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Editorial for the Special Issue on Linking Theory and Practice in Intellectual Capital

This issue of EJKM is driven by the challenge and objective to identify scientific research that can link theory and practice. The search for new metrics and approaches that can capture the nature of intellectual resources has motivated efforts to improve how organizations manage their sources of value; by nurturing them comprehensively, this scientific field can be seen as a profit driver towards sustainable financial and strategic positioning. The six papers in this issue are focused on the role of IC in firms' sustainable value creation and performance (Rossi and Magni, 2017; Harlow, 2017), on the role of IC players (Chiucchi and Giuliani, 2017; Bardy and Rubens, 2017; Harlow, 2017), and social capital as a whole (Maher et al., 2017), as key intangible resources (Lopes et al., 2016; Schiuma et al., 2008) that can link IC theory and practice, in particular in its Human Capital dimension. These papers are based on several research approaches (quantitative and qualitative), reinforcing the traditional insights that intellectual capital can be explored, developed, and perceived from internal and external players from an epistemological or ontological dimension (Lopes, 2015).

The first paper explores the way intellectual capital drivers help Italian consumers' decision to influence firms' performance and profitability (Rossi and Magni, 2017). It is exploratory in nature and from a marketing perspective, and informs readers about the a number of intellectual capital sub-dimensions. Aligned with traditional literature on the IC scientific field, it provides an integrated overview about the connections between these sub-dimensions and the value co-creation of firms. Thus, the paper clearly illustrates a practical perspective of IC, consolidating the theoretical models fully explored and discussed in the literature.

Bardy and Rubens (2017) develop a case study approach, using an interactive and original theoretical association between government officials, local businesses, community councils, health workers, traditional leaders, religious leaders and heads of NGOs. They explore the way institutions are moving towards sustainability co-creating, building on labour relations, sustainability management, social responsibility, culture diversity, and social inclusiveness. From a theoretical perspective, this qualitative approach (Lopes, 2015) also provides a variety of systems-thinking constructs, combining indigenous wisdom with new human knowledge repositories such as academic and practitioners' players.

The relationship between IC and performance is also explored by Harlow (2017), linking the firms' strategic intent, IC dimensions and firms' finance and innovation performance. This paper introduces and underlines the role and importance of a firm's internal player viewpoint (Chief Knowledge Officer) on knowledge management and firms' performance achievements. The insights provided in this approach, although limited to a small sample of USA firms, establish an interesting approach that can be followed and replicated in other regions over time to consolidate the role of knowledge management activities and perspectives on firms' value creation.

The fourth paper is based on IC reporting as a tool for decision making and monitor processing, from the project sponsor, project leader, and external partners perspective and perception (Chiucchi and Giuliani, 2017). It complements some of the insights provided in the other papers, reinforcing the role of the human capital dimension as a key enabler and facilitator towards firms' financial performance and dynamic firms' innovativeness. This theoretical and qualitative approach (Lopes, 2015), based on Italian firms, explores the way project players perceive and manage the traditional IC resources as drivers of project's success. This perspective is also embodied in the last two papers of this special issue (Piwowar-Sulej, 2017; Maher et al., 2017).

Piwowar-Sulej (2017) has surveyed one hundred project-oriented organizations in order to identify the role of Human Resources (HR) in the project efficiency achievement. As a result of the insights that emerged from the discussion, specialists can become strategic partners for an entire organization and take the role of dedicated partners in particular projects. This solution could ensure higher consistency of the activities undertaken

within the framework of both HR function courses. The traditional human capital dimension emerges in this context as a key driver, not only as a project-based approach, but also at the entire firm's level.

The last paper, authored by Maher et al. (2017), has the objective to explore the impact of psychological capital (efficacy, optimism, and resilience) on public employees in Egypt, corroborating the theoretical insights found in Dumay et al. (2015). Thus, this paper continues to reinforce the chain *Intellectual Capital – Internal and External Players – Performance*, as the structural pillar of this special issue. As mentioned in the paper, leaders of public organizations should give more attention to the importance of positive psychological resources as core drivers that affect employees' performance, satisfaction towards higher institutional performance and profitability achievements.

The last words go to the authors who have contribute for this special issue with their thoughts and theoretical and practical insights, making the linkage between theory and practice more visible and clear, towards strong expected improvements over the years to come.

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Guest Editors

Dr. Ilídio Tomás Lopes and Dr Rogério Marques Serrasqueiro
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), Lisbon, Portugal