



OPEN ACCESS

EDITED AND REVIEWED BY
Kirstie McAllum,
Université de Montréal, Canada

*CORRESPONDENCE
Monica Thiel
mt9872@outlook.com

SPECIALTY SECTION
This article was submitted to
Organizational Communication,
a section of the journal
Frontiers in Communication

RECEIVED 09 June 2022
ACCEPTED 26 July 2022
PUBLISHED 10 August 2022

CITATION
Thiel M, Giorgi G and Ariza-Montes A
(2022) Editorial: Exploring social
networks, competitive actions, and
dynamic capabilities in organizations.
Front. Commun. 7:965330.
doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2022.965330

COPYRIGHT
© 2022 Thiel, Giorgi and Ariza-Montes.
This is an open-access article
distributed under the terms of the
Creative Commons Attribution License
(CC BY). The use, distribution or
reproduction in other forums is
permitted, provided the original
author(s) and the copyright owner(s)
are credited and that the original
publication in this journal is cited, in
accordance with accepted academic
practice. No use, distribution or
reproduction is permitted which does
not comply with these terms.

Editorial: Exploring social networks, competitive actions, and dynamic capabilities in organizations

Monica Thiel^{1*}, Gabriele Giorgi² and Antonio Ariza-Montes³

¹Asian Institute of Management, Makati City, Philippines, ²Department of Psychology, European University of Rome, Roma, Italy, ³Social Matters Research Group, Universidad Loyola Andalucía, Córdoba, Spain

KEYWORDS

competition, organizations, strategy, social networks, dynamic capabilities (DC)

Editorial on the Research Topic

Exploring social networks, competitive actions and dynamic capabilities in organizations

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed workplace relations (Stewart, 2021). For instance, employee relationships have weakened, while working at home has become the norm. Consequently, employee networks are continually changing firms' dynamic capabilities and competitive actions. Organizational network competitive actions and dynamic capabilities are crucial for understanding how to effectively manage internal and external organizational networks, especially when many employees are working in a hybrid or offline environment. Integrating social networks, competitive actions, and dynamic capabilities is important to address the growing crises in our natural, social, economic, and political environments since many decisions made are based on self and collective interests through networks and dynamic capabilities in organizations. Furthermore, there is scant literature that examines social networks, competitive actions and dynamic capabilities together. In order to address this important and under explored area in the literature, the editors submitted this Research Topic. We accepted 9 manuscripts that cover social networks and dynamic capabilities with a strong focus on trust and collaboration, followed by competitive advantage. The contributions to this Research Topic and to the literature point to a number of key insights within mechanisms and structures of dynamic capabilities, social networks, and competitive advantage/actions.

Mechanisms in dynamic capabilities

The articles from Zhang et al., Zhou and Li, Thiel, and Eshel et al. highlight the important role of mechanisms in driving dynamic capabilities within social networks and competitive advantage/actions (Zhou et al., 2019). Zhang et al. suggest there is an

urgent need to examine the mechanism effect of dynamic capabilities across a firm's boundaries within a bottom of the pyramid context. The authors' empirical research findings indicate trust and information sharing mechanisms facilitate collaborative network problem solving, develop new technologies, and enhance exploratory learning which enrich competitive advantage in organizations. Overall, the authors' research study enriches our understanding of the dynamic capabilities' antecedents and the black box of the embeddedness paradox in the bottom of the pyramid market context. The paradox shows that social embeddedness can have not only positive, but also negative effects on economic activity. Moreover, moderate relational embeddedness could promote dynamic capabilities, while overembeddedness inhibits dynamic capabilities. Zhao and Li introduce financial literacy as a mechanism for generating social capital and competitive advantage in rural entrepreneurship. The authors' empirical study findings show rural households with greater social networks and a higher level of information communication technology adoption tend to become entrepreneurs. Rather than merely focus on competitive intensity in the market (Wilden et al., 2013), Liu et al.'s research study found that both work and social network tasks conducted within an enterprise's social network media have a positive impact on work exuberance with different mechanisms that drive dynamic sharing capabilities, and in turn, could improve an enterprise's competitive advantage. The empirical study findings show that using social media for social tasks is a positive force rather than negative force within employees' work and engagement. Thiel's theoretical framework shows how employee social network strategies emerge from group entitativity and flow in a reciprocal manner from the organizational level to society at large. Specifically, group entitativity is a competitive mechanism that gives employees strategic advantage over other employees within the organization and influences other actors within the firm and across organizations and communities. Eshel et al.'s research provides new insights for understanding the mechanisms underlying the impact of COVID-19 on student mental health. The authors' empirical research study found that students adapted through the COVID-19 crisis within coping responses as a dynamic capability within the student social networks.

Networks and organizational structures

The articles from Santana, Igarashi and Hirashima, and Estevez and Takacs show network and organizational structures are the foundation of dynamic capabilities. Santana's empirical research findings have important implications for network industry knowledge, membership and stratification. The author examines competitive reactions as dynamic capabilities, rather

than network responsiveness within the content of the network tie (Kleinbaum and Stuart, 2014). The author's empirical findings contribute directly to the theorization of social exchange commitment, remedial boundary work, social capital, and knowledge production in virtual communities of practice, including the methodological study of remedial and discursive boundary work in porous or semi-anonymous communities. Overall, Santana's research work demonstrates that while the boundary worker's position in the sociocentric network may negatively influence their boundary work, the boundary work itself may positively influence the network by retaining members and strengthening their ties to the virtual community. Igarashi and Hirashima conducted a four-wave longitudinal survey to test whether individuals high in generalized trust actively switch ties and form open triads in dynamic social networks. Stochastic Actor-Oriented Models were employed to analyze structural changes in advice and personal discussion networks among first-year undergraduates. The authors' research findings showed the predicted patterns of social selection processes are based on generalized trust when the dynamics of the two networks were analyzed simultaneously. However, in the advice network, individuals high in generalized trust tend to terminate existing ties, create new ties, and show a decreasing trend toward forming close triads when the degree of local clustering was large. Individuals high in generalized trust play a key role in establishing Teece et al.'s (1997) novel knowledge assets because they will get better access to valuable resources embedded within organizational contexts and become popular and advantageous among coworkers owing to their rational tie-formation and dissolution strategies to integrate and reconstruct the value of the resources. Overall, the authors are the first to demonstrate the applicability of the emancipation theory of trust to the process of multiple network dynamics. Taken together, Estevez and Takacs's empirical research results demonstrate that structural aspects beyond the relationship network ties in the gossip triad matter for dynamic capabilities such as workplace gossip. In studying various organizational and network structures, the authors gained further insights into the specific contexts where negative gossip is more likely to promote sustainable cooperation within network ties. Importantly, the authors' findings suggest that brokers can use their structural position to control social information in the organization. However, brokers are also subject to negative evaluations from their colleagues.

Another strength of the articles that form part of this special topic on social networks, competitive actions and dynamic capabilities is the broad international scope of the authors and the study contexts. The authors come from 5 countries (China, Sweden, Israel, USA and Japan) and 13 universities (Aichi Shukutoku University, Beijing Institute of Technology, Beijing Normal University, Linköping University, Nagoya University, Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, Tel Aviv University, Tel-Hai College, University of California, University

of Haifa, University of International Business and Economics, Xidian University and Yanshan University). Each contribution highlights the key role played by organizational networks and dynamic capabilities that are crucial for understanding how to effectively manage organizational competitive advantage and performance in specific social and cultural contexts.

Author contributions

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct, and intellectual contribution to the work and approved it for publication.

Acknowledgments

The editors thank the authors for their hard work and insightful research contributions.

References

- Kleinbaum, A. M., and Stuart, T. E. (2014). Network responsiveness: The social structural microfoundations of dynamic capabilities. *Acad. Manage. Perspect.* 28, 353–367. doi: 10.5465/amp.2013.0096
- Stewart, A. (2021). COVID-19 and the future of labour research, policy and regulation. *Labour Industry* 32, 10–27. doi: 10.1080/10301763.2021.1894634
- Teece, D. J., Pisano, G., and Shuen, A. (1997). Dynamic capabilities and strategic management. *Strategic Manage. J.* 18, 509–533.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1097-0266(199708)18:7andlt;509::AID-SMJ882andgt;3.0.CO;2-Z

Wilden, E., Siegried, G. P., Nielsen, B. B., and Links, I. (2013). Dynamic capabilities and performance: strategy, structure and environment. *Long Range Plann.* 46, 72–96. doi: 10.1016/j.lrp.2012.12.001

Zhou, S. S., Zhou, A. J., Feng, J., and Jiang, S. (2019). Dynamic capabilities and organizational performance: the mediating role of innovation. *J. Manage. Organiz.* 25, 731–747. doi: 10.1017/jmo.2017.20