
Preface

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Biographical notes: Munim Kumar Barai is a Professor of Finance at the Graduate School of Management, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU), Japan. He completed his Masters, MPhil and PhD from Delhi School of Economics, the University of Delhi, India. He was a recipient of a number of academic scholarships including ICCR Fellowship, UGC (India) Junior and Senior Research Fellowship, JSPS Grants-in-Aid (Japan), Asian Scholarship Foundation (ASF) Fellowship, etc. He was a Fulbright Scholar and completed the post-doc research at the University of Pennsylvania, USA. He has researched and published widely on a range of domains in leading journals. He is a joint editor of the book *Towards a Common Future: Understanding Growth, Sustainability in the Asia Pacific Region* published by Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore.

The global business environment has remained a multifaceted set of supply and demand forces including macro, micro and firm-related aspects within and across national borders. In the setting, businesses that have the wider market reach and a large customer base should do well in the survival contest. But the international marketplace has always been vibrant and complex in terms of changes it brings. In order to keep the firm functionally productive and adaptive to this ever-changing environment, the advancement of business process has been a two-way channel to inhale and exhale life (Cavusgil and Cavusgil, 2012). And research has remained a continuous process for understanding various dimensions of changes taking place in the business environment.

A number of variables like demographic environment, political environment, economic environment, socio-cultural environment, technical developments, etc. have been explored by many past and recent studies (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977; Barnes, 1980; Roth, 1995; Cavusgil, 1997; Mellahi et al., 2003; Sakarya et al., 2007; Ojala and Tyrväinen, 2008; Mullen, 2009; Gaston-Breton and Martín, 2011; Jekanyika Matanda, 2012; Griffith et al., 2014).

Similarly, variables like customer demand potential, international marketing planning, product and service developments, innovation and diffusion, etc. have been examined by Cavusgil (1997), Mellahi et al. (2003), Sakarya et al. (2007), Malhotra et al. (2010), Jekanyika Matanda (2012), and so on. Moreover, market control, network relationships, research and innovation have been in focus of the studies by Cavusgil (1997), Papadopoulos et al. (2002), Zain and Ng (2006), Ojala and Tyrväinen (2007), Ren et al. (2015), and others.

The present special issue of *Journal for Global Business Advancement* focuses on contemporary, complex and dynamic dimensions of business constituents including cultural and intentional aspects of the customers in some emerging countries, reaction of service delivery organisations to the environmental changes by drawing together six papers that investigate and analyse them from various perspectives.

For instance, the first paper concentrates on Hofstede's framework of the cultural values of Javanese, Sundanese, Minangkabau, Batak and Chinese-Indonesian employees to investigate whether Hofstede's Indonesian findings are still relevant. Authors Suharnomo and Syahruramdhan argue that as long as many ethnic groups of Indonesia remain unstudied, the nature and character of Indonesian cultural values will also remain open to debate. The paper presents empirical validation for claims of significant differences in cultural values among ethnic groups in Indonesia and assesses whether a national cultural framework can describe cultural differences among ethnic groups in Indonesia. The paper suggests users of Hofstede's framework could supplement their research planning with the latest findings on the cultural values of Indonesia's ethnic groups and subcultures. The results obtained can be meaningful for both managers and employees working with people coming from Javanese, Sundanese, Batak, Minangkabau and Chinese backgrounds.

The following paper by Lestari et al. examines the intention of consumers towards halal logistics in Indonesia. In the study, perceived value comprises quality, *syar'i*, and lifestyle while perceived usefulness encompasses health and safety. Similarly, knowledge of halal logistics encompasses administration, people, processes, and transportation and intention toward halal products, and logistics includes preference regarding food commodities and non-food commodities. Finally, behaviour covers assurance and frequency. The central question is whether the Muslims' intentions toward halal logistics have driven their behaviour in choosing a halal product with halal logistics. This study applies structural equation modelling (SEM) to analyse the structural relationships among perceived value, perceived usefulness, knowledge, intention, and behaviour toward halal logistics acceptance and finds that there is a positive relationship between customers' perceived value and knowledge on halal logistics with the perceived usefulness of the product.

The current special issue progresses further with the paper 'Antecedents and consequences of customer loyalty in Qatar' by Bhuian et al. that draws insights from the customer value-based theory. The paper finds that the innovativeness of the product/service, service quality related to the market offering, trust of the customer in the product/service, satisfaction of the customer with the product/service, and switching cost associated with the product/service positively impact the loyalty of the customer to the product/service in question. Using the customer value-based theory, the study attempted to show the importance of customer loyalty and its relationships with key correlates in creating and maintaining a superior customer value in today's hyper-competitive marketplaces. The study suggests that in addition to paying attention to a number of traditional drivers of customer loyalty simultaneously, marketers seeking to build and sustain customer loyalty in the Gulf region should also focus on innovation. By incorporating both key antecedents and consequences of customer loyalty in a single study, this research sheds further light on customer loyalty as a process. The findings of this study suggest that efforts to enhance customer loyalty are worth pursuing for

managers seeking to create a competitive advantage through creating, maintaining and delivering superior customer value to customers who are ever-increasingly demanding higher quality and lower cost. In doing so, managers can focus on building innovative capacities and innovation processes, which can emit positive ‘value signals’ to customers and increase customers’ loyalty.

The next paper by Raj and Kajla adopts a big data analytics framework for the tourism industry, in which the data can be captured and analysed easily to get some knowledge or insights. The framework helps the tourism organisations and tourism service providers to collect humongous data and use that data to understand the social media in a better way for building up new destination marketing strategies. The text analytics (opinion mining) techniques used in this framework analyses the perception of the user not with the structured data, but with the unstructured data. The study is giving insight on how to capture and analyse the web traffic for tourism places and even compare this with the past data or with some other destinations to check the popularity of tourism places.

The fifth paper on ‘How do public hospitals respond to environmental change? Evidence from Thailand’ by Rutanarugsa and Venkatesh juxtaposes population ecology or resource dependence theories and managerial choice theory. While the former predicts that successful organisations will respond to changes in their environment with changed strategies that fit changes, the latter predicts that organisational responses to environmental changes are a function of how managers in organisations perceive the environmental change and what managers perceive to be constraints on decision making. The paper suggests that public hospitals would not respond to changes in their environment in a deterministic way that would ensure an ideal balance between their strategies and their environment. The findings show that professional public organisations such as public hospitals do not provide confirmatory evidence of the “strategy change to fit environment change” thesis. As a result of such constraints, managers in professional public organisations do not respond to environmental change by making significant changes in their organisations’ strategies. Since public sector reforms often take a long time to implement and are vulnerable to political change and uncertainty, managers in professional public organisations, such as hospitals, are more likely to follow a reform trajectory than to launch radical strategic initiatives for their organisations.

The sixth and last paper of the special issue by Chiravuri is on ‘Investigating the efficacy of techniques affecting information exchange in virtual teams’. The study examines the efficacy of the two cognitive techniques in terms of eliciting unique information from members of a virtual team. The paper finds that one of the primary reasons for the lack of information exchange might be due to the difficulty of a team member in eliciting their unique information, which remains tacit. Results indicate that groups using either technique elicited more unshared unique information than the control group that was using none. However, the Repertory Grid technique helped capture unique information from members of a virtual team than the Delphi technique.

In fact, the six papers selected and published in this special edition focus on both theoretical and empirical aspects of strategic issues and provide interesting insights to readers, managers and scholars through a wide range of topics. Grounded on in-depth analyses, the papers develop solutions and ways forward to the fundamental changes

occurring in the contemporary global business environment and make an important contribution to the ongoing debate and exploration of modern business and organisational development. Authors from various backgrounds also offer true global flavour to this edition.

I believe that the papers included in the issue will ignite research interests and propel further search for strategic factors in the business environment that help create competitive organisations. I would like to thank all the authors who have contributed to this special issue and to the reviewers who made invaluable contributions in ensuring the papers reached the intended global standards. At the same time, I feel extremely honoured to introduce this edition of the *Journal of Global Business Advancement* to the esteemed readers in all parts of the world.

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