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2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on

International Conference on

Mechatronics, Automation and Smart Materials

November 13-14, 2017 Paris, France

## Temporary clusters: A new approach for manufacturing SME management

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mproving efficiency through collective actions and capacity pooling had been the driving force for many manufacturing SMEs clusters. However, the relocation cost and limitation had been one of the biggest challenges in this management approach. This research focuses on a new proposed clustering approach for increasing the competitiveness of manufacturing SMEs referred to as temporary clusters. These new clusters are offered to manage the geographical permeant connectivity challenge associated with the famous classical clusters. The research started with an empirical study of farmers markets as an example of temporary SME cluster to examine to what degree these temporary setups exhibit some typical cluster requirements and performance behavior. Results highlighted that temporary clusters share many of the positive performance behaviors like permanent ones with less cost and extra mobility advantages. These findings were then extended into the manufacturing SMEs context to explore the different temporary clustering configurations that can enhance specific relevant objectives for these SMEs. These objectives include technology transfer, entrepreneurial capacities, social capital and of course economic growth. Analytical analysis was conducted through a temporary cluster configurator toolbox to examine how manufacturing SMEs can be clustered based on their value chain objectives in this dynamic nature. A similarity matrix algorithm is adopted for this purpose. Various insights about the impact of the temporary clustering dynamics on the previously listed objectives were deduced. Furthermore, suggested management practices and policies that will improve the performance of manufacturing SMEs along the outlined objectives are offered. Finally, the challenges of manufacturing SMEs temporary clusters implementations are discussed in light of the provided findings in an attempt to open more opportunities for further research and investigation into this relatively new management approach.

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