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Executive summary

The growth of enterprises has been a popular topic in literature pertaining to entrepreneurship. This has not, however, guaranteed that people have acquired quality, cumulative knowledge concerning growth processes. Although scholars seem to acknowledge the fact that there are many factors affecting the growth of enterprises and that growth processes differ from each other, many studies use cross-sectional, quantitative data concerning the growth of enterprises, which does provide feasible information about the actual process of growth. For these reasons, seeking and developing more holistic approaches to studying the growth of enterprises is necessary.

The purpose of this study is to increase our understanding of the growth processes of micro-firms. More specifically, the main objective is to propose a more general framework and propositions for the successful growth processes of micro-firms in Finnish context, and to discuss the practical implications of the proposed framework.

First, we have developed a preliminary framework for the growth processes of micro-firms based on reviewed literature related to growth factors, growth deterrents, available growth strategies and growth management. At the empirical stage, we applied that framework to the growth process of seven selected enter-

prises to illustrate various paths and strategies for growth. Data was collected via semi-structured interviews with the owner-managers of the selected enterprises. All of the interviews were recorded and the data was analysed using content analysis. The classification of the data constituted a synthesis of loose interview themes and the themes that emerged from the data. The overall approach to this study was abductive, which combines inductive and deductive reasoning.

As a contribution, in addition to a holistic framework of a successful growth process of micro-firms, we suggested seven propositions linked to the framework: (1) The current growth willingness of a firm is linked to the start-up context of the firm especially in the cases when the credibility of the firm has been problematic; (2) Unexpected growth is as common as planned growth among SMEs. The antecedents of unexpected growth are connected to environmental factors; (3) Focusing on key operations and outsourcing all the others increases the growth capability of a small firm; (4) Scarcity of resources leads to creative solutions in growth firms; (5) Professional management contributes to the management of a growth process; (6) Investing in the monitoring of finance and the controlling of costs contributes to the management of a growth process; (7) Developing and utilizing a social network of the firm contributes to the management of a growth process.

This study has demonstrated that micro-firms possess willingness in developing and there are various alternative paths to take in implementing the growth process. The outcome of the study may be used to assist in eliminating some of the deterrents in the growth process and therefore help to increase the amount of potential growth enterprises. The framework we

have developed offers an extensive and holistic way to analyze the growth of business. It offers a tool for entrepreneurs, consultants, investors and educators in identifying some of the central issues related to the growth of micro-firm. ■

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Organizational creativity – From hype to organizational structures facilitating creativity

The themes related to creativity have dominated the Finnish political debate during the past few years. While the Finnish population is aging and the blue-collar jobs are drifting to China and to other low-cost countries, the basic tenet of the politicians' seem to be that in order to maintain the Finnish welfare society, creativity and especially its results in the form of new innovations, are desperately needed. The creativity and innovation hype is manifested for instance in the current government platform, where the term innovation is mentioned astonishingly 58 times.

While the politicians have only recently

discovered the importance of creativity, scholars have studied creativity related themes explicitly for more than 50 years. The history of creativity studies have been clearly dominated by individual-centered perspectives. However, past two decades and especially past few years, have witnessed the growing interest in organizational creativity focusing on group and organizational aspects of creativity.

This article has two basic purposes. Being a new line of academic inquiry, the first purpose of the article is to analyze and clarify the essence of organizational creativity. Scholars interested in organizational creativity typically focus on factors such as culture, structure, resources, climate, and leadership styles, either favorable or less favorable to creativity. After discussing and introducing the topic more generally the analysis focuses on organizational structures. The analysis of organizational structures facilitating creativity is thus the second purpose of this article.

The empirical part of the paper is based on an analysis of two case organizations. Organizational creativity is typically studied in so-called 'hyper-creative' organizations, such as R&D firms. However, analyses of more 'mundane' knowledge intensive organizations, like the laboratory and the newspaper in this article, are needed given that these kinds of organizations contribute significantly to the value-creation of the economy. The analysis reveals that while case organizations have, at least implicitly, pursued to facilitate creativity, they still face some problems to solve. Accordingly, the newspaper is troubled by a lack of cross-functional integration whereas the laboratory continues to suffer from its heavy administrative structure.

While hyper-creative organizations have typically streamlined their bureaucracy, and