

The Early Stages of Growth in Technology- and Service-Based Firms: Does Context Matter?

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Abstract

Many stages of growth models have been introduced to clarify management priorities during the early stages of business growth. However, many of these models are conceptual and universal, providing only limited benefits to specific industries and business contexts. The early stages of technology-based ventures have attracted broad interest, while less attention has been paid to the early stages of service-based firms. However, in recent years, interest in service-based businesses, as well as servitisation, has grown. This literature-based study explores and compares the early stages of growth in service-based and technology-based firms.

The following research questions are posed: What are the basic characteristics of recent empirical studies on the early stages of technology- and service-based firms? What are the central themes, sequential patterns and central differences in the early stages of service- and technology-based firms as revealed in recent empirical literature? Is there room for analysis of the early stages of growth in technology-service hybrids (servitisation)?

Keywords: Stages of growth; SMEs; micro-sized enterprises; technology-based firm; service-based firm