
International Management: exploring the variety

Editorial

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Biographical notes: Vlad Vaiman holds a Doctorate in Business Administration from the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland. His academic experience includes teaching undergraduate, graduate, and executive courses in top universities around the world, such as Helsinki School of Economics (Finland), University of Graz (Austria), Oslo University College (Norway), California Lutheran University (USA), Danube University of Krems (Austria), etc. His research interests include issues of both organisational behaviour and international management and particularly, matters of cultural differences and their influences on leadership, motivation and talent management in multinational companies. He is also an active member of the International Association of Management Consultants and its Canadian chapter.

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the fourth and final issue of the EJIM's inaugural publishing year. This year has been truly remarkable for our journal and all the people involved in its creation and development. First of all, we have received tremendous support from both the academic community and management professionals from around the world, commending us for trying to tackle the issues of international management in Europe. Second, after the release of the first issue, we have welcomed a sensational amount of submissions, both regular papers and special issue proposals – the fact that will ensure EJIM's longevity and prosperity for years to come. Finally, EJIM is slowly, but surely, gaining recognition from academic and practitioner circles in North America, Asia, and certainly in Europe – this trend can be seen in the amount of both formal and informal inquiries which we get during the conferences, workshops, seminars, executive training sessions, etc. We would like to thank everyone who expressed interest in our new publication, those who contributed to it and, of course, those who were intimately involved in its establishment and growth.

In this issue, we present several very interesting papers, which are not combined by any special overarching theme but rather offer the readers a variety of angles on the pressing issues of contemporary international management and their implications.

In the first paper of this issue, John Dunning (who needs no introduction, of course) suggests that International Management and International Business (IB) in general are in the midst of a new spirit of the times we live in, where motives and behaviours of and attitudes towards multinational enterprises are being probed and re-evaluated. The same is pertinent to the IB scholarship, in terms of both methodologies used and issues addressed. Dunning argues that the most prominent components of this new spirit – or a *Zeitgeist*, as he calls it – are new issues, new mindsets, and new actors. While some of these components indirectly affect the content and structure of globalisation and others are just the direct causes or consequences of it, they all strongly affect both IB activity and IB scholarship.

To support his argument, Dunning offers several interesting points, which seem to uncover the overall complexity of the issues in focus. To conclude, the author admits that his work might have just touched the tip of an iceberg, which means that there are many other interesting and exciting issues and prospects for IB as a highly relevant and integrated body of knowledge. Although it may invoke some controversial reactions, the paper is aimed at encouraging more dialogue and understanding of the subject in focus, as well as at identifying a full variety of implications of any new path in academic thought and managerial action.

In the following paper, Francisco Acedo and José Casillas (both of the University of Sevilla, Spain) analyse the geographical origin of academic publications in the field of International Management. The purpose of their analysis is to try to identify the relative influence of European academic inputs, particularly in comparison to that of the USA. The authors argue that, despite the fact that more than one half of all transnational enterprises are of European origin, the discipline, and therefore, relevant publications are still concentrated in North America – a fact which is at odds with business realities. After a thorough analysis of the academic papers published in several most influential journals in the field, Acedo and Casillas come to a conclusion that highlights the importance of increasing the European influence within the international management area of international business.

The next paper by Siah Hwee Ang and Snejina Michailova (both of the University of Auckland, New Zealand) examines the ever-pressing choice of acquisitions vs. alliances by emerging market firms in the European Union and investigates how this choice is affected by various institutional factors. In particular, the authors look at the ways in which the regulatory and normative aspects influence the entry mode adopted by BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) firms in the EU and propose important implications for the European nations with regard to formulating policies that would entice emerging market firms into closer cooperation with the EU.

The next two papers deal with the issues of human resource management. The first one, by Mark Fenton-O’Creevy (Open University Business School, UK) and Stephen Wood (University of Sheffield, UK), examines the features associated with the cross-national diffusion of HRM systems within multinational enterprises. The authors build their case based on one important premise – the assertion that since HR systems are identified as essential in creating and sustaining strategic capabilities, and ultimately, firm-specific advantages, they may be a principal part of reducing ‘liabilities’ linked to geographical distance between the parent and the subsidiary countries, cross-cultural knowledge gap, lack of legitimacy, etc.

According to Fenton-O’Creevy and Wood, it is unclear whether managers in MNEs are able to exercise the type of unconstrained choices in designing and implementing HRM systems that their strategic situation dictates. Therefore, the authors continue, it is essential to scrutinise the relative importance of institutional constraints, the strategic context and managerial strategy, as well as the relationship between these factors in developing such systems. In order to accomplish this, the authors examine the similarity of parent and subsidiary HRM systems within MNEs and illustrate it with the example of 20 UK multinationals and their European affiliates.

The second HR-related paper in this issue is written by Dana Minbaeva (Copenhagen Business School, Denmark), Kate Hutchings, and Bruce Thomson (both of Monash University, Australia). It explores HRM practices in foreign-owned subsidiaries in the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan in order to investigate the development of HR management in that country and the extent to which its practices and policies reflect those of the firm’s country of origin, old- or post-Soviet marketplace, or an emerging Kazakhstan. The paper offers a lively discussion based on the findings of a multi-dimensional empirical research study, which utilises the advantages of a questionnaire survey, secondary data analysis, and informal interviews. Among the main outcomes of the study are practical suggestions by European companies planning on expanding into emerging markets like Kazakhstan.

The author of the concluding paper in this issue, Jimmy Huang (Warwick Business School, UK), examines the implementation of a new IT system and process changes and their impact on the organisation’s information processing capability. The main argument of this contribution is built on the premise of radical changes in the modern business environment that have produced some challenging requirements in the way in which information is processed and managed. The author synthesises prior research studies in the areas of both information processing and dynamic capability and proposes a new angle on understanding of information processing capabilities, which is masterfully illustrated by the example of a European-based international company.

Overall, this issue offers the readers a good mixture of both conceptual and empirical papers, which has been one of EJIM’s main objectives from the very beginning. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions – with regard to the published material, as well as to the further development of our journal. And of course, we look forward to your contributions, whether it is papers, book reviews, conference notes, or special issue proposals. Thank you for your interest in our journal and I hope you enjoy reading it!