Editorial

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Although the field of strategic management is multidisciplinary and admits a wide array of theories and methodologies, research has established that its members, nevertheless, share an implicit consensus about the meaning of the field (Nag et al. 2007). Yet, the field faces challenges both with regard to specific topic areas studied and in terms of consolidating its knowledge. Thus, the purpose of this special issue of JBE is twofold. On the one hand, the issue seeks to advance knowledge in some specific areas of strategy research that deserve more attention. On the other hand, the special issue addresses problems in generating and advancing knowledge that have resulted from the field's openness to multiple neighbouring disciplines. The contributors to this special issue were invited to present the preliminary version of their papers at a special strategy session at the 5th International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 4–6 October, 2012.

Three papers represent contributions to the special issue's first aim. Bromiley and Rau examine the behavioral approach to strategy. While recent publications suggest that there is an increasing interest in a behavioral approach to strategy, this stream of research has not yet addressed issues of prescription. The authors first describe the key assumptions of a behavioral approach to strategy. Thereafter, they discuss specific areas of prescription for improving firm performance that would result from a behavioral approach. The areas covered include the practice of strategic planning, the management of technologies and the boundaries of the firm, managerial motivation, and managing change in organizations. Scholars who typically rely on

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the resource-based view or the market based view when framing their strategy research will be intrigued by the rich potential of additional questions a behavioral approach can offer.

Franke and zu Knyphausen-Aufsess revisit the concept of dominant logic that was introduced by C. K. Prahalad and Richard Bettis to explain successful diversification behaviour 28 years ago. Much has been done to refine and apply this concept during the past decades; but as a result, our knowledge of the concept is fragmented and confusing. The authors provide a much needed review and synthesis of the research drawing on the idea of a dominant logic. Their result is a research framework that links the antecedents of dominant logic formation and adaptation, the dominant logic commonality-performance effect, and the dynamics of dominant logics. Through several distinctions and clarifications, this paper may contribute to a more integrated and focused dialogue focusing on this concept in the future.

Mellewigt and Decker examine the costs of partner search and selection that accrue when strategic alliances are formed. Arguably, strategic alliances are also one of the topics that have been widely studied in the strategic management field. Yet, the authors draw our attention to a necessary distinction that the literature has not sufficiently recognized: the need to distinguish between search and selection costs during the alliance formation stage. This distinction allows for a better appreciation of the potential benefits of a partnership between firms and thus the dynamics during the formation of an alliance. In their study of firms in the German telecommunications industry, the authors find that partner search and selections costs, though closely related, are differently affected by task- and company-related factors.

The two concluding papers address the knowledge generation process typical of the strategic management field. One result of the field's openness to many different theories, methodologies, and neighbouring social science fields is that strategy research is almost exclusively concerned with theoretical novelty and novel findings at the expense of managerial relevance. This lack of relevance does not only concern the practice of strategic management, it also concerns the very nature of the academic field because the preoccupation with novel theoretical contributions prevents consolidation and necessary replication. Instead, the field's boundaries are continuously expanded by pressures to produce and what appears to be opportune to authors in a culture that values volume and novelty. The obsession with publishing in A-journals and editorial policies demanding new and significant contributions are two factors that contribute to this seemingly uncontrolled proliferation of theoretical frameworks and strategic phenomena (Hambrick 2004, 2007). It has been proposed that researchers and leaders of academic institutions should revamp tenure and promotion practices to encourage research that is relevant both to the academic field and to practice but significant progress in this regard is elusive (Walsh 2011).

Using meta-analytical techniques, Flickinger, Tuschke, Gruber-Mücke, and Fiedler explore how in the relatively young field of strategic entrepreneurship rigor- and relevance-related characteristics of studies are linked to their legitimacy, i.e., their impact in terms of the number of times an article is cited in other articles. Interestingly, the authors show that rigor is the most decisive factor in influencing a study's impact (legitimacy) and this in spite of the fact that strategic

entrepreneurship claims to be strongly concerned with the practical relevance of research. This finding is emphasized by the fact that none of the relevance indicators considered is significantly related to a study's impact.

Dunbar and Bresser look critically at the knowledge generation process prevailing in the field of strategic management. They take a very broad approach because much of their criticism holds for all management subdisciplines. The authors show that positivist, scientific principles dominate knowledge generation in the academic management field, leading to abstract knowledge-by-representation. In contrast, managers typically generate knowledge-by-exemplification, i.e., knowledge based on coping experiences and immersion in real-world situations. This difference in knowledge generation is a major factor why many managers question the practical relevance of academic management research. The paper highlights how governance structures and processes guiding academic management journals, peer review, and business school practices reinforce the generation of knowledge-by-representation at the expense of alternative, innovative research designs that may be more relevant for practice. To stimulate innovative research, the authors recommend modifications of the governance systems of academic publishing that focus on transparency and the balance of power between journal editors and authors. These recommendations are interesting to discuss but their realization may be realistic only in the long run.

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