

NILOOFAR ABOLFATHI

Website: www.niloofarabolfathi.com

Email: niloofara@smu.edu.sg

Academic Appointment

Singapore Management University Assistant Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship	July 2023–Present
National University of Singapore Visiting Assistant Professor	2019–2023
WU Vienna University of Economics and Business Assistant Professor (Non-tenure track)	2017–2019

Education

Bocconi University Ph.D. in Business Administration and Management Dissertation title: “Essays on organizations and competition” Committee: Charles Williams (chair), Anupama Phene (GWU), Nilanjana Dutt	2018
George Washington University Visiting Research Scholar	Fall 2015
Allameh Tabatabai University MSc. in Industrial Management Thesis title: “A model for prioritizing firm strategies using multicriteria decision making techniques”	2010
K.N.Toosi University of Technology BSc. in Industrial Engineering	2008

Research Interests

Areas: Competitive strategy, Entrepreneurship, Firm scope, Incumbent versus entrant dynamics, Demand-side perspective.

Methods: Field experiment, Difference-in-Differences, Panel data analysis.

Publications

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- Abolfathi, N.** (Forthcoming). Multihoming and single-homing complementors’ responses to intensified between-platform competition: Evidence from the YouTube–Twitch rivalry. *Strategic Management Journal*.
– Finalist for Best Proposal Award for Rigor, Competitive Strategy IG, SMS Annual Conference, 2024
 - Santamaria, S., **Abolfathi, N.**, & Mahmood, I. P. (2024). Demand pull versus resource push training approaches to entrepreneurship: A field experiment. *Strategic Management Journal*, 45(3), 564–587. doi.org/10.1002/smj.3560
– Best Paper Award, wISE Scholarship in Oceania, 2023

3. **Abolfathi, N.**, Fosfuri, A., & Santamaria, S. (2022). Out of the trap: Conversion funnel business model, customer switching costs, and industry profitability. *Strategic Management Journal*. 43(9), 1872–1896. doi.org/10.1002/smj.3388
 – Best Paper Prize Honorable Mention, SMS Annual Conference, 2021
4. **Abolfathi, N.**, Santamaria, S., & Williams, C. (2021). How does firm scope depend on customer switching costs? Evidence from mobile telecommunications markets. *Management Science*. 68(1): 316–332. doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2020.3913
 – Glueck Best Paper Award, Strategic Management Division of AOM, 2020

Other Publications

5. **Abolfathi, N.**, & Santamaria, S. (2020). Dating disruption—How Tinder gamified an industry. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. 61(3), 7–11. sloanreview.mit.edu/article/dating-disruption-how-tinder-gamified-an-industry
6. **Abolfathi, N.**, Santamaria, S. & Williams, C. (2020) Market frictions and competitive positions: Lessons from the mobile telecommunications market. *Academy of Management Best Paper Proceedings*. doi.org/10.5465/AMBPP.2020.119

Selected Working Papers and Work In Progress

- **Abolfathi, N.**, Kacperczyk, A., & Wang, H. When do advisors help with startup fundraising? Evidence from a field experiment.
- Kotha, R., Xu, G., **Abolfathi, N.**, Jiang, L., & Dimov, D. Evaluating entrepreneurial potential with AI and human judgment.
- **Abolfathi, N.** Niche expansion strategy: Explaining leadership change in the mobile dating app industry.
- **Abolfathi, N.** & Phene, A. Demand-side perspective on firm performance after new technology introduction: The role of customer complementary assets.

Selected Grants, Awards, and Scholarships

- Singapore’s Ministry of Education (MOE) Tier 1 Grant for the Project “Digital Entrepreneurship” (2023)
- Best Paper Award, wISE Scholarship in Oceania co-organized by the Strategic Management Division of AOM (2023)
- Best Paper Prize Honorable Mention, SMS Annual Conference (2021)
- Glueck Best Paper Award, Strategic Management Division of AOM (2020)
- CoCoCo Research Grant, Bocconi University (2016–2017)
- Outstanding Reviewer Award, Strategic Management Division of AOM (2016)
- Fondazione CARIPLO Travel Award, Bocconi (2016)
- Fondazione CARIPLO Grant (Research Visit), Bocconi (2015)
- Fondazione CARIPLO (Travel Award), Bocconi (2014)
- Ph.D. Fellowship, Bocconi (2012–16)
- Graduated with honors, Allameh Tabatabai (2010)

Selected Invited Seminar and Conference Presentations

• AOM Annual Meeting (Copenhagen)	2025
• Strategy Science Conference (Barcelona)	2025
• Barcelona School of Economics Summer Forum	2025
• SMS Special Conference (Palermo)	2025
• 7th Asian Management Research Consortium (Hong Kong)	2025
• Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal Workshop (Singapore)	2025
• SMS Annual Conference (Istanbul)	2024
• DRUID Conference (Nice)	2024
• 6th Asian Management Research Consortium (Singapore)	2024
• Organization Science Workshop (Singapore)	2024
• European Digital Platform Research Network (Milan)	2023
• SIE Virtual Workshop	2023
• wISE Scholarship in Oceania (Sydney)	2023
• ESSEC Business School	2022
• ESADE	2022
• IESE Business School	2022
• Rotterdam School of Management (RSM)	2022
• University College London (UCL)	2022
• University of Melbourne	2022
• University of Sydney	2022
• China Europe International Business School (CEIBS)	2022
• Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)	2022
• City University of Hong Kong (CityUHK)	2022
• Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)	2022
• Singapore Management University (SMU)	2022
• Copenhagen Business School	2022
• Frankfurt School	2022
• KU Leuven	2022
• Michigan Ross School of Business	2021
• University of Tehran (Faculty of Entrepreneurship)	2021
• Virtual SMS Annual Conference	2021
• NUS Business School	2021
• NUS BizWIP Seminar Series	2020
• Virtual AOM Annual Meeting	2020
• SMS Special Conference (Frankfurt)	2019
• DRUID Conference (Copenhagen)	2019
• SMS Annual Conference (Paris)	2018
• SMS Special Conference (Oslo)	2018
• AOM Annual Meeting (Atlanta)	2017
• SMS Annual Conference (Berlin)	2016
• AOM Annual Meeting (Philadelphia)	2014

Teaching Interests

Strategy, Entrepreneurship, Innovation Management

Teaching Experiences

Instructor

- Singapore Management University
 - Strategy (BSc course, Spring 2024, Spring 2025, Fall 2025)
 - PhD Pro-Seminar (PhD course, 2023–Present)
- NUS Business School
 - Strategic Management (BSc course, 2019–2023)
- WU Vienna University of Economics and Business
 - Advanced Innovation Management (MSc course, 2017–2019)
 - Business Model Innovation (BSc course, Spring 2018)
- Bocconi University
 - Innovation Management (MSc course, Spring 2017)

Teaching Case

Abolfathi, N., & Santamaria, S. (2024). [Vibefam: Raising the Bar\(bell\) in the Singapore Fitness Industry](#). Singapore Management University.

Service

Reviewer

Strategic Management Journal, Organization Science, Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Management Studies, Strategic Management Society, Academy of Management.

Others

- Strategy & Entrepreneurship Area Seminar Series Coordinator (2023–)
- Strategy & Entrepreneurship Area Research Summer Camp Co-organizer (2025)
- LKC School of Business Admissions Screening Exercise | SMU (2024–)
- AOM TIM Best Dissertation Reviewer (2024)
- Strategic Management Society Best Paper Reviewer (2023–2024)
- Startup Pitch Competition Judge for SWITCH (2023)
- Startup Pitch Competition Judge for Women in Entrepreneurship Incubator | SMU (2023)
- PhD student mentor | SMU (2023–)
- Conference paper discussant (DRUID 2024, AMRC 2024)
- SMS Media Innovations Team Member (2022–24)
- Conference session chair (SMS 2021, DRUID 2019)
- Ph.D. and Master thesis (co)supervisor | WU Vienna (2018–19)
- Committee member in selecting the Department's Master candidates | WU Vienna (2017–19)
- Session chair for post-seminar meetings with Ph.D. candidates | Bocconi (2016–17)
- Ph.D. Buddy | Mentoring new Ph.D. students | Bocconi (2016-17)

Selected Media Mentions

- Lower switching costs a win for providers and consumers: study. [iTWire](#). (2022, September 1).
 - Covering “Out of the trap: Conversion funnel business model, customer switching costs, and industry profitability”
- Make the right call: Telcos benefit when customers can retain numbers when switching firms. [BizBeat](#). (2022, August 30).
 - Covering “Out of the trap: Conversion funnel business model, customer switching costs, and industry profitability”
- 超级应用崛起 谁是下个乱“市”英雄? [Rise of the super apps: Which one will be the next big thing?]. [Lianhe Zaobao](#) (Singapore). (2022, August 14). [Link](#)
 - Covering “How does firm scope depend on customer switching costs?”
- Don’t trap your customers. [SMS Explorer](#). (2021, June 15).
 - Covering “Out of the trap: Conversion funnel business model, customer switching costs, and industry profitability”
- Generation Robinhood: How the trading app conditioned its inexperienced users to obsessively play the market. [Business Insider](#). (2021, February 8).
 - Covering “Niche expansion strategy: Explaining leadership change in the mobile dating app industry”
- The Korean Chatroulette-style dating app quietly taking over the world. [Rest of World](#). (2021, May 13).
 - Covering “Niche expansion strategy: Explaining leadership change in the mobile dating app industry”
- When do super apps dominate the market? South China Morning Post. Page B3. [Link](#). (2021, May 19).
 - Commentary on “How does firm scope depend on customer switching costs?”
- The Different Strategies of WhatsApp and WeChat. [ViaSarfatti25](#). (2021, June 21).
 - Opinion on “How does firm scope depend on customer switching costs?”

Other Professional Experiences

Research Associate at Sharif University Energy Research Institute, Iran (2010–2012)

Skills

- Languages. Farsi (native), Azerbaijani (native), English (fluent), Italian (intermediate), German (basic)
- Statistical software. Stata, Python