



Journal of World Business

A Special Issue on

“Strategic Agility in Emerging and Transitional Markets”

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Overview

Current concepts such as sustained competitive advantage and strategic planning have been deemed vague, tautological, and inadequate for companies to cope with the rapid rate and increasing complexity of environmental and market changes. To cope with growing strategic discontinuities and disruptions, scholars have highlighted the relevance and proliferation of strategically agile companies; such firms develop new ways for managing business transformation and renewal, developing learning and knowledge transfer skills, founded on an adaptive corporate culture. While the literature on strategic agility has been growing, there are virtually no studies that address strategic agility in the dynamic context of emerging and transitional markets, where arguably strategic agility is of even greater importance than in developed markets, given the more fluid nature of institutional supports.

Strategic agility has emerged as a vibrant research stream and the concept has also received attention in the practitioner community (Doz and Kosonen, 2008a; Doz and Kosonen, 2008b; Weber and Tarba, 2014). Strategic agility, in general, relates to the firm’s ability to constantly adapt to changing and uncertain environments (Goldman, Nagel, and Preis, 2006). More specifically, Doz and his colleagues suggested that strategic agility consists of three meta-capabilities, namely strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity, and leadership unity (Doz and Kosonen, 2008a; Doz and Kosonen, 2008b). Strategic agility requires inventing new business models and new categories rather than rearranging old products and categories (Wilson and Doz, 2011). To cope with growing strategic discontinuities and disruptions, scholars have suggested the creation of strategically agile companies, including new ways for managing

business transformation and renewal, developing learning and knowledge transfer skills, an adaptive corporate culture, and more (Doz and Kosonen, 2008a; Doz and Kosonen, 2010). Thus strategic agility is an increasingly important core competence of the firm (Weber and Tarba, 2014) in general, and even more important in dynamic institutional environments, such as emerging markets, particularly if the firm engages in international collaborative partnerships such as mergers and acquisitions (Junni, Sarala, Tarba, and Weber, 2015b) in particular.

The challenge of strategic agility lies in matching the firm's strategy with the firm's resources, such as: capital, human resources, intellectual property, advanced manufacturing and information technologies, as well as in knowledge transfer, building a post-acquisition integration capability, the relevant coordination mechanisms between multinational headquarters and its subsidiaries, adapting CEO's leadership style to the ever-changing business environment, and organizational preparedness to reverse ineffective strategic decisions (Combs, Ketchen Jr, Ireland, and Webb, 2011; Lewis, Andriopoulos, and Smith, 2014; Nadkarni and Herrmann, 2010; Shimizu and Hitt, 2004). In addition, the challenge of strategic agility in emerging markets relates to matching the firm's strategy and resources with the complexities of the rapidly changing and demanding institutional context. Hence, these challenges encountered by firms in today's highly competitive global environment necessitate a deeper understanding of strategic agility, its theoretical underpinnings, potential micro-foundations, and its implications for firm performance (Weber and Tarba, 2014).

In order to attain strategic agility it is important for organizations to develop the key capabilities needed to accelerate the renewal and transformation of the existing business models (Bock, Opsahl, George, and Gann, 2012). For instance, human resource management practices may be conducive to managing tensions associated with organizational change and transformation (Burgess, Strauss, Currie, and Wood, 2015; Junni, Sarala, Tarba, Liu, and Cooper, 2015a). Furthermore, leadership that is able to manage strategic paradoxes may enable strategic agility (Lewis et al., 2014; Smith, 2014). Strategic agility in its turn can strengthen the positive effects of technological capability on explorative innovation in the firm (Zhou and Wu, 2010).

Strategic agility plays an important role in collaborative entry modes, such as mergers and acquisitions (Junni et al., 2015b), which are important entry modes for firms to and from emerging markets. For instance, human resource flexibility facilitates the sociocultural integration and knowledge transfer in mergers and acquisitions (Sarala, Junni, Cooper, and Tarba, 2016). Moreover, different types of mergers and acquisitions can facilitate strategic agility (Brueller, Carmeli, and Drori, 2014).

Multinational enterprises are not exempt from the requirement for entrepreneurial capabilities to compete successfully on the global landscape (Teece, 2014). Strategic agility may facilitate multinational companies to capture opportunities across emerging and established markets in today's increasingly connected global world (Fourné, Jansen, and Mom, 2014). In addition, firms need to possess the resources and capabilities to interact with multiple partners to gain competitive advantages (Mellahi, Frynas, Siegel, and Sun, 2016). Furthermore, firms increasingly face the complexity of government involvement and new

Statism (Wood and Wright, 2015). Strategic agility may have important bearing to enable firms to cope with afore-mentioned cases of complexity.

In the context of entrepreneurial partnership, the social role of entrepreneurship necessitates collaborative involvement among multiple stakeholders (Zahra and Wright, 2015), hence strategic agility is crucial for incumbents to proactively interact with entrepreneurs to enable value creation for multiple stakeholders. For instance, entrepreneurial partnership needs agile approaches in dealing with partners while navigating through uncertainty (Liu and Almor, 2016). The nature and extent of agility is bound up with local, national, and regional context; these all afford organizations opportunities and capabilities, and restrain and mould choices. A key concern in taking the literature on strategic agility forward is a better understanding of the effect of these various contextual circumstances on the ability to modify and remodify what the organization does.

Objectives of the Special Issue

The goal of this Special Issue is to stimulate scholars to explore how underlying concepts and methodologies can make an important contribution towards better understanding of strategic agility in developing, emerging, and transitional economies as well as advanced economies - such as the United Kingdom, Greece and others - undergoing systematic economic change, and its impact on organizational performance.

We invite papers that focus on the strategies and operations of multinational companies and SMEs in developing, transitional, emerging and developed economies undergoing systematic economic change, which address various aspects of strategic agility. The complex, widespread and growing phenomenon of strategic agility may require the incorporation of multidisciplinary, multi-level and cross-cultural models and analyses. Thus our special issue solicits papers that offer novel insights in terms of the performance implications of strategic agility, the relative importance of strategic agility antecedents and their interaction effects, and the influence of different contexts (intra-firm, inter-firm, network) and different levels of analysis (firm level, business-unit level, top management team, individual), in terms of promoting theoretical synthesis, and suggests new venues for future research.

Illustrative Topics

We encourage both conceptual and empirical contributions that may address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- What are the antecedents, moderators/mediators, and outcomes of strategic agility in emerging, transitional, and developed markets undergoing systematic economic change?
- What impact do different configurations of national level institutions have on the nature, extent and relevance of different firm level approaches to strategic agility?
- What are the international dimensions of strategic agility (eg. foreign firms that are entering/operating in these environments and their ability to respond to changing conditions and the competitive responses/advantages of indigenous firms as well)?

- What are the roles of early warning systems, communication, learning, scanning, knowledge transfer, training, managerial rotation, and rewarding in the development of strategically agile MNCs and SMEs?
- What is the role of strategic agility in global collaborative arrangements (M&A, strategic alliances, joint ventures, and/or entrepreneurial partnership) in emerging, transitional, and developed markets?
- What insights can perspectives from strategy, economics, organizational behaviour, international management, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines provide into the nature, antecedents, processes, and effects of strategic agility in emerging, transitional, and developed markets?
- What are the profiles of strategically agile MNCs and SMEs in emerging and transitional markets?
- When should management embrace intuitive, improvisational, and action-oriented forms of decision making for the sake of strategic agility in emerging, transitional, and developed markets?
- How can the organizational context in and from emerging markets and in the particular context of the senior management's strategic decisions best contribute to achieving strategic agility in the emerging, transitional, and developed markets?
- What are the interrelationships between strategic agility and organizational change, transformation, and renewal in the emerging, transitional, and developed markets?
- What is the impact of corporate social responsibility on strategic agility in the emerging, transitional, and developed markets?
- What is the impact of corporate culture differences and national culture distance on strategic agility?
- What may be the impact of leadership and trust on strategic agility in emerging and transitional markets?
- What is the impact of market and non-market strategies, and integration of the both, on achieving strategic agility?
- What may be the impact of emotions and resilience on strategic agility in emerging and transitional markets?
- What are the new methods (both quantitative and qualitative) to assess the antecedents and consequences of strategic agility (and perhaps even measurement of the construct itself)?
- What differences can be found in organizations in terms of strategic agility in the public and non-profit sectors in the emerging, transitional, and developed markets?

Submission Process

Between September 1st and September 30th, 2019, authors should submit their manuscripts online via the Journal of World Business submission system at:

<https://www.evise.com/profile/#/JWB/login>

To ensure that all manuscripts are correctly identified for consideration for this Special Issue, it is important that authors select 'SI: Strategic Agility in Emerging and Transitional Markets' when they reach the "Article Type" step in the submission process. Manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the Journal of World Business Guide for Authors available at www.elsevier.com/journals/journal-of-world-business/1090-9516/guide-for-authors. All

submitted manuscripts will be subject to the Journal of World Business's double-blind review process. Invitations to revise and resubmit will follow initial submissions in approximately 3-4 months.

For further information and questions, please contact the lead guest co-editor, Shlomo Tarba (s.tarba@bham.ac.uk) or the supervising editor, Stav Fainshmidt (sfainshm@fiu.edu).

Research Data

Research data forms the backbone of research articles and provides the foundation on which knowledge is built. Researchers are increasingly encouraged, or even mandated, to make research data available, accessible, discoverable and usable. Although not mandatory, the journal encourages authors to submit their data at the same time as their manuscript. Further information can be found at: www.elsevier.com/authors/author-services/research-data.

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