**Call for Papers**

**Journal of Small Business Management Special Issue**

**Small Business Resilience: A Look from Different Levels of Analysis**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Entrepreneurship researchers have studied resilience across various contexts by drawing from a myriad of academic disciplines. At the micro-level, the focus has been on how small business owners and entrepreneurs cope throughout the entrepreneurial process. At the macro level, research has considered the resilience of clusters, ecosystems, and regions in response to challenging conditions. In addition to contextual and level differences, researchers have modeled resilience as positive frame-making behaviors to increase reliability, as well as rule-breaking behaviors in a proactive manner to cope with inevitable changes. Given the prior diversity of resilience research, the goal of this Special Issue is to encourage scholars to conduct broad and deep examinations to connect complex and often conflicting psychological, sociological, and economic factors influencing small business resilience at different levels of analysis. This special issue is open to, but not restricted by, data and theories relevant to small business disruptions from COVID-19 and social unrests.

**WHY A SPECIAL ISSUE ON RESILIENCE NOW?**

Organizational resilience has been studied using lenses from human resource management (Bullough, Renko, & Myatt, 2014; Muehlfeld, Urbig, & Weitzel, 2017), knowledge management (Milosevic, Erin, & Combs, 2018), strategic management (Rothaemel and Deeds), and macroeconomics (Shepherd and Williams, 2014; Williams and Shepherd, 2016). Organizational resilience is especially important and relevant for small businesses because half of small businesses fail within five years (Small Business Administration, 2012). At the individual level, scholars use resilience as cognitive and behavioral traits to explain why and how individuals bounce back repeatedly from failures to start a small business or how small business owners recover from unexpected adverse events (Bullough, et al., 2014; Muehlfeld et al., 2017; Nisula & Olander, 2020). At the organizational level, research has employed resilience to explain how businesses adapt organizational processes to increase reliability in protecting their operations (Bigley & Roberts, 2001; Haase & Eberl, 2019). In addition, researchers employ entrepreneurial resilience to explain how and why firms promote rule-breaking behaviors as a proactive means to cope with inevitable changes (Kickul & Gundry, 2002) or to create new value (Arend, 2016; Paige & Littrell, 2002). At the macro-economic level, research has focused on understanding mechanisms to enhance existing regional competitiveness related to clusters (Crespo et al., 2014; Suire & Vicente, 2014) and ecosystems (e.g., Roundy et al., 2017), or how regions seek to revitalize economies through networks and institutional support (e.g., Williams & Vorley, 2014).

However, there are still unanswered questions for the high failure rate of small businesses that relate to resilience. For example, if small business owner’s resilience is viewed as an *attribute* or *characteristic*, can this resilience be strengthened to improve business survival rate? In terms of construct definition, how is resilience similar to or different from perseverance? How does resilience fit with other constructs in a nomological net that includes adaptability (Branicki et al., 2018; Duchek, 2018), bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005), improvisation (Balachandra, 2019; Hmieleski & Corbett, 2006), resourcefulness (Powell & Baker, 2011), commitment (Powell & Baker, 2012), and coordination (Hayward et al., 2010)? Additionally, resilience can be thought of as a dynamic *process* of adjustments to new contextual circumstances by the owner, the team, or the business (e.g., Dewald and Bowen, 2010). In this case, resilience is often modeled as a response to an existential threat. However, another way to model small business resilience is through the creation of processes that prepare them for potential disruptions (Haase & Eberl, 2019). Researchers can thus model ex-ante, the factors that foster small business resilience through regional macroeconomic revitalization or view this form of resilience as the capacity and readiness to recover from disruptions (e.g., Hayward et al., 2010). The potential for the resilience construct remains unfulfilled, in part, because its boundaries with related concepts remain fuzzy, leading to suboptimal methodologies, ineffectual operationalization, and thus flawed analytical testing. Advancing a more comprehensive, theoretically grounded construct of small business resilience has implications for entrepreneurship theory (Baker & Nelson, 2005) and pedagogy (Santos & Morris, 2019).

We encourage scholars to develop theory and evidence on such interactions to provide a more accurate and complete picture of the contextual tapestry within which small business resilience operates. We welcome scholars from diverse disciplines, who study resilience within small businesses and entrepreneurial firms and small businesses at different levels of analysis, and that represent significant theoretical and empirical contributions to the literature.

**TOPICS OF INTEREST**

We believe that this Special Issue will help small business and entrepreneurship scholars reevaluate and reorient research on resilience around a range of important issues such as:

1. What factors influence the ways that individuals (e.g., small business owners), teams, firms, and regions or communities enact resilience, which has influenced small business survival over time and vice versa?
2. How do actors within one level of analysis address small business resilience that influences another level of analysis? Why do they take these actions, and how do they focus their efforts? Will one level of resilience facilitate or hamper another level’s resilience efforts and effectiveness?
3. How do contextual factors manifest and lead small business owners, teams, firms, or regions/communities to engage in developmental processes to improve resilience?
4. What dispositional, self-regulatory, or task-specific social-cognitive factors influence resilience? What performance-based or coping strategies enhance small business resilience after failure or continuance toward success? How do frame-making or rule-breaking behaviors serve as proactive means to develop resilience?
5. What is the influence of venture imprinting on small business resilience? For example, what are (some of) the path dependencies at founding that predict resilience at different stages of business development?
6. How do small business team cohesiveness and conflicts (e.g., with co-founders key employees) affect resilience?
7. What theories predict the emergence of, the catalyst, and efficacy for the manifestations of resilience?
8. What are some proactive means for small businesses to build resilience to overcome macroeconomic and other societal disruptions?
9. Does government aid and intervention hurt small business’s capacity to be self-reliant and develop resilient capabilities?
10. How do strategy, leadership, performance management, communication, problem-solving, coordination, and/or knowledge mapping build resilience in times of crisis?

This list of issues is illustrative rather than exhaustive. This Special Issue is open to resilience in a variety of contexts, including COVID-19, social unrests, and other crises (e.g., natural disasters or financial recession). Studies that demonstrate how different mechanisms interact would be of particular interest, as would papers examining the antecedents and consequences of multiple mechanisms. We especially welcome truly innovative and path-breaking research and projects bringing together scholars from diverse research traditions or disciplines, who examine the phenomenon from different perspectives. We welcome diverse methods, including qualitative, field, survey, archival, laboratory, and computational methods as well as the study of a broad range of intra- and inter-organizational phenomena for different kinds of organizations, including not-for-profit organizations, and voluntary organizations.

**A PROPOSED TIMELINE**

* Papers will be reviewed following the *JSBM* double-blind review process.
* Papers should be prepared using the *JSBM Guidelines*.
* **January 31st, 2021** - deadline for submission of papers.
* **April 30th, 2021** – Authors notified of initial revise and resubmit decisions and provided peer reviewer feedback.
* **May 15th, 2021** – Virtual Workshop for authors who have received a revise and resubmit.
* **June 30th, 2021** – Article revisions due.
* **August 15th, 2021** – Final feedback to authors.
* **September 15th, 2021** – Final revisions due.
* **October 15th, 2021** – Final acceptance decisions made.
* Authors should submit their manuscripts through JSBM’s manuscript portal and choose this “Small Business Resilience” Special Issue.

**SPECIAL ISSUE WORKSHOP**

To help authors advance their manuscripts, the guest editors will host a “virtual” Workshop in May 2021. Authors of manuscripts asked to be revised & resubmitted will be invited to present their papers to the co-editors during this workshop. Participating at this workshop does not guarantee acceptance of the paper.

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