



Editorial to the special issue “Structured Literature Reviews in Entrepreneurship Research-Taking Stock and Setting the Agenda”

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship as a phenomenon has changed a lot over the last years. At the same time entrepreneurship as an interdisciplinary research field has seen strong growth and gained importance in management as a discipline. The special issue “Structured Literature Reviews in Entrepreneurship Research-Taking Stock and Setting the Agenda” takes stock of what has been achieved in selected areas of entrepreneurship research. This editorial summarizes the content of the seven articles that are included in the special issue.

Keywords Entrepreneurship · Hidden Champions · Family firms · Literature reviews

JEL Classifications L20 · L26

1 Introduction

Entrepreneurship research is an evolving and highly dynamic research field. As a result, new phenomena emerge regularly and our understanding of different topics in entrepreneurship deepens continuously. In such an environment, it is necessary to take regularly stock of what has been achieved and to suggest areas for future research. This Special Issue (SI) of *Management Review Quarterly* aims to add to this discussion by providing rigorous and structured literature reviews (Clark et al. 2021; Denyer and Tranfield 2009; Fisch and Block 2018) in different areas of entrepreneurship research. Our focus for this SI is to provide timely, interesting

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and relevant research areas in entrepreneurship, which open the discussion for future research and provide the basis for further developing this research area.

Before summarizing the articles chosen for publication in this SI, we would like to thank all authors that responded to our call for papers. During the 24th Annual Interdisciplinary Conference on Entrepreneurship, Innovation and SMEs (G-Forum) organized by the Förderkreis Gründungs-Forschung e.V. (FGF), the SI editors held a paper development workshop and provided feedback on early drafts or first paper versions. Even though it was not a requirement to attend the workshop to submit to this SI, the opportunity to receive early feedback was well received.

In addition, we would like to thank the reviewers of this SI. To review the submitted manuscripts, we identified influential researchers in the particular areas and established review panels for each paper. The final outcome is a special issue that contains seven articles spanning a wide range of entrepreneurship areas and phenomena.

2 The articles in the special issue

The articles included in this SI investigate very recent and timely topics and phenomena such as entrepreneurship in the COVID-19 pandemic and crowdfunding but also established topics such as entrepreneurship education and corporate entrepreneurship. In addition, the SI includes studies about established entrepreneurial firms such as Hidden Champions and family firms. All articles chosen for this SI provide a structured literature review. They identify prior research in the specific research field, categorize it according to frameworks and provide clear future research suggestions. Now that the overall motivation for this SI has been outlined, we present how each article contributes to our understanding of entrepreneurship research.

Investigating the influence of crisis on entrepreneurial activity, Kuckertz and Brändle (2022) focus in their study “Creative reconstruction: a structured literature review on the early empirical research on the COVID-19 crisis and entrepreneurship” on the particular influence of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors synthesize the empirical findings from this early time of the pandemic in a thematic literature review. They structure their review along three identified perspectives: uncertainty, resilience and entrepreneurial opportunity. Whereas prior research has focused mainly on one of those perspectives, the authors summarize that all three perspectives should be considered in combination. They conclude that the destruction caused by this major exogenous event should lead to creative reconstruction where entrepreneurship is an essential part of the solution. The authors propose that future research should not only differentiate between different types of events but also consider the pre-crisis situation of different types of entrepreneurs to get a better understanding of entrepreneurs’ resilience in crises and how their responses differ depending on the type of disruptive event.

The study by Neuhaus et al. (2022) “Million dollar personality: a systematic literature review on personality in crowdfunding” analyzes the results of prior quantitative

studies investigating the relationship between personality factors and crowdfunding success and identify the current knowledge gaps in this research. Whereas a positive effect of the entrepreneurs' openness and crowdfunding success could be identified, narcissism shows an inverted u-shaped relationship. The effects of other personality traits on crowdfunding success are rather inconclusive. As a result, the authors propose that more research is required examining a non-linear relationship between expressed personality traits and crowdfunding success and a plurality of personality perspectives should be used to strengthen our current knowledge.

Barth and Muehlfeld's (2022) study "Thinking out of the box—by thinking in other boxes: a systematic review of interventions in early entrepreneurship vs. STEM education research" focuses on the research area of (early) entrepreneurship education. More specifically, they investigate the results of prior research on effective interventions to foster entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a crucial element of early entrepreneurial education. As research in this area is scarce, the authors go beyond an analysis of the studies in this area and review the related but more developed literature of research on self-efficacy-oriented interventions in early STEM education. A comparison of both literatures enables the authors to derive implications for future research on entrepreneurial self-efficacy-oriented interventions in early entrepreneurship education.

Göcke et al.'s (2022) "The legitimacy of corporate entrepreneurship: a structured literature review" provides a multidimensional framework synthesizing the state-of-the-art of resource allocation and withdrawal in the context of corporate entrepreneurship (CE) and identifies underlying strategies for gaining legitimacy. To structure their systematic literature review, they apply the concept of (internal) legitimacy. The authors conclude that legitimacy is an important explanatory factor of success and failure of CE. More specifically, CE entities, which undertake legitimation efforts, receive active and passive support increasing their survivability. Based on their findings, the authors identify avenues for future research that could further enhance the current understanding of legitimacy, resource deployment and withdrawal and ultimately the survival of CE units.

Successful entrepreneurial ventures that strengthen their market position over the years might evolve into Hidden Champions. These companies are typically market leaders in niche markets with a low public visibility (Simon 2009; Johann et al., 2021). Still, they can have a strong impact on regional development (Benz et al., 2021). However, a comprehensive review of the increasing Hidden Champions literature is missing. Schenkenhofer's (2022) study "Hidden Champions: a review of the literature & future research avenues" closes this research gap by investigating 112 publications on Hidden Champions. Using a conceptual and theory-based review, the author derives the factors that explain the characteristics and behavior of Hidden Champions and identifies the main research streams. Furthermore, he classifies research on Hidden Champions into the adjacent and superordinate research areas of Mittelstand and family firms. The author points out that even though low brand awareness is one of the main characteristics of Hidden Champions, no measure

to quantify this aspect is available. Therefore, he develops a composite index that measures low brand awareness using digital visibility of Hidden Champions through online media metrics. The study closes by suggesting future research focusing on succession planning and the ‘hiddenness’ of Hidden Champions.

Focusing more specifically on family firms, Heider et al. (2022) develop in their integrative literature review “The Role of family firm specific resources in innovation: an integrative literature review”, a conceptual model investigating the role of family firm specific resources for innovation. Based on this model, the authors explain the core mechanisms of innovation in family firms, in particular with regard to the puzzling finding of prior research that lower investments in innovation may lead to similar innovation output in family firms (Block et al., 2022). The authors conclude that differences in innovation between family firms and non-family firms, but also among family firms, can be explained with their heterogeneity resulting from their unique resource bundles. Hence, future research needs to consider this heterogeneity as a critical factor to explain innovation input and innovation output in family firms.

Finally, the study of Amato et al. (2022) “Contextualizing employment outcomes in family business research: current findings and future research avenues” investigates the empirical evidence on context in family firms employment outcomes. The authors apply a two-by-two framework to classify, analyze and interpret how context has been recognized in prior research on family firm employment outcomes. These outcomes comprise firm creation and growth, destruction of jobs as well as the quality of employment. Based on their systematic review, the authors conclude that most research so far is on the firm level in one context and future research should develop a context-contingent theory to approach this topic. In addition, the authors argue that the effect of family firms on employment outcomes on an aggregate level is required.

While the articles in our SI cover a wide range of streams within entrepreneurship research and related disciplines, they motivate us to move forward and dig deeper into entrepreneurship phenomena. We hope that the articles in the SI lead to more interesting and relevant entrepreneurship research.

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Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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