

Editorial: Business evolution across organisational types and sectors in the Euro-Mediterranean Region

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Marco Frey
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About this special issue

Amidst an incessantly changing business environment, characterised by the constant shape-shifting of all macro- and micro-environmental forces, organisations in the Euro-Mediterranean region are struggling to evolve in a manner that befits their individual and collective contextual developments. While this strategic aspiration has traditionally been associated with business, it is now increasingly being adopted across an array of organisational types, including government departments, public utilities and universities. Much like industry practice itself, scholarly research has inescapably turned its attention to both these phenomena and significant works are ceaselessly being published in an effort to descriptively comprehend and/or prescriptively adapt organisations to the new business reality. In this vein, a multi-perspective outlook is called upon to view the matter in terms of varied managerial functions, but also in relation to different organisational types.

This special issue of the *Sinergie Italian Journal of Management*, entitled '*Business Evolution Across Organisational Types and Sectors in the Euro-Mediterranean Region*' presents six papers collectively providing a comprehensive glimpse into the subject and individually offering valuable scientific insights and managerial implications towards comprehension, further research and practical implementation. The papers have been carefully selected among hundreds of others that were presented at the 8th Annual Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business on "*Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Value Chain in a Dynamic Environment*" (Verona, Italy, September 16th-18th, 2015) and have been included in this special issue following significant development and three rounds of blind reviews. These works constitute a positive mix of business research and geographic area foci and have also been selected to ensure high scholarly standards and represent the spectrum of the schools of thought and institutions devoted to these foci.

A preview to the papers

The first paper, by Karipidis P., Tselempis D., Karypidou I. and Aggelopoulos S., entitled "*Market-Driven or Policy-Directed Quality Certification?*" focuses on the question of balance between the impact of market factors and policy factors that accelerate certification, such that a divergence between the supply and demand of certified food is avoided.

Through the development of a value co-creation framework and a discrete choice model, the acceleration of certification is analysed and the model is empirically investigated with quantitative data collected from 231 Greek certified farm businesses. The findings include the identification of five market and policy factors that accelerate certification; the conclusion is that policy factors outperform market factors without unbalancing the development of the certified food subsector and confirms that the role of private standards is shifting from public to private food-sector governance.

The second paper, by Bresciani S., Del Giudice M. and Papa A. (*“Public Control and Strategic Governance in State-Owned Public Utilities: Empirical Evidence from Italian Listed Firms”*) investigates the governance of public utilities whereby top management engages conflicting pressures between the business model and social functions. Through an empirical evaluation of thirteen public utilities listed on the Italian stock exchange they make interesting predictions based on the level of ownership concentration and dominance exercised by the government within the company and find that corporate governance and board composition may represent proxies of the level of public management discretion in the decision-making process.

The third paper, by Belyaeva Z. and Bentsion V. (*“Business Evolution in the Lens of Universities’ Sustainable Impact: Russian Lessons in BRICS”*), analyzes the heterogeneity of the intended social impacts of BRICS universities in terms of regional business evolution in the context of recent business trends in education and their newly evolved roles of sustainable mentoring and bringing socially responsible graduates to the world market. By applying causal and exploratory research to a stratified sample of ten BRICS internationally ranked universities, the paper analyzes textual sources of internal and external communication of university social responsibility (USR) in accordance with a specifically predefined coding system. The study ultimately guides managers towards globalized knowledge management in the context of strategic sustainable development.

Shuv-Ami A. authored the fourth paper (*“A New Scale of Brand Lovemarks”*), which provides a new Lovemarks scale that predicts consumers’ behavioral outcomes and bridges over some of the inconsistencies of the measurement of “brand love” and “brand respect”. The research is based on three studies that respectively apply Exploratory Factor Analysis using Principal Component exploratory factor analysis, second-order confirmatory factor analysis with a maximum likelihood fitting function of the two-component solution, and measurement of the nomological validity of the Lovemarks scale that was assessed by testing its relations with four other relevant scales. The paper establishes the reliability and validity of the scale in four different and diverse product categories and finds the scale to have strong positive correlations with attitude, preference, price premium and recommendation. The findings offer valuable marketing tactical direction to brand management and particularly with regards to marketing communications and pricing.

The fifth paper, authored by Festa G., Rossi M., Cuomo M.T. and Metallo G. (*“Capital Budgeting for ITSM - Modelization, Classification and Disclosure in the Structural Capital Perspective”*) proposes and analyses a

modelization, classification, and disclosure framework for Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) investments intended as components of the structural capital. The paper carries out a conceptual construction that emerges from the traditional taxonomy of capital budgeting, which is oriented to IT investments in general and focused on ITSM investments in particular within the context of structural capital. The findings show that to appreciate ITSM investments value, blended methods (quantitative as well as qualitative) are the most correct option, above all in order to better disclose to stakeholders their real value as fundamental components of the structural capital.

The sixth – and final paper, authored by Gabryelczyk R., Kulesza P. and Rakowska E. (*“Improving Public Sector Performance by Using Business Process Modelling and Measurement: a Case Study Analysis”*) demonstrates the use of business process modelling and measurement as basic Business Process Management techniques to improve Enterprise Resource Planning systems and existing processes in public sector institutions. Based on a case study of a Polish public sector institution the process has been modelled in an ‘as-is’ and ‘to-be’ state, i.e. before and after the organisational change and implementation of an ERP system. The study found that the measurement of cost, time, quality and throughput capacity of a process demonstrates specific corresponding improvements that effect an increase in the efficiency of public sector institutions. The study also finds that business process modelling and measurement are techniques that are useful specifically in the design and implementation of IT systems, but also in the wider design and improvement of public organisations.

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Concluding remarks

The developments in business knowledge and practice that have taken place over the past few years have increasingly expanded the realm of business management to gradually and steadily (albeit not without resistance) engulf an array of organisational types and sectors - including public institutions, educational establishments and, naturally, mainstream businesses. It is our aim and hope that this focused assortment of scientific works on *‘Business Evolution Across Organisational Types and Sectors in the Euro-Mediterranean Region’* reflects this evolution in management philosophy, attitude and practice and that it shall indeed provide paradigms for international consideration, development and application for scholars and practitioners alike.

Academic or professional position and contacts

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