

EDITORIAL PREFACE

Special Issue on Open Innovation Strategies for SMEs Development: Utilization of ICT methods

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PREAMBLE

Entrepreneurship in recent years is passing through a dynamic transformation in operational and management aspects in terms of competitive advantage, knowledge gain and value addition within an enterprise. This may be termed as a paradigm shift and it has been shifted from simple introduction of new ideas, product or service development to collaborative nature incorporating innovation, in terms of products, processes, services and organizational transformations. Innovation has also incorporated open innovation concepts and practices in comparison to the more traditional closed innovation. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play a critical role in the economy of most countries in the world. Many of them are leaders in applying innovation strategies for business promotion, value gain and economic empowerment in a country. However, little is known on how open innova-

tion is implemented in SMEs and what are the challenges and benefits associated with their implementation. This special issue would like to focus in-depth studies, cases and researches focusing open innovation strategies for SMEs development through utilization of ICT tools.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

This special issue has five papers, focusing various aspects of open innovation within the entrepreneurs. Ranging from conceptual issues to empirical or success cases, this special issue has tried to accumulate knowledge on how SMEs can apply the open innovation strategies for their development and empower them to act as catalyst of economic empowerment.

Paper 1 aims at providing a deep understanding of the current status of electronic networks in the Jordanian handicrafts sector from

managers' perspectives. The study enhances utilizing the e-environment to gain market share in local, regional, and international markets. Four cases of handicraft projects have been selected to conduct face to face interview. The results show that handicraft projects have initial attempts to use E-electronic in their activities, while these attempts are still in embryonic stages and they do not use E-networks effectively to gain market share to date. However, project managers believe that there is direct link between the use of electronic networks and the increase the business market share.

Inspired by the potential of ICTs, for socio-economic development, and supported by a university based technology and business incubator, paper 2 reveals how Rural Production Company, initially an exploratory project whose key innovation was its Internet kiosk-facilitated model of crafts production and local empowerment, transformed into a social enterprise catering to global demands. The paper is a reflexive mapping of the organization's evolution from the original research agenda of outsourcing production cum rural employment, to one that privileges local networks both as a conscious business strategy and as an arena for collaborative change for human development.

Paper 3 explores the factors affecting the adoption of e-commerce by small businesses in a developing country context. To attain this purpose a case study was conducted in a small hotel, which is using its website to keep up with customer expectations and competition in a small Turkish city. *Although having a website* is critically important and it provides some benefits for the hotel, but in order to become successful in e-commerce, it is just not enough. Conclusions and suggestions derived from this study provide a meaningful contribution to the understanding of e-commerce adoption among small businesses in developing countries.

Adoption of innovation strategies in entrepreneurship is an age old phenomenon, but inclusion of open innovation or collaborative

innovation strategies in the entrepreneurship is a newly evolved concept. By far, most researches reveal, majority of successful global ventures are adopting open innovation strategies in their business proceedings. However, despite their contribution to entrepreneurship and national economy, the SMEs are well below in acquiring this newly emerged trend of doing business. Moreover, not many researches are being conducted to investigate SMEs potencies, expectations, delivery channels and intricacies around the adoption of open innovation strategies. Paper 4 tries to put forward a contextual framework leading to an operational framework to explore the life-cycle of open innovation strategy management activities focusing technology transfer. It also discusses about issues on future researches in empowering SMEs through utilization of open innovation strategies.

Along the past years, the knowledge and innovation management have acquired increasing relevance in organizations and entrepreneurships. During the last decade, open innovation strategy, and especially, crowdsourcing innovation model has gained increasing importance. Paper 5 discusses about this issue by approaching in two ways for commercializing intellectual property: crowdsourcing innovation and intellectual property marketplaces. The paper aims to provide knowledge about concepts and practices underlying the ways for commercializing intellectual property. It also seeks to contribute with a proposal of architecture for an intellectual property marketplace, based on the analysis of practices about crowdsourcing innovation and intellectual property marketplaces.

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Hakikur Rahman is an academic over 25 years has served leading education institutes and established various ICT projects funded by ADB, UNDP and World Bank in Bangladesh. He is currently serving as a Post Doctorate Researcher at the University of Minho, Portugal. He has written and edited over 15 books on computer education in ICT, education and research. Graduating from the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology in 1981, he has done his Master's of Engineering from the American University of Beirut in 1986 and completed his PhD in Computer Engineering from the Ansted University, BVI, UK in 2001.

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