

BOOK REVIEW

Cultural Variations and Business Performance: Contemporary Globalism

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*Cultural Variations and Business Performance:
Contemporary Globalism*

Bryan Christiansen

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The global business is in the era of transformation: the emphasis of industrial production, services, know-how and expertise is in the state of change between different countries and continents. These changes increase the amount of multi-cultural organizations and transnational cooperation between companies. This contemporary mega-trend causes the need for the practitioners and scholars of management to understand thoroughly the multifaceted and multidimensional features of globalization and their manifestation not only on macro level, but also meso and especially on micro level. This book edited by

Bryan Christiansen meets with merit these topical needs. One of the targets of this book is in transcultural decision-making on busi-

ness performance in contemporary globalism. Although the book has 20 chapter provided by different authors, it concentrates relatively consistently in this target. This book provides multidimensional perspectives for culture and globalization in the context of business emphasizing following sub-subjects: cultural dimensions, such as intercultural competences, bicultural managers, organizational culture and cultural embeddedness on firm performance, and human resource management (HRM), such as linguistic side of HRM, social capital and global human resource management. Furthermore, this book provides these perspectives taking into the account business performance in most of its chapters.

The chosen alignment confirms also that the practitioners and management are interested in to read this book.

Although diversified perspectives about globalization, this book provides useful up-to-date knowledge for strategists of the multinational companies for their planning process, taking into the account not only long-term planning but also underlying everyday HRM

activities which have also effects on the strategy making and strategizing.

This book provides the features of globalism as such, that is to say, taking into the account not only mega-trends but also the different nuances of reality. A good example is in Chapter 19 in which the Maud Oortwijn (p. 307) mentions that “The present chapter reports on the role immigrants fulfill in foreign entry plans and how their involvement relates to the outcome of the foreign entry go/no-go decision. Findings confirm that among the firms that continue in entry, the presence of immigrants in the firm is relatively high. But, and this is unexpected, the same is true for firms that cancel entry plans”. The reader of this book familiarizes the micro-activities and practices of Globalism having also great importance on the strategic and performance level of the company.

Biculturalism in organizations is one of the themes of this book. This is one of the underlying themes especially in the chapters 1, 2 and 3. For example, Suzanne Gagnon and Pamela Lirio (in Chapter 2) consider biculturalism of Canada in the context of knowing-in-practices emphasizing intercultural competence in the forms of tacit knowledge and practices. In their focus groups were members from six continents! Already this example shows the importance of the theme of the book.

Another underlying topic of the book is business performance and competitive advantage. This theme has been emphasized several chapters of the book (Chapters 10, 13, 14 and 15) and is underlying perspective practically in all of book chapters. This kind of prescriptive alignment towards business (cf. Mintzberg et al., 1998) is robust up-keeping sufficiently the interest of the reader. At the same time, this prescriptive perspective of business ensures the wide readership which contains also practitioners of business and HRM consultants. Furthermore, this book is useful tool for academics of management, especially for the educational and research purposes focused on intercultural issues. One example of these perspectives is provided by Yang, Pfohl and Saric (Chapter 15). They combine interestingly different discussions into

the same article: entrepreneurship and competitive advantage. They are focused on challenging theme: entrepreneurial strategy making process. According to them, (temporary) competition advantage is based on resource-based view (advantage exploitation) and Austrian school of economics (Opportunity exploration) in the context of strategic entrepreneurship. For example this Chapter provides fresh ideas for the field of management. Also Chapter 7 (authors Williams, Ridgman and Shi) is focused on resources and resource-based view in the context internationalization in SME. Chapter introduces SME internationalization theories, participates in Born Global discussions and finally directs the perspective instead of RBV towards dynamic resource development.

Naturally, Multinational enterprises (MNE) are also one of the main themes of this book. MNEs are reason and source for intercultural enterprises. In addition to immigration, MNEs cause need for intercultural organizations and bicultural managers and specialist and other workers for the companies. The management of diversity is one of the main challenges of the managers of the MNEs. Kiesel and Haghirian (in Chapter 3) have focused on micro-activities of bicultural managers in the context of Japan. Bicultural managers live in-between two cultures, which fact has both positive effects and stressful effects on their life. Khan (in Chapter 6) emphasizes in his analysis country-level macro-activities of the MNEs. Khan separates in the context of international strategy and marketing multidomestic focus and global focus. In contemporary business the emphasis is on the latter one.

The writers of this book are specialists of intercultural themes and globalism and they are acting research and educational positions in various universities and research institutes all over the world. Book provides relatively impartial perspective for Globalism, because its authors are from different continents and several countries: USA, UK, China, Germany, Italy, Grenada, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Canada, France and Brazil. Therefore, books provides as a whole multicultural perspective for various

viewpoints of globalism increasing the relevance of the content.

Especially, this book is deserving in its versatile and multidimensional perspectives about intercultural HRM, MNCs and business

performance providing new fresh ideas about Globalism of companies. At the latest now it is needed to read about intercultural elements of globalization in business and organizations. This book provides for it a good opportunity.