

## **Entrepreneurial Competences and Their Development in the Context of Small Enterprises Within the Austrian Traditional Industry Sector**

**Elizabeta Valentic**

FH Joanneum, International Management, Austria  
*Elizabeta.valentic@fh-joanneum.at*

**Birgit Burböck**

FH Joanneum, International Management, Austria  
*Birgit.burboeck@fh-joanneum.at*

**Markus Jocham**

FH Joanneum, International Management, Austria  
*markus.jocham@edu.fh-joanneum.at*

Traditional, or low- and medium-technology (LMT) firms are increasingly becoming out of focus with modern research today and appear to be displaced by the interest in their modern high-tech opponents. However, given the high economic importance of smaller enterprises in LMT branches, it turns out to be essential to examine certain necessary entrepreneurial characteristics in order to provide a guideline for further economic development in this very sector. The entrepreneurial competences are based on the framework of the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework developed by the European Commission and consists of three areas like i.) resources, ii.) ideas & opportunities, and iii.) into action. These three areas are further divided into 15 different competences.

The contribution of this study to the scientific community can be two-fold. First, the majority of studies, dealing with the topic of smaller firms, nowadays, focus rather on high-technology branches. While the importance and future-orientation of suchlike companies are undisputed, low-technology firms seem to be losing presence within modern economic research. As opposed to this, Veglio & Zucchella (2015, pp. 139–140) pointed out that particularly these traditional firms do still have a ‘*raison d’être*’ within modern research. Suchlike ventures, when located in a first world country, are facing very specific challenges in terms of their foreign competition and can, therefore, be treated as a research field in their own right.

This quantitative work has the objective to examine such like vital entrepreneurial competences in traditional companies and their development in Austria. The results of the empirical study, conducted among a random sample of 52 Austrian entrepreneurs, show a high homogeneity regarding the response trend and thereby indicate a distinguishing peculiarity of the underlying target group. In line with the prior conducted literature research, predominantly competences, related to motivation and perseverance, combined with the capability to learn through experience were considered vital from the examinees of the questionnaire. Based on a comprehensive analysis of the Austrian education system, combined with this quantitative results on the preferred method of competence enhancement, the findings show that in all kinds and levels of education, the development of entrepreneurial competences and know how would be beneficial for the Austrian economy.

*Keywords:* competence, competency, entrepreneur, traditional industry sectors, small enterprises, Austrian education system

Sources:

- Valerio, Veglio, and Antonelly, Zucchella. “Entrepreneurial firms in traditional industries. Does innovation matter for international growth?” *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 13, no. 2 (2015): 138–152. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10843-015-0142-z>