

Editorial

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As the term “Business Model” fundamentally brings together different perspectives from wide-ranging disciplines and is not limited to a single research construct, researchers currently progress towards discovering and grasping its complexity. Resulting from these research attempts, particularly during the past decade, business model innovation has become one of the most prominent research fields in the business model context. Moreover, its significance is also emphasised by corresponding research streams, such as business model transformation.

In turbulent business environments, business model innovation and transformation are discussed by researchers as prerequisites for long-term survival and for sustaining a company’s competitive edge (Chesbrough 2007, 2010; Amit and Zott 2012). Against this background, the scientific conference on “Business Model Innovation and Transformation” of the Erich-Gutenberg-Arbeitsgemeinschaft deliberately chose and carefully discussed a number of related topics during a two-day session in September 2014 in Nuremberg. The topics covered aspects ranging from triggers for business model transformation to innovation types and design patterns to the development of formative indexes for business model innovation. By providing a forum for ideas and inspiring discussions among all participants, the 2014 conference represents the cornerstone for the present

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publication. Participating researchers were invited to submit full papers to this special issue of the *Journal of Business Economics*. Out of the received papers, four have been accepted to be part of this special issue. Contributing to the evolution of the research fields dedicated to studying business models, this special issue brings together both conceptual and empirical studies that provide researchers with new perspectives and offer managers hands-on guidelines for the further strategic positioning of their firms.

Thomas Werani, Bernhard Freiseisen, Petra Martinek-Kuchinka, and Alexander Schauburger study the relationship between business model design and corporate performance in their article “How should successful business models be configured? Results from an empirical study in business-to-business markets and implications for the change of business models”. The researchers employ a qualitative comparative analysis in order to illustrate 14 business model configurations that, as proposed by the authors, bring forward sufficient conditions for corporate success in terms of sales profitability. By contrasting sales profitability with the selected business model configuration, the authors provide a decision matrix on business model changes. Hereby, they conclude that beside the fact that not all business models call for revision from the outset, managers have to consider the trade-offs between complex business model innovation versus the more practical business model transformation.

In the article entitled “Path dependence as a barrier to business model change in manufacturing firms: insights from a multiple-case study”, *Sven M. Laudien and Birgit Daxböck* raise awareness of the factors that impede business model change attempts, in particular, by highlighting the negative effects of path dependency. The term “change” is deliberately chosen, reflecting the authors’ approach to illustrating business model innovation as one manifestation of a much broader repertoire of business model changes. The authors choose manufacturing firms as a viable research setting, considering that the industry is currently undergoing a high degree of conversion towards service business models. By first giving a detailed account of the elements entailed in a business model change process, the authors further provide empirical evidence for the primal relevance of path dependency in this context. The degree to which business model change processes are affected by path dependency results from a number of determinants and mechanisms, which are comprehensively examined in this study. Hereby, the literature on business models gains further insights concerning the barriers to business model change.

As research on business model innovation matures, scholars have ample possibilities for studying its implications in an organizational context. In the article “Business model innovation and organizational resilience—towards an integrated conceptual framework”, *Oana Buliga, Christian W. Scheiner, and Kai-Ingo Voigt* study business model innovation as an appropriate approach for creating resilient organizations. Assuming that the resilience construct comprises both organizational robustness and organizational adaptability, the authors perceive business model innovation as a manifestation of the latter. While business model innovation, whether radical or incremental, is often necessary for creating resilient organizations, it requires support from further organizational mechanisms in the long-term. Against this backdrop, the authors raise awareness of the need for organizations to

sustain robustness. In order to understand why some organizations rather lean towards robust responses in turbulent environments, while others prefer offensive approaches, such as business model innovation, the authors consider the individual preference of decision-makers. Hereby, the regulatory focus theory offers an adequate approach for observing the relationship between the individual and the organizational level, which ultimately results in organizational preferences towards stability versus innovation.

In the article “Business model innovativeness: designing a formative measure for business model innovation”, *Patrick Spieth* and *Sabrina Schneider* formulate a definition of business model innovation and provide a measurement index for the extent of the innovativeness of a changed business model. With the theoretical part of the study rooted in the fields of business model, business model innovation and product innovation, the authors conceptualize business model innovation as a ‘new to-the firm’ change that affects at least one of three business model dimensions: value offering, value creation architecture, and revenue model logic. The empirical part of this paper is based on an analysis of 200 German firms, which in turn allows for an empirically validated measurement model for business model innovativeness. For practitioners, the authors emphasise various applications of the business model concept, for instance, its relevance in the context of commercialization and facilitation of opportunities. For academia, the paper provides a welcome initiative, which encourages further research in the business model innovation field by offering an empirically validated measurement index as a fitting starting point.

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