
Editorial

Veland Ramadani* and Gadaf Rexhepi

Faculty of Business and Economics,
South-East European University,
Ilindenska n.335, 1200 Tetovo,
Republic of Macedonia
Email: v.ramadani@seeu.edu.mk
Email: g.rexhepi@seeu.edu.mk
*Corresponding author

Biographical notes: Veland Ramadani is an Associate Professor at the South-East European University, Republic of Macedonia, where he teaches both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in entrepreneurship and small business management. His research interests include entrepreneurship, small business management, innovations, family businesses and angel investments. He authored or co-authored around 60 research articles and 13 textbooks. His last published book is *Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management*, with Robert D. Hisrich. He is an Associate Editor of *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business (IJESB)*. Last year, he received the Award for Excellence 2015 – Outstanding Reviewer by Emerald Group Publishing (*Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*).

Gadaf Rexhepi is an Assistant Professor at the South-East European University, Republic of Macedonia. He is the author of more than 40 research papers in different journals around the world. He is also the author and co-author of more than ten books, book chapters and monographs, published by Springer, Taylor and Francis, Inderscience, etc. He works as a Consultant in Business Development Centre at the South East European University, Consultant for Development of ALMA-M one of the biggest companies in Macedonia, member of expert team SEECEL and he is active as an expert in many commissions in Ministry of Economy in Macedonia. His research interests are strategy, game theory, entrepreneurship, and total quality management.

The call for papers for this guest edition endorsed the collection of papers examining entrepreneurship and small business from the Balkans perspective. The Balkans cover a large area of Europe, heterogeneous in historical experience, policy and demographics; it is rich in opportunities for entrepreneurship, but far from homogeneous. The aim of this special issue is to explore entrepreneurship from the perspective of Balkan countries, building on pioneer works of Dana (1994, 1996, 1998, 1999); complemented by the recent contributions of Ramadani (2013), Ramadani et al. (2013a, 2013b), Ramadani and Schneider (2013), Ramadani and Dana (2013), Rexhepi et al. (2013), and Dana and Ramadani (2015). The Balkans has not been a focal point of interest in the current literature on entrepreneurship and this special issue aims to overcome this deficit in our knowledge and contribute to this lacuna.

We hope that this special issue shall be very welcomed by regional and international researchers, who are interested to know more about entrepreneurship and small business in the Balkans countries.

The section below briefly introduces the content of the corresponding papers:

- ‘Balkans entrepreneurship: the role of internal and external knowledge for business creation’ by Vanessa Ratten, João J. Ferreira and Cristina I. Fernandes

In the first paper of this special issue, the authors, by using the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2009–2013) data, want to understand the reasons why the Balkans’ people start new businesses. They found that intrinsic knowledge as an individual capability is very important for starting a new business in the Balkans. They also show that internal and external knowledge represents relevant advantages in starting a formal businesses in the Balkans. The authors at the end of the paper provide useful suggestions for future research about Balkans entrepreneurship and implications of this paper for managers and policymakers.

- ‘The competitiveness of established entrepreneurs in Balkan countries’ by Karin Širec and Dijana Močnik

The second paper, also based on the data from Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, aims to assess the relationship between innovation activities, international orientation, growth aspirations about future employment and the level of competition. Their analyses were based on a sample of 597 cases from five Balkan countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia and Slovenia). They found that established entrepreneurs, who innovate, respectively introduce new or unfamiliar products by using new technologies are overrepresented in markets with limited competition in contrast with younger entrepreneurs who are facing with more competitors.

- ‘Fostering entrepreneurship and economic growth: pathways to economic resilience in Kosovo’ by Tim Vorley and Nick Williams

In this paper, the authors examine economic resilience in Republic of Kosovo. The authors found that ‘entrepreneurship in Kosovo is integral to promoting the diversification and capacity building, by developing institutional arrangements to harness productive entrepreneurship and reduce informal economic activity’. They also concluded that restructuring in a post-war country is a very challenging process and requires long-term joined-up approaches.

- ‘Small and medium enterprises and obstacles to public procurement: lessons learned for Balkans’ by Jelena Budak, Edo Rajh and Suncana Slijepcevic

In this paper, the authors empirically assess the issues related to the public procurement from the perspective of SMEs’ owners in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH). Findings showed slight variations in opinions among micro, small and medium-sized companies as well as significant differences among the opinions of successful and unsuccessful bidders. Corruption is mentioned as a main reason why SMEs owners do not have confidence in the public procurement system.

- ‘Innovations and entrepreneurship in the Macedonian business sector’ by Taki Fiti, Vladimir Filipovski, Marica Antovska and Biljana Tashevska

In this paper, the authors treat the common factors that contribute for low level of innovation activity in the Western Balkans, specifically focusing the Republic of Macedonia. Among these factors are mentioned: the low level of R&D investments, the small share of the business sector in such investments, the insufficient competitive pressure on firms to innovate, the political involvement in the business sector, etc.

- ‘The phenomenon of entrepreneurial leadership in gazelles and mice: a qualitative study from Bosnia and Herzegovina’ by Ramo Palalic

This paper aims to match theory and practice, and numbers and realities that has to do with the influence of the entrepreneurial leadership in gazelles and mice. Research methodology that has been used in this study is stratified purposive method in collecting data. The data were taken from three sectors, manufacturing, sales and service and it used semi-structured interview. The findings of this paper suggest that gazelles are more in favour of applying entrepreneurial leadership compared to mice. This why it is suggested that both of them need to be improved and maintain sustainable growth in the market. Findings also emphasise that analysed dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation and transformational leadership style influence business performance and that the synergetic affect can be created when they are applied in the long term. The paper also emphasise that Bosnian Government almost is doing nothing about entrepreneurial activities.

- ‘The effects of emotional intelligence in managing changes: an entrepreneurial perspective’ by Gadaf Rexhepi and Besar Berisha

This paper shows that the success in managing changes and in overall working performance is not depending only on professional knowledge and the level of IQ of employees and managers, but also very important impact is having the level of emotional intelligence. The research have been conducted from the analysis of 265 respondent divided on 215 non-managers position and 51 respondent with managers/director position both in private and public institutions in Macedonia. Finding reveal that the success of managing changes is depending from the level of emotional intelligence, there have been a significant correlations between the level of EQ and the index of managing changes.

- ‘Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial learning in Albania’ by Arbër Demeti, Erjona Rebi Suljoti and Tefta Demeti

This paper gives overall overview about entrepreneurship development and entrepreneurial learning in Albania. It gives more insides about difficulties that entrepreneurs especially start-ups face from government institutional and financial institutions. The paper points also to the progress that the last five years have been made, but this effort was more oriented toward small businesses (existing) and very little have been made for start-ups. It also refers to several deficiencies in entrepreneurial learning both in formal and non-formal education system.

- ‘Entrepreneurship education at school: a case study on secondary education in Greece’ by Dimitrios G. Ierapetritis

The paper analyse the connection between education and entrepreneurship and innovation systems. The finding shove very disappointing results that are related with the implementation and specialisation of the Greek national strategic priorities in entrepreneurship education, when examining at business level, the weight and importance attributed to the curriculum of the secondary education. The paper investigates the need to promote entrepreneurship education in Greek schools in secondary education. It presents the curriculum of the Greek Lyceum related to the entrepreneurship education, which have been realised through survey of ninety students. The author also proposes a national strategy on entrepreneurship education that can be implemented.

- ‘Entrepreneurial education and internationalisation of firms in transition economies: a conceptual framework from the case of Croatia’ by Riccardo Rialti, Massimiliano M. Pellegrini, Andrea Caputo and Marina Dabic

The authors of this paper analyse the role that entrepreneurial education can play on internationalisation process in transition economies. The research has been made in Croatia which was focused on entrepreneurial context. These findings resulted with a framework which explores the problems that entrepreneurs face in the process of internationalisation. This paper contributes with the proposition of an entrepreneurial education as facilitator of the process. It suggests that entrepreneurial education, is considered as formal education and an entrepreneurial university context, can directly ameliorate the process of internationalisation and that it can affect the networking strategy. It is proposed to governments to continue and invest on entrepreneurial education.

- ‘Exploring the moderation effects of family business status on the relationships between CEO’s characteristics and SME internationalisation: evidence from Bulgaria’ by Desislava I. Yordanova

This paper discusses about effect of the family business status on the relationships between the chief executive officer’s characteristics and internationalisation. The research has been conducted in Bulgaria. The paper proposes a conceptual model and hypotheses positing that the effects of the chief executive officer’s attributes on internationalisation may differ significantly between family and non-family SMEs. As a method in preparing the conceptual model is upper echelons theory and the resource-based view. Findings in this paper had shown the presence of diverging antecedents of internationalisation between family and non-family SMEs supporting the view that it is important to research family SMEs as distinctive research objects.

In summary, this special issue is a diverse collection of papers treating the Balkan’s entrepreneurship and small business from different dimensions. We would like to gratefully thank the distinguished Professor Léo-Paul Dana, the Editor-in-Chief of this respectable journal, for his inspiration and endless support; the colleagues who helped us during the selection and evaluation process and all authors who showed interest to this specific and always challengeable region.

References

- Dana, L-P. (1994) 'The impact of culture on entrepreneurship, innovation and change in the Balkans: the Yugoslplurist model', *Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Change*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp.177–190.
- Dana, L-P. (1996) 'Albania in the twilight zone: the Perseritje model and its impact on small business', *Journal of Small Business Management*, January, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp.64–70.
- Dana, L-P. (1998) 'Waiting for direction in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)', *Journal of Small Business Management*, April, Vol. 36, No. 2, pp.62–67.
- Dana, L-P. (1999) 'Preserving culture through small business: government support for artisans and craftsmen in Greece', *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp.90–92.
- Dana, L-P. and Ramadani, V. (2015) *Family Businesses in Transition Economies*, Springer, Cham.
- Ramadani, V. (2013) 'Entrepreneurship and small business in Republic of Macedonia', *Strategic Change*, Vol. 22, Nos. 7/8, pp.485–501.
- Ramadani, V. and Dana, L-P. (2013) 'The state of entrepreneurship in the Balkans: evidence from selected countries', in Ramadani, V. and Schneider, C.R. (Eds.): *Entrepreneurship in the Balkans*, Springer, Berlin.
- Ramadani, V. and Schneider, C.R. (2013) *Entrepreneurship in the Balkans*, Springer, Heidelberg.
- Ramadani, V., Dana, L-P., Gërguri, S. and Tašaminova, T. (2013a) 'Women entrepreneurs in the Republic of Macedonia: waiting for directions', *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp.95–121.
- Ramadani, V., Gërguri, S., Rexhepi, G. and Abduli, S. (2013b) 'Innovation and economic development: the case of FYR of Macedonia', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp.324–345.
- Rexhepi, G., Ibraimi, S. and Veseli, N. (2013) 'Role of intellectual capital in creating enterprise strategy', *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 75, No. 1, pp.44–51.