

# **Openness dilemmas and disposition in SME strategy: A sudden breeze of passion or a promising management practice**

*Aylin Ates, Akwal Sunner, Peter McKiernan*

*Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship, Strathclyde University Business School, Glasgow, UK*

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to gain a deeper understanding of the dilemmas of Open Strategy initiatives, investigate the already established dilemmas and identify further if any in the context of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Central to our examination is the concept of ‘openness disposition’, which in the context of strategy refers to the tendency of individuals, collectives, and managers to make strategy transparent, participatory, and inclusive, or look for closure. We contribute to addressing the performative effects of this dynamic expansion and contraction in openness within SME strategy while using the concept of openness dilemmas and disposition. While Open Strategy is regarded as a positive means of contemporary management, fostering creativity, innovation, and empowerment, there are some researched negative areas too. By using Paradox Theory to gain a deeper understanding of Open Strategy dilemmas, this paper will bring together theory with practitioners’ experiences of Open Strategy initiatives. Based on findings emerging from a longitudinal multiple case study with eleven European SMEs, we empirically identify two new dilemmas, which are theorised to extend understanding of the dilemmas of Open Strategy.

**Keywords:** Open strategy, dilemmas, SMEs, participation, inclusion, transparency