

**CALL FOR PAPERS**  
Management International

**'Routines and competences: what links with the performance of organizations?'**

Guest editors:  
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The question of the linkage between competences and performances is old but recurrent. Often it is precisely this linkage that is presented as justifying interest in the notion of competence. Yet, paradoxically, few studies have analyzed it in depth. Some attempts have been made to identify universal keys to performance, but their limits soon became apparent (Foster and Kaplan, 2001). Exploration of the maneuvers, practices or behaviors that can maintain or develop performance in organizations thus remains a very present unanswered question in strategy and human resource management (Miller et al., 2013; Ndofor et al., 2011; Malpica et al., 2014; Prieto et al., 2014; Yang et al., 2014; Barrick et al., 2015; Brulhart and Gherra, 2015; Martin et al., 2015).

Resource and competence theory, which feeds into the debate on the respective importance of firms' internal capabilities and external factors in achieving performance (Penrose, 1959; Wernerfelt, 1984; Rumelt, 1991; Hansen and Wernerfelt, 1989), is thus deeply rooted in these discussions. Over the last thirty years, this theory has undergone a remarkable development (Arrègle, 1996; Koenig, 1999; Durand, 2000; Métais, 2004; Foss, 2007; Brulhart et al., 2010; Prévot et al., 2010) and many ramifications have been directly inspired by it: "competence-based management" (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990; Sanchez, Heene & Thomas, 1996; Wright et al., 2001); "dynamic capabilities" (Teece et al., 1997; Teece, 2007); the "knowledge-based view" (Spender and Grant, 1996; Grant, 1996a; 1996b; Nonaka et al., 2000). These cross-cutting approaches to management sciences have enabled researchers in strategy and human resource management to make considerable use of them.

However, despite these common references, the concept of competence remains characterized by a clear-cut separation between the ways it has been handled in strategic management and human resources management (Oiry, 2004). Whereas strategic management aims to identify the links between competences and the dynamics of the organization (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990; Sanchez et al., 1996), human resource management focuses mainly on the management of individual competences and the ways of rewarding these competences (remuneration and career management) and developing them (training management, deployment, etc.) (Wright et al., 2001; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2009; Rouby et al., 2012).

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Each disciplinary field thus appropriates the concept at its own level, and very few approaches have tried to bring them together. The aim of this call for submissions is to favor the intersection of approaches by privileging multi-level analyses. Several researchers have tried to link the different levels of resource and competence theory (Javidan, 1998; Retour, 2005; Retour et al., 2009; Salvato and Rerup, 2011). Salvato and Rerup (2011) put forward a multi-level analytical grid integrating five levels: strategy, dynamic capabilities, capabilities, routines, and competences, which they link to performance. It is thus possible to envisage the different links that these various aspects have with performance:

- strategy: a lever on routines and capabilities which determines their specific character and therefore the performance of the firm;
- dynamic capabilities, which are higher-level routines. Here it is the capacity to reconfigure these resources and competences with the aid of organizational processes that makes it possible to create value for the firm (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000; Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009);
- capabilities: an assemblage of routines at the level of a department or inter-department. Performance depends on the efficient use of resources and their exploitation through a given process coordinating and combining these resources (Newbert, 2007);
- organizational routines which operate at group level. These are recurrent models of interaction at group level (performative) and of cognitive regularity (ostensive) (Feldman and Pentland, 2003);
- individual competences. Performance is explained by differences in human resources among firms, 2007; Wright et al., 2001), team effects (Wernerfelt, 1989), HRM practices (Lado and Wilson, 1994) or work situations and interaction with individuals (Sandberg, 2000), etc.

The aim of this call for submissions is to bring together the approaches of strategy and human resource management on the links between competences and performance, with a view to offering a deeper exploration of the concepts of competence and performance and fine-grained empirical descriptions of them. The objective is to propose a close understanding of the underlying mechanisms and processes behind the relationships between these different levels and performance, so as to escape from the “black box” impasse and tautological critique (Porter, 1991; Priem and Butler, 2001).

This call will also give priority to articles proposing robust and precise spin-offs for organization leadership. One of the challenges is indeed to move from relatively clear conceptual bases to effective operational prescriptions for organization management.

Several questions orient the content of the articles expected (the list is not exhaustive):

- What are the roles of the different levels (organization, group, individual) in the performance(s) of the organization? What performance for what level?
- What are the underlying mechanisms that generate the linkage between these different levels? What are the complementarities or incompatibilities between these different levels?
- How should the competences and performances of the organization be managed in a multi-level way? How should the tensions between the different levels be articulated?
- To what extent are competence management tools a lever for the performances of the organization? What are the HR levers? For what performance?

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Submissions are open to all, including (but not exclusively) participants at the Research Day "competences, knowledge and performance: theoretical and empirical insights" (the research day is organized by the AIMS Working Party " Resources, Competences, and Dynamic Capabilities " (RCCD), the AGHR Research and Working Party " Competence Management – Didier Retour", the

Research Group “Collective Competences and Knowledge” (C3) of LEST UMR CNRS 7317 and AGECSO).to be held in Aix-en-Provence on Friday November 20, 2015

All manuscripts submitted in response this invitation will be subject to “double blind” evaluation in accordance with the rules of *Management International*.

Manuscripts should be sent by email to [franck.brulhart@univ-amu.fr](mailto:franck.brulhart@univ-amu.fr) no later than march 10 2015. Presented papers must follow the standards set out in the editorial policy of Management International (<http://www.managementinternational.ca/section-des-auteurs/soumettre-un-article/>).

