
Guest editorial: Sustainable creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship: concerning failures and resilience in hard times, difficult conditions and special communities

Guest editorial

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Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship (CIE) are highly related research areas that have formed a significant knowledge backbone and dynamism energy for the larger business and organization discipline (Andrzejewski, 2019; Ballor and Claar, 2019; Sarri *et al.*, 2010; Sun, 2011). Nowadays, major and ultimate goals of the CIE require more than competitive advantages – it demands sustainability in the spirit, practices and outcomes of CIE. For sustainable CIE's research, we not only need to promote positive facilitating factors but we also have to fight against negative impediments at different levels of analysis. That being confirmed by theorists and practitioners, we expect that the agency and capacity of creators, innovators and entrepreneurs to learn from failure and resilience also varies across different contextual settings, which have been much less cared.

Due to the nature of failures and resilience, significant phenomena are often influenced by negative contexts, where we formally termed here as *hard times, difficult conditions and special communities*. We refer “hard times” to a chronically defined period when critical events leave barriers to firms, industries and governments, which are more challenging to overcome than other time periods. Unpredictability of the future stops actors from continuously committing themselves in CIE in such kind of time period (Ballor and Claar, 2019). For example, the period of economic downturn, postmature stages of business/industrial life cycle and the global financial crisis are all hard times at different levels. “Difficult conditions” refer to situational settings that impose limitations (especially in resources, opportunities and so forth) that force people to perform problem-solving tasks. For instance, the worldwide pandemics (COVID-19) limited interactive international businesses and trades in the past years and added unpredictable velocity in global industry. “Special communities” refer to groups of people with relevant interests in CIE and who are heterogeneous in terms of their collective attributes, resource possession and capability configuration (Hytti, 2005). Such heterogeneity forms differences, and thus challenging deviances, in how these special communities respond to CIE activities and environments. For example, entrepreneurs with insufficient resources would “creatively” take bricolage strategies to respond to endorsement insufficiency (Baker and Nelson, 2005). Another example is innovators at periphery can adopt untraditional ways to research and development; similarly, outsiders (or *outliers*) can contribute in innovation projects in unexpected ways.

Based on the rationales above, we sincerely organized this special issue. Overall, we were eager to see the theorization, conceptualization, examination and application of “hard times, difficult conditions and special communities” in CIE contexts, by exploiting what we know and exploring what we have not known yet. After a committed co-creation process together by the authors, reviewers, editors, editorial staffs as a collective of special community orchestrated during this combo of hard time and difficult conditions of the



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global popularity of COVID-19 pandemic, we now have eight quality papers that have survived through the scientific failure and academic resilience checks. Collectively and theoretically, these papers' contents reflect a picture of conditioned sustainable CIE quest for practitioners' and academia's reference. Individually, each paper demonstrated a piece of that picture and went in courageous explorations for possible future imagination. In this editorial, we proposed a conceptual scheme to present each paper's contents and relative positions. Two dimensions are utilized: the creativity–innovation–entrepreneurship and the time–condition–community axes.

	Creativity	Innovation	Entrepreneurship
Hard times	Traumatic experience through emotional creativity (Schiavone)	Clustering over-guarantee behaviors → Financial distress (Xu and Wu)	Institutional environment x Government digitalization → Tech entrepreneurship (Jiao <i>et al.</i>)
Difficult conditions	Leader–employee congruence → Creativity goal and innovation performance (Yuan <i>et al.</i>)	High-performance work practices → Resilience (Aparna and Sahney)	Industrial evolution → Executive departure (Li and Feng)
Special communities	Entrepreneurial failure in pandemic → Ambidexterity (Semerci)	Top management team (TMT) decision-making → Mgt. innovation adoption (Li <i>et al.</i>)	Entrepreneur narcissism → Venture growth (Wang <i>et al.</i>)

Schiavone's paper perfectly researched emotional creativity and resilience of cancer survivors in the hard time of COVID-19 pandemic. The study found that living through a traumatic experience results in a higher level of resilience during another traumatic experience, which is the result of higher posttraumatic growth. Furthermore, emotional creativity explained a significantly higher level of posttraumatic growth among survivors of a traumatic event.

Yuan and colleagues conceptualized dissatisfaction with organizational performance as a difficult condition for CIE. They argued that dissatisfaction moderates the relationship between leader–employee congruence/incongruence in creativity goal and employee innovative performance. The findings showed that the match in leaders' and followers' creativity goals could facilitate innovative performance, and such influence is conditioned by dissatisfaction, as innovative performance will be more positively predicted by increasing congruence between LCG and ECG from employee group with higher dissatisfaction. This paper positioned as the first paper that puts the conditioned meaning of relativity (congruence and comparison) between leader and employee goals of creativity in order to predict innovation outcomes.

Semerci's excellent work on a special community of failed entrepreneurs has opened the black box between those entrepreneurs' evaluative perception of failure and their coping orientations and behaviors (in terms of ambidexterity) by exploring a context interwoven by self-efficacy, social valuation of reentry decisions and employment status. This study has deepened our understandings of cognitive and social perceptions that drive consequent entrepreneurial responses and individual transformation to the failure in entrepreneurship. To confirm the causality of the model, the study also had committed good efforts in collecting data from different time points.

Xu and Wu explored a hard time of financial distress featuring firms' clustered overguarantee crisis, caused by peer firms' interactive behaviors and moderated by financial market improvement. They found that “[. . .] Firms with lower information quality, smaller

asset size, and higher managerial overconfidence will be more likely to be influenced by other listed firms to over-guarantee [. . .]” and that “A favorable financial market environment can effectively inhibit listed firms from imitating the guaranteeing behavior of peer firms.” As those findings revealed, overguarantee as a financial behavior that could be harmful for financial innovation and flexibility might be caused by interorganizational assemblage within a cluster of peering firms. Such theoretical proposition and empirical demonstration leads the research of overguarantee crisis up to a higher and interactive level of analysis (i.e. the peer effect) and even implicates on potential for higher-level studies.

Aparna and Sahney examined how R&D organizations’ creativity-oriented high-performance work practices (CHPWPs) could facilitate resilience against difficult conditions, knowing the core value creation of R&D organizations rely heavily on innovations. Moreover, the effect of role clarity as a moderator has also been verified. This study brings in governance elements (CHPWPs with role definitions) into the research of innovative resilience and showed the potential of exploring more of resilience governance mechanisms for enabling rational intervention against difficult innovative conditions.

TMT as a special community was studied by Li *et al.* as different TMTs have heterogeneous decision-making styles. They examined intuitive vs rational decision-making styles as mediators in the relationship between perceived environmental turbulence and management innovation adoption. Organizational slack plays a role of moderator in the aforementioned relationships. This paper depicts a situation when environmental evaluation for innovation is indirectly functioning via a grouped of decision-makers with special characteristics, with a necessary concern of contextual variables. Interestingly, *personal* decisional orientation may alter the effect of *environmental* dynamism perception on the final decision of innovation adoption though such chained relationship might be “enveloped” by the contextual condition of *organizational* slack. The results demonstrated the cross-level complexity in the phenomenon of innovation adoption and can stimulate more imagination on other combinative effects of cross-level factors.

Jiao and co-authors build their analyses on an integrated cross-country and cross-archival dataset. They managed to examine the interrelationships between institutional environment, government digitalization, gender and technoentrepreneurship, during a difficult time period that characterized slowdown, hesitation, challenges and even obstacles to global entrepreneurship activities. Indeed, institutional force contributes an important portion to the formation or transformation of hard times. In this study, the authors argue that different dimensions of institutional environment (e.g. culture or intellectual property right protection) affect technoentrepreneurship in different ways. Moreover, government digitalization moderates in the differentiated relationships above. The addition of government digitalization is meaningful to discuss institutional impacts on entrepreneurship especially in a digitalizing age, since government is among the most powerful and effective actor carrying out an institution.

Whenever an industry is during its evolutionary journey, frequent changes in firms are implemented to enact difficult conditions brought by the evolution. One of the most representative phenomena is the mobility of top executives. Li and Feng’s creative works matches industrial life cycle and tendency of top executive appointment. They found that “[. . .] Companies at the growth stage in the life cycle of an industry were more likely to select and appoint younger corporate executives with political capital, peripheral functions and output functions, whereas companies at the maturity stage were more likely to select and appoint older corporate executives with throughput functions.” This study opened a big room for research on the macro- and micro-level factor alignment between firm and executive characteristics in a dynamic fashion. For entrepreneurship research that also put organizational life cycle as a core attributes of new ventures, the results offered good practical reference for top executive hiring though from our viewpoint, the matching

situation might be more complex due to the complex relationship between entrepreneur/founder and hired top executives.

Another study that linked across macro- and micro-level factors of an entrepreneurial firm's strategic human resource dynamism is by Wang and colleagues. Their study showed that entrepreneurs' dual narcissism (i.e. narcissistic admiration and rivalry) affects new venture growth (NVG) through learning from entrepreneurial failure (LFEF). The relationship between narcissism and LFEF is moderated by of personal initiative. Interestingly, as the study of Li and Feng emphasizes fits between micro–macro linkages, the study of Wang *et al.* focused on emergent influences of microlevel personality factors on macroconsequences of NVG. As a larger portion of cross-level entrepreneurship studies focuses on macrolevel influences on microlevel entrepreneurial psychology and behaviors, this paper opened an avenue for future research in two clear directions – first, testing emergence model in multilevel entrepreneurship research; second, identifying the substance and influences of microfoundation for macrolevel entrepreneurial dynamics.

As many interesting issues have been examined in this special issue, we still wish to explicate some more research questions that could be further explored (to name just a few): how can extant theories/models/perspectives of CIE be revised to account for deeper understanding of hard times, difficult conditions and special communities? Are there possible benefits from hard times, difficult conditions and community-based heterogeneity? What are the roles of new technologies (AI, IoT, virtual reality, FinTech, PropertyTech, BioTech, etc.)? How may CIE and CIE agency/institutions be redefined when considering the hard times, difficult conditions and special communities?

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