
Editorial: Welcome to EJCCM

Frank Brück

Department of Foreign Language Business Communication,
Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration,
Nordbergstraße 15, 1090 Vienna, Austria
E-mail: brueck@wu-wien.ac.at

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the inaugural issue of the *European Journal of Cross-Cultural Competence and Management (EJCCM)*. *EJCCM* is the official scholarly publication of the International Association of Cross-Cultural Management and Competence (IACCM). Firstly I would like to express my gratitude to all those who contributed to this new and vital journal. Particularly I would like to thank the co-editors Gerhard Fink, Wolfgang Mayrhofer, Slawek Magala and Nigel Holden, our chief editorial advisor, Rosalie Tung and all the members of the editorial board. Special thanks also to the team of Inderscience who supported us in the transition process from the former publication of the IACCM to the *Journal of Cross-cultural Competence and Management*.

While the former journal existed only in printed form and was strongly embedded in the German speaking cross-cultural community, *EJCCM* became a symbol of the new dynamism of both IACCM and the intercultural field in general. The online version of the journal provides us with the visibility we require in the new scientific world and the printed version satisfies the tangible experience of actually holding the journal in one's hand. More importantly, the expansion of the scope of content the journal offers has been introduced. *EJCCM* aims to widen and deepen the discussion about issues regarding the influence of cultural differences and diversity on the management of organisations of all kinds. By inviting scholars to present their views of the state of the art in the field of inter-/cross-cultural competence and management in short contributions, we hope to stimulate an intensive discussion of these topics from the beginning.

The *EJCCM* commences with Rosalie Tung who takes us on a journey through her life in cross-cultural research. She explains how the different research projects she has worked on during her outstanding career, represented puzzle stones in her personal development and how her personal cross-national experiences helped her to develop a special view on the cross-cultural research topics.

In a very practical contribution, Gert Jan Hofstede offers advice to researchers in the cross-cultural field and puts particular attention on the separation between concepts of culture and group identity. He claims that it is necessary to be aware of these differences in order to be able to use the cultural dimensions introduced by Geert Hofstede appropriately and for them not to be confused with stereotypes.

In a contribution by Brendan McSweeney, he points out that all cultures contain contradictions and many forms of heterogeneity and are therefore incoherent. He argues that viewing culture as a coherent holistic contradiction free pattern would restrict our openness to identify and acknowledge diversity within cultures.

In his unique thought provoking style Slawomir Magala states that diversity management needs to be alert not to fall into the trap of Neo-Darwinism. He stresses that critical social researchers have to be aware of the difference between the unnatural selection of tolerated versus opposed forms of inequalities. Not every difference we are able to identify is to be legitimatised.

Aïda Hajro focuses on the necessity to fully capture the complexity of the concept of corporate culture. She claims that the relationship between national and corporate culture especially needs to be discussed in greater depth. This discussion might also open the view on the particular cultural features of strong corporate cultures.

These discussion papers should offer the chance to start a scientific discussion on relevant topics. *EJCCM* particularly invites contributions responding to the positions of the authors. A special section of the journal will always be open for this discussion process.

The section of the full academic papers commences with the contribution of Gerhard Fink and Wolfgang Mayrhofer. They provide a frame of reference for the domain of cross-cultural competence and management and differentiate between various levels of analysis. Methodological issues and classical research on cross-cultural competence and management are discussed just as epistemological, ontological and phenomenological approaches. Furthermore the relations of societal culture to various other characteristics of societies and issues related to the time are highlighted.

Marie-Thérèse Claes questions the domination of approaches towards intercultural communication which are driven by behavioural interest and which focus on the management of misunderstandings and conflicts. She examines how a shift from 'being shaped by culture' to actively shaping culture could be achieved in communication.

In the next paper Astrid Kainzbauer and I introduce autophotography as a method of cross-cultural research. Autophotography offers a unique opportunity to see artefacts through the eyes of a person from another culture. These photos can then be used in intercultural trainings directly, adding further stimulus and creating an effect on the emotional level as well as on the cognitive level.

An empirical study on culture shock is added by Diana Petkova. The study reveals that there are basically three different levels of awareness of a culture shock which appears out of the conflict between local codes and perceived meanings. She states that the process of cultural hybridisation can be an outcome of the application of coping strategies.

We are very proud of our new section of *EJCCM*: the practitioner's corner. The scope of *EJCCM* is even further widened by this product of a close cooperation with the European chapter of the Society of Intercultural Education Training and Research (SIETAR Europa). The practitioner's corner covers applied papers which aim at the special interests of, for example, business people, trainers and lecturers. In other words, people who are interested in practical topics rather than academic models and theories.

Our first paper in this section deals with cultural differences between Austria, Croatia and Slovenia in particular contexts of task groups. Sylvia Meierewert highlights how time concepts in different context situations, levels of personal responsibility and the importance of social relationships influence intercultural interactions in teamwork.

Now that the first step towards a great future for *EJCCM* has been taken, we enter the most important next phase in the life of our new journal, whereby *EJCCM* generates interest and a new dynamism on its own. I hope that you enjoy reading it and look forward to publishing your next article in the area of cross-cultural competence and management.