

Exploring and Exploiting for Success: Stage-Specific Drivers of Startup Ambidexterity

Prof.Paweł Mielcarek, Klaudiusz Kalisty

Poznań University of Economics and Business, Poland

Abstract

Purpose: The research problem considers the impact of ambidexterity on the development of start-ups. Therefore, the main goal of the paper is to determine the importance of ambidexterity's critical success factors (CSF) for different phases of start-up development.

Method: Research covers 27 different CSF and 18 items describing ambidexterity. This set of variables were analysed in terms of seed, early and growth stage of start-up development. The statistical verification of research exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was applied with maximum likelihood as a factoring method.

Data: Study covers 170 start-ups operating in Poland. The study based on a CATI method. Respondents of the survey were general managers and business owners.

Main results: The most important CSF for start-up ambidexterity are strategic cooperation, establishing formal cooperation and dynamic capacity. In terms of ambidexterity crucial activities relate to offering new, unique values for customer and systematically checking customer satisfaction. At the same time CSF as leader's age and gender or academic training were not significant for start-up ambidexterity. Moreover, research shown that there is crucial difference between seed stage and other phases of start-up development, that require to pay attention to specific areas by the managers.

Implications: This research fills the research gap regarding the use of ambidexterity in start-ups and also deepens the knowledge on how to shape individual stages of start-up development.

Keywords: start-up, ambidexterity, exploration, exploitation, critical success factors