

Call for papers: **Digitalization and Servitization in International Entrepreneurship**

The *Journal of International Entrepreneurship* welcomes submissions for a special issue exploring the creation and deployment of digital dynamic capabilities in the digitized international entrepreneurial ventures enabling to enter and compete effectively in the rapidly expanding online global marketplace.

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Submission deadline:

Deadline for full paper submissions: **November 30, 2022**

Digitisation is the process of converting information from a physical format into a digital one. When this process is leveraged to improve business processes, i.e. to convert business processes over to use digital technologies instead of analogue or offline systems, it is called *digitalisation*. The impact or results of this digitalisation process are called *digital transformation*. The concept of digital capability derives from firms' ability to mobilize and deploy digital resources to support value creation in their business activities (Cahen and Borini, 2020; Lee et al., 2019). A *dynamic digital capability* (DDC) is about the effective orchestration of exponential advancements in digital technologies, global digital platforms, Internet connectivity and global use of smart mobile devices to assist technical, production or marketing capabilities (Cahen and Borini, 2020). Such dynamic capabilities occur when firms deliberately invest in actions to orchestrate digital technologies, resources and skills combined with, and enhance, other organizational resources and capabilities (Bharadwaj, 2000) resulting in highly complementary digital sensing, seizing and reconfiguring capabilities deployment (Ruey-Jer and Kim, 2020). The scant DDC existing literature has described what could constitute the micro-foundations influencing DDC. For example, Cahen and Borini (2020) propose to study DDC through cross-cultural programming practices, virtual global networking activities and cross-border digital monetization adaptability. Nambisan et al. (2017) have associated DDC with dynamic problem-solution practices and with activities to expand firms' boundaries. Lenka et al. (2017) have related DDC with intelligence, connect and analytical digital practices. Glavas et al. (2017) consider organizational practices in using digital tools as the main informing factors for DDC, such as the Internet (Reuber and Fischer, 2011), platforms and websites (Ruey-Jer and Kim, 2020), or social media (Alarcón et al., 2018).

In the context of International Entrepreneurship (IE), it is widely acknowledged that DDC and digitalization can provide international entrepreneurial ventures (IEVs) with higher internationalization scope and speed by fostering their quicker adaptation to new, and rapidly changing, international market conditions (Hervé et al., 2020; Westerlund, 2020; Etemad, 2017). However, many questions can still emerge regarding the factors potentially enhancing DDC in the context of IEVs, especially for those firms not born in the *digital logic context*, and its role in successful product-service transition. Exploring how IEVs move towards a more digitalized business models warrants further research, especially in the post-COVID reality, which seems to increasingly demand further customer online

integration in value-creation processes through innovation processes in digitally-based business (re)modelling (Holmes, 2020); Zahra, 2020).

On the other hand, the term *servitization* has become an accepted label for the process of becoming an increasingly service-focused business (Fliess and Lexutt, 2019). With its origins in the tendency of manufacturing firms to “offer fuller market packages or bundles of customer-focused combinations of goods, services, support, self-service, and knowledge” (Vandermerwe and Rada, 1988, p. 314). Currently, servitization delineates business model configurations to support the customer-related functions by offering customized and total solutions (Lenka et al., 2017). In particular, past studies have given significant focus to the transition toward more servitized business models and have broadly assumed that firms follow a unidirectional transformational path along a product-to-service continuum (Lenka et al., 2017). This path starts with the offer of physical products, and led to offer product-service systems, solutions and smart PSS, which are based on cloud platforms and conceived as a multilayered technology aimed at covering the customer’s needs (Martín-Peña, et al. 2018). However, this process is being recognized to be largely iterative and context-specific (Brax and Visintin, 2017). In addition, Valtakoski (2017) have suggested that a service paradox does exist, which indicates that advancing in the process of servitization does not always yield the expected positive impact on organizational performance, and may even have a negative effect. Accordingly, different internal and external factors are expected to have key roles in helping international entrepreneurial firms to transit and move forward in the servitization process (Fliess and Lexutt, 2019), including digital capabilities (Kohtamäki et al., 2019). Digital capabilities do not only contribute to the process of servitization, but can facilitate the interactions between the front- and back-office service activities (Jovanovic et al., 2019). Kohtamäki et al. (2019, p.380) suggest “It is now time to shed light on the role of digitalization in servitization and let digitalization rewrite the servitization narrative”. However, the past literature does not point to a consensus on the critical drivers for a successful service transition research (see Fliess and Lexutt, 2019; Díaz-Garrido et al., 2018; Brax and Visintin, 2017 for comprehensive literature reviews). In addition, the fact that there are many different conceptualizations of what constitutes a service transition strategy, interferes with the applicability of obtaining results from one context to another. Therefore, it is pertinent to explore the factors that impact on the servitization process in the context of IEVS and the role of digitalization in between.

The purpose of this special issue is to shed new light on how international entrepreneurial ventures (IEVs) support customer demands and requirements in international markets by developing digitalized and/or servitized business models and their respective impacts on their international growth and performance. We invite researchers to submit conceptual and empirical papers on issues addressing digitalization and servitization in IEVs. Specifically, this issue invites papers that advance knowledge on the micro-foundations that deploy DDC and digitalized business models under which a service logic emerges, develops and is implemented by IEVs, especially for those not born in the on-line context. It would be also interesting for papers to further highlight the problems and challenges associated with enacting digitalization and/or servitization in IEVs by the way of DDC deployment and their impact on growth. Other interesting inquiries can address the circumstances in the IEVs’ external environment under which digital and servitized business

models are demanded and how external forces interact with internal processes. Multidisciplinary papers are also well received. Consequently, potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- Levels of analysis of digitalization and DDC in international entrepreneurship research and differences between digital IEVs and non-digital IEVs.
- Different practices that enhance DDC in the context of digital IEVs and non-digital IEVs and their consequential impact on their performance (e.g. international extent, scope, and speed, international performance, innovation performance).
- Similarities and differences in digitalization across domestic/international market operations. Conceptual and empirical discrepancies between born-digital IEVs and non-digital IEVs.
- Defining, adapting, measuring and comparing different digitalised and/or servitized business models in IEVs.
- Antecedents and conditions that enable or disable the adoption and implementation of digital business models or servitization in the context of international entrepreneurship.
- Different paths for evolving transition along the product-to-service continuum in the context of IEVs and their impact on their performance.
- Interactions between servitization and digitalization in response to international opportunities or to global crisis for IEVs.
- The service paradox in the context of IEVs and the role of digitalization and other internal capabilities to overcome the service paradox.
- Servitization impact in early and rapid internationalization, and foreign entry mode selection (e.g. Internet; foreign agents and distributors, IJVs, FDI, alliances and/or networks).

Submission guidelines

- Prospective authors are encouraged to submit one-page synopsis by e-mail to the SI guest co-editors no later than **June 30, 2022**.
- Please visit the [Journal of International Entrepreneurship](#) and click on [Submission guidelines](#) for format and styling instructions. **Please submit your full manuscript via www.editorialmanager.com/jien no later than November 30, 2022.**
- If asked whether you are submitting to a special issue, reply “Yes” and select the relevant title from the drop-down menu. We recommend that you mention that you are submitting to this special issue in your cover letter as well.
- Submitted contributions should not have been previously published nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. Manuscripts will undergo rigorous peer review through the journal’s double-blind peer review process.

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