

EDITORIAL

ENTREPRENEURIAL INNOVATION IN THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM: FROM ACADEMIC INCUBATION TO ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCE¹

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Entrepreneurship continues to be a key driver of economic and social transformation worldwide, particularly as digital technologies reshape traditional business models and ecosystems (Autio et al., 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital adoption while exposing vulnerabilities in startup development, organizational management, and skills readiness (Crammond, 2025). In this context, research that deepens our understanding of entrepreneurial competencies, digital transformation, lean management, and product strategy is more vital than ever. This volume gathers four contributions that illuminate different facets of these complex and interrelated challenges in contemporary entrepreneurial practice and education.

Recent empirical studies emphasize the pivotal role of digital transformation in revitalizing entrepreneurial ecosystems and enhancing firm innovation capacities (Kraus et al., 2023; Bhuiyan & Akter, 2024). Digital entrepreneurship is not only about adopting technologies but also about fostering entrepreneurial orientation that drives disruptive innovation and competitive advantage in volatile markets (Kraus et al., 2023). Moreover, higher education institutions are increasingly recognized as critical actors in equipping entrepreneurial talent with both digital and managerial competencies, thereby nurturing resilience and adaptability in emerging ventures (Bulto et al., 2025). Lean management principles have further been integrated into educational settings to advance quality, efficiency, and continuous improvement, reinforcing the alignment between academic curricula and evolving marketplace demands (Hariyani, 2025). These dynamics make it imperative to explore frameworks and methodologies that support entrepreneurs and institutions in navigating complex digital and innovation landscapes.

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2. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUE

This issue features four research papers spanning university-based startup development, lean management in higher education, e-commerce product selection frameworks, and digital competency matrices for IT professionals.

- The first paper by Crammond (2025) evaluates how a Scottish business school leverages digital tools to reinforce university-based startup development. The study's Four-stage Digital Incubation Innovation Model addresses critical phases—from knowledge acquisition to acceleration—highlighting a replicable institutional strategy to nurture entrepreneurial mindsets and ventures in times of instability.
- The second article investigates the strategic role of external auditing aligned with lean management principles within a Portuguese private higher education institution. It reveals how quality assurance mechanisms serve as catalysts for organizational innovation and sustainability, expanding the application of lean thinking beyond industrial to educational domains (Santos et al., 2025).
- The third paper delivers a systematic, data-driven framework for selecting profitable products in Amazon's competitive marketplace. By integrating market intelligence, competitor benchmarking, and financial analysis, the authors provide SMEs with a robust roadmap to navigate e-commerce challenges and capitalize on digital opportunities (Silva et al., 2025).
- Complementing these contributions, the fourth paper synthesizes fifteen recent empirical studies to propose a five-step methodology for designing, auditing, and updating skill matrices in IT. This approach aligns human resource practices with fast-evolving digital competencies, essential for agile scaling and cybersecurity in modern organizations (Martins et al., 2025).

Together, these research papers advance our empirical and practical knowledge on fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems, embedding lean innovation in education, harnessing digital commerce data, and cultivating future-ready digital skills.

3. ACKNOWLEDGENTS

We thank all authors for their insightful contributions to this volume and the peer reviewers for their rigorous evaluations. Their dedication enhances the robustness and relevance of the research presented here. This volume reflects the ongoing commitment of the Management in Review community to advancing entrepreneurship scholarship that bridges academia and practice.

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