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Configurations of Entrepreneurial Orientation, Knowledge Management, and Positional Advantage: A Comparative Analysis between Native and Immigrant Entrepreneurial Firms

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Abstract

Entrepreneurial firms survive and ultimately succeed when they are able to marshal their resources into productive advantages. The entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and knowledge management (KM) process are broadly seen as antecedents to such an outcome. However, the interplay between EO and KM elements through a configurational approach is still unaccounted for. Moreover, the existing literature is replete with single solutions for entrepreneurs and managers. But, advancements in configuration theory suggest that EO may combine with elements of KM in different ways to create separate but equifinal pathways to performance. In addition, the contingency theory suggests that these configurational paths are contextually dependent. Moreover, contingency theory also proffers that these configurational pathways may differ for native versus immigrant entrepreneurial firms. To address these research gaps, we perform a fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) on data collected from service-oriented firms owned by native and immigrant entrepreneurs in Malaysia. Our results identify that configurational paths vary based on the types of firms. Four causal pathways are identified for immigrant entrepreneurial firms and five pathways for native firms. Although EO is critical for both types of firms, different configurational paths of KM elements are identified, which are further complemented by positional advantages in achieving performance success. We opine that knowledge acquisition and application ensure intelligent conversion of EO behaviour. Secondly, EO itself can create valuable knowledge; thereby, the acquisition and application are bypassed, and knowledge conversion and protection becoming critical for holistic success.

Keywords: immigrant entrepreneurs; entrepreneurial orientation; knowledge management process; emerging economy; fsQCA.