizational ambidexterity in terms of the competing demands for exploration and exploitation (Gupta et al., 2006; Raisch and Birkinshaw, 2008): where exploration involves
“experimentation with new alternatives” with returns that are “uncertain, and distant,” and exploitation is the “refinement and extension of existing competencies, technologies and paradigms” with returns that are “proximate and predictable” (March, 1991: 85). Thus, the general agreement in this literature is that an ambidextrous firm is one that is capable of both exploiting existing competencies as well as exploring new opportunities with equal dexterity (Carayannis and Rakhmatullin, 2014; Lubatkin et al., 2006; Tsai and Li, 2007), and also that achieving ambidexterity enables a firm to enhance its performance and competitiveness (Cao et al., 2009). However, organizational ambidexterity capability may enhance a firm’s performance in the long run only if it achieves incremental and radical innovation. The former refers to relatively minor adaptations of existing products and business concepts, whereas the latter represents fundamental changes leading to a switch from existing products or concepts to completely new ones (Dewar and Dutton, 1986). Incremental innovations are designed to meet the needs of existing customers or markets, while radical innovations are designed to meet the needs of emerging customers or markets (Benner and Tushman 2003; Danneels, 2002). Therefore, ambidextrous organizations excel at exploiting existing competencies to enable incremental innovation and at exploring new opportunities to foster radical innovation (Andriopoulos and Lewis, 2009). Overall, ambidexterity has been shown to be an important factor for enhancing overall firm performance (Junni, Sarala, Taras, & Tarba, 2013). While investigation on antecedents of organizational ambidexterity is increasing, the argument regarding whether and under what circumstances organizational ambidexterity improves organizational performance still remains inadequately developed (Junni et al., 2013). Moreover, the antecedent circumstances and justifications provided in existing research on ambidexterity have been discussed autonomously with little theoretical cross-fertilization, and scant effort exists in synthesizing the prior literature (Junni, Sarala, Tarba, Liu, and Cooper, 2015). In addition, there are still many underexplored factors especially at the individual level in the realm of the ambidexterity, especially in the context of the young entrepreneurial ventures.

An infrequent introduction of a new process, product, or service combined with a low exposure to risk exemplifies the traditional organization which is engaged in entrepreneurial behaviour of low intensity. Anyway, global ecosystems request organizations to engage in entrepreneurial activities of high intensity by introducing many new processes, products, or services which can appear as extremely innovative, even risky, thus showing their proactive behaviour (Hansen et al., 2005). Management scholars have widely described firms that melt knowledge-driven practices with organizational ambidexterity. Such firms are termed
revolutionary and they need a strong balance between knowledge management orientation and organizational ambidexterity, in order to support their entrepreneurial intensity (Hansen et al., 1999; Gibson and Birkinshaw, 2004).

Based on the discussion thus far, the aim of the present special issue is primarily to discover which effects knowledge management and organizational ambidexterity may have on entrepreneurial intensity. We expect research studies to contain documented applications. The special issue aims at collecting both theoretical and empirical research papers. Research methodologies must be consistent with highest standards and may include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches. Contributions should span across different approaches/levels of analysis and offer a broad international viewpoint on these issues. We welcome research articles that bridge the gaps in between theoretical conceptions and practical propositions, through the implications of theories on business practices, as well as through practice-based theorisation. We invite contributions, based on innovative studies that span theoretical boundaries and disciplines to develop new insights on implications and relationships between entrepreneurial conditions in global ecosystems and interactions in diverse industries and different market settings, in order to develop insights on the emerging perspectives of entrepreneurship. Such studies might be relevant, but not limited to:

- Entrepreneurial intensity, knowledge management and innovation ambidexterity
- Traditional vs. value based financial measures of entrepreneurial intensity;
- Entrepreneurial intensity and value creation;
- Entrepreneurial opportunities through knowledge transfer;
- Knowledge sharing and entrepreneurial intensity;
- MIS, entrepreneurial intentions and fast growing firms;
- Entrepreneurism in Global and local ecosystems;
- Knowledge transfer and value creation within global ecosystems;
- Evaluation of firm performance and entrepreneurial intensity in knowledge intensive markets;
- Knowledge management initiatives for ambidextrous contexts;
- Relationships between intellectual capital, organizational ambidexterity and entrepreneurial intensity

The focus of the manuscripts should be on cutting-edge theoretical developments and phenomena in the best practices.
Guidelines for authors

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. Please kindly read the author guidelines on the journal homepage before submitting your manuscript, to ensure it is consistent with the journal style (http://www.springer.com/business+%26+management/business+for+professionals/journal/11187).

- Submission to the special issue should be sent electronically (by email) to all Guest Editors before 30th September 2016.
- All papers should follow the publisher's submission policies for style and format. Papers will undergo at least a double blind, developmental review as per the standard review process followed by Small Business Economics: An Entrepreneurship Journal.
- Final acceptance of approved papers will be contingent on incorporating reviewers’ feedback to the satisfaction of the Guest Editors.
- For all additional information, contact Prof. Manlio Del Giudice at m.delgiudice@unilink.it and Prof. Elias G. Carayannis at caraye@gwu.edu.

Important dates

- Manuscript submission deadline: 30th September 2016
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References


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