From Knowledge-Driven Creation to Society-Driven Innovation: Some Glimpses on Organizational Ambidexterity, Open Innovation and Value Creation

Innovation lies at the heart of value creation, growth and competitiveness, and receives accrued attention in times of economic turbulence and slowdown. Organizations currently face increasingly dynamic environments and challenging conditions, which leave them exposed to higher levels of complexity and uncertainty. Thus, the ability of organizations to reinvent themselves and to reposition their offerings is critical for their survival. Permanently nurturing this ability to innovate is an essential role for managers and innovation leaders. In this issue we embrace different facets of this ability, and consider it at multiple levels: individual, organizational and inter-organizational. The two Letters featured in this Issue also reflect this multiplicity of levels needed to comprehend, and support the innovation process. In the first Letter of this Issue, Molina contends that value creation from science can be achieved through the astute combination of "knowledge driven creation" and "society driven innovation". He further argues of the need for scientific research to address key challenges facing humanity, and to unleash its transformative power on society. This message echoes with the philosophy of this Journal, as connecting academic research with pragmatic reality is embedded in its DNA.

The inter-organizational collective level is debated in the first Letter from Standardization published in the Journal of Innovation Management. Standards' role on the innovation process is still largely debated as they have been simultaneously reported to act as catalysts for innovation activities and to prevent and hamper the development of novelties by constraining and restricting creativity and original thinking. Zelm illustrates the usefulness of engaging into a standardization process at the early phases of a research project. The concomitant action between research and standardization is depicted as having positive effects on interoperability, on avoidance of misconceptions and misunderstanding, and on the diffusion of novelties.

Defining the individual skills and competencies to mobilize in the innovation process, as well as characterizing organizational capabilities to astutely configure, combine and reconfigure resources in view of developing novelties remain topical managerial challenges. Organizational ambidexterity, a central concept in organizational theory gaining increasing popularity in technology and innovation management, is conceptually debated and empirically investigated in this Issue. In their conceptual paper, Hafkesbrink and Schroll discuss the individual competencies, as well as the organizational antecedents and competencies needed to achieve simultaneously exploration and exploitation in the specific context of open innovation processes. Their contribution further elaborates a framework to understand the educational needs of industry to engage into the open innovation journey, thus providing food for thought for educational bodies and policy makers alike.

Suzuki's empirical contribution explores the interplay between the exploration-exploitation dilemma, problemistic search, deliberate learning and speciation. Organizational ambidexterity is modeled as a continuous variable, and is derived from factual and objective information, in contrast to mainstream research operationalizing the construct using several items for which managers' perceptions are collected. Furthermore, Suzuki's analysis enables time lag effects to be captured in a fast-moving business environment, thereby addressing typical limitations of cross sectional studies. The scholar concludes that firms may boost their degree of organizational ambidexterity by resolving, rather than circumventing, the typical

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dichotomy between exploration and exploitation.

The contribution by Hieltjes and Hieltjes present a case study on the implementation of open innovation in the consumer electronics industry. Inbound open innovation activities are crystallized in this paper through the reliance on three ecosystems - knowledge, experience and legislation/certification – which interact with the stage-gate development of novelties. The influence of standardization is also unveiled in this paper, thus resonating with the standardization letter and departing from the view that innovation and standardization are oxymoron.

Tüten et al. explore other key components of the economy: SMEs. In their empirical paper, the scholars reveal the role of entrepreneurial team characteristics, mainly age heterogeneity and average education, on organizational innovativeness of SMEs. Furthermore, the scholars uncover potential substitute effects between average education and networking.

The final paper of this Issue by Nicola et al. proposes a model for decomposing and assessing value customers, adopting a multi-polar perspective of the concept of value network analysis. The model is applied in the footwear industry, where it shows its usefulness for supporting the managerial decision-making process. In doing so, the scholars exemplify how academic research can contribute to frame, shape and support the innovation process in businesses, thereby connecting new knowledge creation to societal needs and challenges.

Wishing the Readers an enjoyable innovation journey,

Innovatively yours,

João José Pinto Ferreira, Anne-Laure Mention, Marko Torkkeli
Editors