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Cultural and Technological Influences on Global Business



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Foreword

Over the past three decades, terms such as globalization, information, communication, and technology have become not only frequently used, but have also been applied to different aspects of life. These can include the physical sciences such as atmospheric research in terms of global warming; in business and commercial affairs; in education; and in culture. The basis of all these involvements was science and computer applications since 1950, but especially after 1990 with the development and widespread practical use of the Internet. E-mail and all other facilities in the electronic media have rendered daily life into nationally and internationally transparent, multi-cultural, and multi-linguistic forms. Improvements in technological advancement can act as a double-edged sword regarding information and knowledge management where not only crisp engineering rules, but also social, cultural, and expert views play significant roles. In this manner, international business, strategic management, and other business activities gain vital importance with future prospects in almost all societies around the world. Each society, nation, firm, or institution takes its share depending on the cultural background, administrative system (democracy or other modes of rule), liberalization, education, and national specifications.

In general terms, globalization is the name of the process which leads to an increase in social, cultural, political, and economic interdependence with impacts on some changes and impacts on business environment—the main concern of this book. One can see the increasing number of super-, mega- and other business affairs in his/her environment actually or through mass media such as television and internet facilities, where each sector seeks market opportunities and experiences threats as major effects of globalization. Contemporary globalization is expected to make more changes to business in the coming years, and the world has experienced this process via increasing trends on economic, financial, social, cultural, political, market, and environmental issues providing interdependence on these aspects among nations.

For now, globalization has replaced crisp borders with fuzzy alternatives, but in the future, borders will most likely have far more transparent features. During this process, different countries will experience different shares of the market pie, but consequently they will take roughly the same level in the long run. Such effects are very obvious in business transactions today.

Although globalization is a set of processes including increased social and cultural inter-connectedness, political interdependence, economic interchanges, and financial/market integrations, to a great extent it has caused the destruction of local entrepreneurship. The vast subject of this book encompasses significant aspects of economy, society, technology, and culture. It is necessary to provide up-to-date and authentic information on culture and technology to augment efficient administration and management of human resources through timely and effective decision-making procedures. Globalization of the 21st century has changed economic and other realities far beyond the expectations of most individuals; the

worldwide financial meltdown of 2008 serves as a particularly pervasive example. Experts in business, education, finance, government, and other fields continue to work on revising these various systems and infrastructures which will operate in a robust manner within the new realities of today. The task at hand is highly important and daunting for all concerned, but humanity will succeed.

It gives me a great pleasure to witness such efforts which have been made by the editors and contributing authors of this book to highlight current issues on culture and technology. I am confident this work will serve as an important reference book for various users, including scholars, business executives, practitioners, and university students who are involved in global business.

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January 2013

Zekâi Şen obtained his B. Sc. and M. Sc Degrees from Technical University of İstanbul, Civil Engineering Faculty, Department of Reinforced Concrete, in 1972. His further post-graduate studies were carried out at the University of London, Imperial College of Science and Technology. He was granted a Diploma of Imperial College (DIC) in 1972, M. Sc. in Engineering Hydrology in 1973, and Ph. D. in Stochastic Hydrology in 1974. He worked in different countries such as England, Norway, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. He worked in different faculties such as the King Abdulaziz University, Faculty of Earth Sciences, Hydrogeology Department; Istanbul Technical University, Faculty of Astronautics and Aeronautics, Meteorology Department. His main interests are hydrology, water resources, hydrogeology, atmospheric sciences, hydrometeorology, hydraulics, science philosophy and history. He has published about 230 SCI scientific papers in different international top journals. Currently he is at the Technical University of İstanbul, Civil Engineering Faculty.

Preface

Technology is a key driver behind the effects of contemporary globalization on business and other organizations worldwide. Understanding this phenomena in connection with the impact of cultural variations is key to improving business and product life cycles in an era in which corporate capital and liquidity buffers must be increased for unexpected developments in global markets. In addition, little extant literature exists regarding the processes underlying decision-makers' assessments of performance in contemporary globalism. Therefore, the primary purpose of this book is that of a reference publication for business scholars who need to understand the need for more culturally- and technologically-responsive decision making within a global context. Other readers can include business practitioners and business students who wish to broaden their understanding of the direct relationship between culture and technology in the international business realm.

There is no doubt that 21st century globalization has changed economic realities far beyond anyone's expectations. As the global economy of today continues to develop into an increasingly complex entity, it becomes necessary for companies to access multiple sources of knowledge for organizational effectiveness. Among other things, this entails developing employees who are capable of operating across cultures and continents. To address the most critical issues involved, we will cover a multitude of issues such as the following:

- Advertising Polysemy
- Business Intelligence
- Case Studies
- Communicative Strategies in Transnational Research Teams
- Culture and Market Expansion
- Human Resource Management
- Industrial & Organizational Psychology
- Innovation
- International Diversity Management
- Knowledge Management
- Leading Virtual Teams
- National Culture on International Business Development
- Performance Measurement in Manufacturing Firms
- Qualitative Research Methods
- Websites Interaction

The justification for this book is based largely on the extensive and practical international business experience of the authors as well as their respective academic backgrounds. The desired result is to provide a foundation from which to pursue further applied research in the fields discussed in the book. It is also desired that the same material shall provide thought-provoking material from which business executives can work to develop responsible corporate policies for all concerned.

Organizations of all types and sizes today must constantly navigate high levels of turbulence to remain sustainable and viable over the long-term. Therefore, it is imperative for them to consider a wide variety of questions such as: 1) How can we manage across cultures?; 2) How should we develop effective virtual networks?; 3) How does global interdependency affect us in the long-term?; and 4) How should we contend with rapidly changing employee expectations and diversity? This publication provides a number of examples towards answering these and related questions.

Chapter 1 concerns the foundations of Human Resource Management (HRM) which sets the tone for the remainder of the book. Managing a foreign workforce can differ drastically from managing a domestic one. HRM in the international context requires managing diverse workforces originating from different nationalities with various cultures. Therefore, workforce diversity has become increasingly important for organizations which plan to expand into global markets and target different consumer groups.

Chapter 2 develops earlier work in the field of Diversity Management by Özbilgin and Tatli, and uses examples of three countries—the USA, South Africa, and Norway—to illustrate the complexity of managing diversity across national borders. Key challenges of international diversity management are highlighted. These three cases have been selected using a theoretically driven, maximum variation approach.

Chapter 3 discusses the role of Business Intelligence (BI) in decision-making for global companies. Organizations have started to compete in a challenging and competitive environment with the effects of globalization. In today's world, organizations must manage many environmental factors. Technological developments are one of those factors to which organizations must manage and adapt themselves to gain competitive advantage. With increasing data flow, it has become more difficult for organizations to store this data and gain useful knowledge to manage their business operations and functions. This explosive growth in data and databases has generated an urgent need for new techniques and tools that can intelligently and automatically transform the processed data into useful information and knowledge.

Chapter 4 empirically examines the internal and external factors of companies which can affect their foreign market mode choice. The model is comprised of internal factors such as control, domestic business experience, and industry type; and external factors in terms of culture of foreign markets and intensity of competition. A mail-out survey to Australian firms involved in international business generated 315 useful responses. The hypotheses were tested using direct logistic regression analysis.

Chapter 5 is a study which explores how polysemy leads to better branding. The research investigates the concept of polysemy and the generation of idiosyncratic meanings, and examines the impact of advertising polysemy on consumer-based brand equity. The research proposes and measures the advertising polysemy and consumer-based brand equity conceptual framework supported by accommodation theory, consumer response theory and theory of hierarchy of effects, leading to stronger ad-evoked feelings, ad and brand attitudes, and consumer-based brand equity.

Chapter 6 focuses on two Arab developing countries following the view that scope, role, and positioning of management accounting differ across organisations and countries, and, in the same direction, the study draws on the recent literature on localisation of global management control systems. The study embeds the view that certain contextual variables such as country differences and organizational culture possess particular cultural characteristics, which in turn affect individuals to respond distinctively to Management Accounting Systems' (MAS) applications.

Chapter 7 examines two significant trends which have been gaining momentum in software development: the utilization of Agile development methodologies, and the continuing trend of companies to outsource development work offshore. These two trends have changed the way companies develop software and business applications. This chapter seeks to evaluate how a company can successfully manage both trends in conjunction with each other on global business.

Chapter 8 discusses the concept of globalisation and its impact on the economies, cultures, and international business in developing countries and, in particular, Vietnam. The chapter provides an insight into how national culture and technology affects business operations, including current issues in technological readiness for e-business adoption in Vietnam. By applying theories of globalisation to explain changes and progress in Vietnamese economic development, the chapter also provides a better understanding of the complex mix of culture, technology, and business operations in Vietnam.

Chapter 9 portrays a quantitative framework regarding entry mode choice and ownership structures by measuring performance under given ownership structures as the degree of efficiency in technology transfer, and knowledge exchange in the form of a residual productivity growth variable. This method has been shown to be a proxy for or an indirect measure of transaction costs, in that ownership structures are validated by the growth in technology/knowledge-based productivity that they caused. In the process, the chapter discusses hierarchical entry modes and adjustment of ownership structures with respect to minimizing transaction costs incurred in the transfer and internalization of complementary assets, both tangible and intangible.

Chapter 10 presents a preliminary understanding of cross-cultural challenges and synergistic experiences of multicultural students engaged in Global Virtual Teams (GVTs). In this case study, we introduced the GVT structure as a novel learning platform which utilized Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) tools as part of its virtual-based learning. We administered the case study with thirty students ($n=30$) in the United of Emirates (UAE) who engaged in GVTs across the globe—encompassing 26 universities and 22 countries.

Chapter 11 discusses the role and purpose of Industrial / Organizational (I/O) Psychologists in global business. Most commonly, I/O psychology is concerned with those problems caused by human performance and those which affect human performance within organizational contexts. As such, I/O psychologists employ psychological measurement and research findings related to human abilities, motivation, perception, and learning in seeking to improve the fit between the needs of the work organization and those of the people who populate it. Thus, I/O psychologists plays a paramount role in successful global ventures, by addressing two key factors—culture and behavior—resulting in positive Return-on-Investment (ROI).

Chapter 12 provides an integrated approach to lead and manage transcultural virtual teams. Many novel team working structures have emerged due to the push from the industry to improve performance. The pressure on organizations to use more effective team working structures has increased due to invasive globalization and decentralization. Researchers have conducted a noticeable number of studies aimed at harnessing the capabilities of technology for satisfying the requirements of different industries in team working. Outcomes of the foregoing publications and the reports of successful cases within various industries have catalyzed the trend of merging technology into team working procedures.

Chapter 13 examines both theoretically and empirically how market orientation as a cultural factor is related to the internationalization processes of Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). This hopefully helps us to understand how SMEs can develop their businesses to a global level. The chapter

presents a qualitative study of four Finnish SMEs representing different phases of internationalization. Finally, discussion on the results and future research directions are presented.

Chapter 14 shows how national culture influences people's perceptions of the world, and what actions they subsequently take due to those perceptions. Research has shown this also follows in the actions taken by firms which reside in those national cultures. The authors discuss the two ways a firm can pursue disruption and how culture might affect that pursuit. Additionally, it argues the coexistence of disruptive business models and the opportunities of the bottom of the pyramid markets.

Chapter 15 is a Case Study of work group conflicts at an Italian firm and how these conflicts affect conflict dynamics.

Chapter 16 investigates Knowledge Management (KM) and its challenges in global business. Some of the KM challenges in global business include global leadership competencies and strategy, project-based flexible global virtual teams, global knowledge integration and working with Information Communication Technology (ICT) gaps across different economies.

Chapter 17 discusses issues and perspectives regarding culture and website interaction. This chapter analyzes how scholarly research on the interaction of culture and websites has developed. The studies are categorized according to the framework developed and a selected 40 of them are discussed in details, under some subcategories. A number of conceptual and methodological issues that deserve more attention are discussed to fulfill high potential of websites. A state-of-the-art review of several innovative advances in culture and websites topic is provided to stimulate new streams for future research, thus future research recommendations are proposed at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 18 presents a conceptual discussion about investigating management issues relating to global business operations. Current global business operations provide an opportunity to conduct so-called Ex-Cultura research. This term represents the situation where researchers conduct investigations beyond their own culture. A Grounded Theory approach within a qualitative perspective is proposed so newly emerging themes may be identified.

Chapter 19 highlights the effects of culture on the internationalization of business activities regarding Small- and Medium-size Enterprises (SMEs) in Medellin, Colombia. As an emerging market, global business is of greatest importance in Colombia and several efforts are implemented to keep up with the international competitive environment. However, these efforts should be accompanied with the development of entrepreneurial capabilities in a wide range of ambits, among others, cross-cultural management. This chapter describes cultural influences in internationalisation activities of Medellin's small and medium enterprises based on original research results using descriptive multi-case methods within five companies and documentary review of business publications.

Chapter 20 discusses Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) in the United Kingdom. Outsourcing is a widespread practice in the modern global economy, with decisions motivated by the expectation of various advantages of which cost reduction is often the primary factor. Recent trends have been towards Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and offshore outsourcing, and more recently Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) has emerged as an established area of the market. Despite the potential attractions, there are a range of risks associated with outsourcing, and these are demonstrated by the substantial number of arrangements which fail to meet expectations.

Chapter 21 examines transcultural managers and transcultural communications. Transcultural Communication today is an integral component of many business related disciplines (strategic management, leadership, strategic marketing, business ethics, etc.). However, within the context of global business management and to a certain extent, Transcultural Communication follows under the broad umbrella

of “Managerial Communication.” This chapter discusses the topic of communication in general with emphasis on Transcultural communication. The result of a qualitative study used in this chapter confirms that efficient communication strategies and effective communications policy implementation can propel a firm to success.

Chapter 22 inspects local embeddedness and expatriates’ effectiveness for knowledge transfer within Multinational Corporations (MNCs). The development of expatriates’ social relationships in a local environment is critical given that social ties are considered the key players of an MNC network and a prerequisite for knowledge transfer within the organization. By building on the national and organizational culture literature, we develop a conceptual model to better understand how expatriates can effectively build local embeddedness.

Chapter 23 study concerns networking and Information Communication Technology (ICT)-mediated collaboration in transnational research teams with Russian participation which are affected by cultural differences. The core interest lies in investigation of communicative strategies and effects of visual and interactive techniques, including video-conferencing, participatory social media, podcasting, among others, and, to collaboratively construct, interpret, and theorize participants’ accounts of cooperation.

Chapter 24 compares students’ cultural influence on global assessment of higher education service quality. In particular, this study surveyed full-time students at the Central Queensland University (CQU) in Australia. CQU has 10 campuses and is one of the largest universities in Australia with more than 14,000 students in which 3,000 students are enrolled as full-time students and 11,000 as part-time students. An online survey was undertaken, and 227 responses from full-time students were returned for data analysis. Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were performed to determine valid and reliable dimensions of perceived service quality. Tests of differences such as ANOVA and t-test were conducted to examine the differences of perceived service quality in terms of four cultural dimensions; power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity.

Chapter 25 addresses the extent to which quality management is “culture-specific.” The chapter presents the results of a survey administered across 21 countries which seeks to examine quality priorities and practices by adopting the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) framework. Drawing on previous research, data was collected in 2009 as part of the fifth iteration of the International Manufacturing Strategy Survey (IMSS). This study shows that adopting the GLOBE framework provides an invaluable insight into understanding quality management across countries.

Chapter 26 examines the complex of e-booking and e-purchasing travel behaviors among Slovenes. This is important as no research on Slovene tourists has been previously conducted. In detail, the relationship between e-booking and paying travel accommodation and travel transportation on the Internet during a five year period was investigated.

Chapter 27 explores the internationalization process of Italian Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the Chinese market, focusing on entry and distribution choices within the framework of facilitating factors and perceived difficulties. The following main research questions were formulated: how do Italian SMEs enter the Chinese market and distribute their products? Which are the main facilitating factors and difficulties perceived by Italian companies selling in the Chinese market? This exploratory study was conducted in two steps: a quantitative research, based on a structured questionnaire; a qualitative research, with open-ended interviews. The findings could provide marketing executives useful insights in developing entry and distribution strategies for SMEs in the Chinese market.

Chapter 28 is a comparative analysis of functionalities in three Customer Relationship Management (CRM) products; namely, Salesforce.com, mySAP.com, and SiebelCRM. In the era of IT-enabled

relationship management, organizations have a host of CRM software products from which they can choose. These products come with different functionalities and support the different functions of a firm, thereby changing the face of global business today. In an era of so-called Cloud computing, support for web-based functionalities is the prime requisite for any CRM software product.

The reader should remember the following material is meant to provoke questions which will develop further research inquiry in the fields covered in this book. We trust this publication will assist in this goal to provide applicable results which are needed more than ever before in an era of hyper-competition and increasingly scarce global resources. As such, we have provided a wide range of topics which address the effects of cultural and technological influences on global business today.

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