
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Siham El-Kafafi is currently a Senior Lecturer in Management at the Faculty of Business, Manukau Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand. She holds a Master in Public Administration from the American University in Cairo (AUC), Egypt and a PhD from the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand awarded with distinction in 2004. She also teaches on the MBA and DBA Supervisor for the Southern Cross University, Australia. She is the regional editor for four international journals and she is also on the Board of Examiners for the Asia-Pacific Business Excellence Standard (APBEST) Award.

Quality has been one of the corner stones of businesses which evolved to total quality management and then to Business Excellence as a means of operational excellence in organisations who want to survive the global competition. One of the main requirements for attaining Business excellence is leadership that gives proper guidance, encourages improvement and generally steers the ship i.e., the whole organisation to change from traditional management thinking towards continuous improvement through best practices in corporate governance and foster a knowledge culture for their organisation to survive and thrive in the global village we are living in.

New Zealand (Aotearoa) is a multicultural nation that has most of the ingredients to evolve its social, economic and environmental policies to deliver the best qualities of life which sets the scene for its businesses. Organisational identity and culture is shaped by its leadership and how they inspire and engage people, champion innovation and lead organisational change. This is evident in the recent reforms taking place in lots of sectors (e.g., corporate governance framework, environmental education in New Zealand Schools, education for sustainability, tertiary education reforms) to help New Zealand businesses meet the global challenges and demonstrates the nation's capabilities in competing internationally.

Welcome to this special issue which provides an insight in the role of leadership and the strategies used by NZ business in managing business excellence through their corporate governance. It will also provide a platform for discussion on the different perceptions of knowledge, the resultant challenges and how it is managed in a diverse and multi-cultural nation like New Zealand.

The first paper, 'Business excellence and governance: the drive for integration' presents a platform to examine Corporate Governance (CG) as a stakeholder imperative and how best practice governance is a key success factor for organisations' long term

survival. It discusses the parallel rise of CG and Total Quality Management (TQM) and identifies the key drivers in the growth of these two perspectives and what leads to the recent developments in both disciplines. It further explores the emerging debates in both fields of enquiry and alignments between both concepts. The governance emphasis on structural innovation, growth in organisational values and stakeholder perspectives is compared to TQM emphasis on customer satisfaction, process control and continuous performance improvement. Finally, the paper demonstrates that the amalgamation between the two concepts of quality management systems and corporate governance leads to an integrative model of business excellence i.e., best practice model.

The second paper, 'New Zealand entrepreneurs: leading for excellence' discusses entrepreneurship through small businesses and how it has been signalled as having potential in the creation of sustainable development and poverty alleviation in transitioning and developing countries. Successful micro-businesses can create more jobs, raise the standards of living for families, and remove the need to rely primary production and favourable growing conditions for survival. NZ is a nation of predominately small businesses.

The paper further reviews the results of the 2005 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) assessment to results from a New Zealand (NZ) survey of micro-business operators by examining factors pertinent to entrepreneurial leadership in NZ. The five leading countries in the Entrepreneurial League, including NZ in third place, do not rate highly on the factors deemed to provide a favourable business climate for entrepreneurship. The paper identifies other factors that may contribute to the high placement of NZ in the GEM assessment and calls for more research to clarify what contributes to the propensity to voluntarily set-up new businesses.

The third paper, 'Broken links: Absorptive Capacity and the internationalisation process of high-tech companies' examines the impact of Absorptive Capacity (AC) on internationalisation process. It proposes a conceptual model based on the empirical examination of high-tech SMEs. The paper demonstrates that the extent to which firms capture and exploit new information is highly influenced by their AC and suggest that AC in high-tech companies exists as two subsets: technological AC (accumulated knowledge related to science and technology) and on-core AC (knowledge acquired beyond area of expertise). Furthermore, this paper identifies some crucial impediments to the process of internationalisation for New Zealand agro-technology firms. Identification and understanding of these barriers will assist New Zealand agro-technology firms to meet the challenges of global competition and this identifies how these firms can develop the capabilities to compete internationally.

The fourth paper, 'Sustainable futures and Maori business education' deals with education as the core of a sustainable social and economic development of New Zealand. It addresses the concept of tertiary education in New Zealand and the development of education for Maori exemplified in their active participation in the tertiary education sector as a means of creating an education for a sustainable future. The paper examines and investigates the effectiveness of the governmental policies according to the new approach to the Maori education as per the 7th Deliberation (Maori-Crown Co-operation) recommended at the first Hui Taumata Matauranga: Maori Education Summit and further endorsed by the New Zealand Ministry of Education. It also reports on results of a case study of a business program of one of the tertiary institutes in the Auckland region of NZ. Finally it identifies strategies to help increase the numbers of Maori and Pacific Island students enrolling in the tertiary programmes.

The fifth paper, 'New Zealand wine industry: a study of changing comparative advantage and competitiveness' presents a different aspect of New Zealand's comparative advantage in the production of land-based products arising from its natural resource endowment. The paper examines the relative performance of the New Zealand wine industry in comparison with the Australian wine industry. Both these countries are the leading exporters of wine from the Asia-Pacific Region. In view of the similarities between New Zealand and Australia a comparison of the fast growing wine industry enables us to assess whether the New Zealand wine industry is on par with a leading wine exporter in the world. Product differentiation appears to be the major contributing factor to the industry excellence of the New Zealand wine industry.

The sixth paper, 'Developing emotional intelligence as a means to increase team performance' discusses the links made between emotional intelligence and successful corporate leadership and how emotional intelligence has been shown to influence the perceptions followers' hold of their leaders. Followers in the corporate world of today need to work in teams to meet organisational objectives. Hence, team members need to work together to ensure high performance. This paper supports the view that developing emotional intelligence skills of team members benefit organisational performance.

The final and seventh paper of this issue 'Mentoring needs: the staff experiences of a peer-group mentoring programme in a tertiary education environment' focuses on mentoring as an important developmental tool to support both the individual and the business needs of the organisation. This paper is an exploratory study which is part of a larger fieldwork setting. It follows up on academic participants in groups (formal and informal) over the period of the first year in their peer-group mentoring relationships. The paper envisages that concentration on the mentee's experience will help in understanding how to meet the diverse needs of participants more fully within organisations.

Coming to the end of this editorial, I would like to thank the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Allam Ahmed, all the authors who contributed to this issue, the many colleagues who participated in the review process, the journal's editorial team and staff who have contributed directly and indirectly for making a success of this special issue.

Finally, I wish you a delightful journey while exploring and savouring the various delicacies of the various practices in the land of the long white cloud, New Zealand. This special issue of the journal is aimed to strengthen the readers understanding of the debates and challenges confronting the New Zealand government, practitioners, academics and organisations while aspiring for a sustainable business excellence in this global village we are living in nowadays.