
Cross-cultural transformations and conflict in the current global arena. Editorial

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Maurice Yolles is Emeritus Professor in Management Systems at Liverpool John Moores University. He has published three research books in the field of management systems/cybernetics, and well over 200 academic papers. He was the Research Director for the International Society for Systems Science for several years, and now heads the Centre for the Creation of Coherent Change and Knowledge which runs courses and does research into transformational change. He has also been involved in a number of international research and development projects for the EU and in Asia. He is the Editor of the *Journal of Organisational Transformation and Social Change*.

The degree of organisational change and complexity, following the fast-paced globalisation processes, may vary substantially across different geographical regions and organisational settings due to various environmental and cultural contexts as well as personality and emotional differences, and human resource practices among individuals, teams, groups, etc. (Dauber, 2009; Dauber, 2012a; Iles et al., 2004; Weber and Tarba, 2010; Weber et al., 2012a).

Furthermore, the sweeping and unprecedented globalisation is expected to continue to increase the number of strategic alliances, joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions, and adds to the complexity in the multinational corporations (Dauber, 2012b; Gomes et al., 2011; Iles and Yolles, 2002; Weber et al., 2009, 2011a).

The aforementioned challenges require a sophisticated adaptation on both employees and managers side. This gives rise to new questions, relevant to theory, research, and practice, about the nature and effects of national and corporate culture on cross-cultural transformations and conflict (Fink and Mayrhofer, 2009; Hajro, 2009; McSweeney, 2009; Michailova and Hutchings, 2006; Weber and Tarba, 2012; Weber et al., 2011b; Weber et al., 2012b).

The aim of the current special issue was to promote and shape the future direction for cross-cultural transformations and conflict and its management research in nowadays global arena. To provide more knowledge on the possible explanations for cross-cultural transformations and resultant conflicts, this special issue contains several unique contributions intended to enhance our understanding of these phenomena.

The first paper by Fink and Yolles explores the dominant paradigms influencing the relation between narratives and stories. This paper offers a theoretical construct exploring changes in narratives and relevance from the perspective of paradigm change theory. It offers a theory guided illustration of change processes in what is considered relevant.

The article that follows, by Kaufmann, Vrontis, and Manakova focuses on an area in which there is limited research namely perception of luxury in the context of idiosyncratic Russian consumer culture and identity. This paper increases our understanding of the factors that elucidate the process of luxury consumption by consumers in transition economies. The paper applies a mixed quantitative and qualitative methodology approach and reveals that Russian luxury consumption differs from that of Western societies. Specifically, the authors have found there are positive relationships between identity, status consumption, perceived quality, symbolic/status consumption, and uniqueness, whereas the identity turned out to have a significant bearing on consumption of luxury goods in Russia.

The next article, by Pikturieniė and Vasiliauskaite, focuses on another important topic – differences in attitudes towards corporate social responsibility (CSR) between Lithuanian and Swedish consumers. Their findings demonstrate that Lithuanians are

more economically and legally oriented than Swedes, whereas Swedes demonstrate stronger ethical and philanthropic CSR orientation.

The fourth article by Weber, Drori, and Tarba presents a theoretical framework for investigating mergers and acquisitions (M&A) performance through an interdisciplinary, multi-stage, and multi-level approach. They posit that trust and human resource challenges during the post-merger integration process help explain the inconsistencies among empirical findings about the effects of cultural differences on overall M&A performance. This paper proposes that in addition to culture clash, trust has a direct effect on acquired firm's management attitudes and behaviours, thereby influencing post-merger success.

In the fifth paper, based on a sample of Finnish companies engaged in cross-border and domestic acquisitions, Junni and Sarala explain the impact of collective learning and teaching initiatives on different types of knowledge flows in M&A. This paper explores the antecedents of the knowledge transfer, including knowledge complementarity and knowledge complexity, as well as cultural acceptance and cultural preservation.

The next paper by Vasilaki, Smith, Giangreco, and Carugati examines the human integration in cross-border mergers. Using an ethnographic study of a merger of four banks in four countries, this article investigates the impact of systemic and integrated human resource practices (high-performance work practices – HPWPs) on human integration namely employees behaviours and attitudes during post-merger integration stage. The paper reaches a conclusion that the implementation of HPWPs, such as communication, employee involvement, and team building, may not always produce the expected effects on human integration; conversely, it can have the opposite effects if top management does not closely monitor the immediate results of deploying such practices.

Finally, Sánchez-Lorda and García-Canal analyse to what extent previous experience of the firms affects the investor's valuation of business combinations. They examine two types of business combinations as alternative means to gain access to external strategic resources: strategic alliances and acquisitions. The paper shows that previous experience of the companies in the management of business combinations will positively affect the abnormal returns of these operations. However, if the business combination supposes a diversification of the company, experience affects the investor's valuation of acquisitions and alliances in a different fashion.

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