
Preface

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Biographical notes: Gary L. Frankwick (PhD, Arizona State University, USA) is Professor of Marketing and Marcus Hunt Chair of International Business in the College of Business at the University of Texas at El Paso. During his career, he has previously served as the Associate Dean of Faculty Development, PhD Coordinator, and MBA Director, and currently serves as the Director of International Engagement. He has chaired more than a dozen PhD dissertations. His research interests lie primarily in the behavioural aspects of business-to-business marketing, including marketing strategy decision-making, marketing management, sales management, new product development, and supply chain management. His research has been published in the *Journal of Marketing*, *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, and *Industrial Marketing Management*, among others. His primary teaching responsibilities include marketing strategy, data analysis, and new product development.

The six studies that constitute this special issue focus on fairness and equitable treatment of people in organisations or their various stakeholders. The authors, from five different countries, examine samples from different countries and offer recommendations for managers and public policy makers that essentially create safer and more level playing fields in organisations, among innovators, and for recipients of commercial and public goods.

The first paper, entitled ‘Assessing the implementation of serialisation in pharmaceutical industry in Greece: a qualitative approach’, by Theodoros Pagonidis, Svetlana Sapuric and Petros Lois, all from the University of Nicosia, Cyprus, examines safety control of pharmaceutical production and distribution by employing serial numbers to improve traceability for ingredients from combination in production processes and facilities through distribution to end users, in an effort to control falsification and counterfeiting of medications. These scholars have interviewed six stakeholders in the Greek pharmaceutical industry to investigate the situation. Major issues involve the multinational sourcing of ingredients and manufacturing for the same end-use drug, with drugs taking varied paths to end users. The difficulty of handling the large amount of data required to manage such a system is compounded by the need to maintain historical data for many years and have it available to hospitals, pharmacies, and regulators in multiple countries. These scholars provide a description of conducting stakeholder analysis that is clear and concise enough for other researchers to follow and employ in their own

research. They then proceed to identify and interview six managers in the pharmaceutical industry: three manufacturers, one contract manufacturer (CMO), and two equipment/software providers. Results of the study identify the complexity and potential costs involved in implementing serialisation in the industry. In addition, these scholars have identified several benefits of implementation beyond control of drug falsification and counterfeiting.

In the second paper, entitled ‘Examining the role of internal communication and employee engagement in Cyprus-based medium-sized organisations in times of challenging strategic changes’, by Komodromos Marcos from the University of Nicosia, Cyprus, communications among employees and with managers are examined to determine the effect on firm strategic change through employee engagement. The study contributes to the field by examining mid-sized companies whereas most research in this area involves large firms. While large firms may have people or even departments employed to formulate communications with employees, in small firms managers can communicate directly with employees since there are so few, and mid-sized firms may encounter a problem in that managers would have to add formal communications to their already full-time workload. Komodromos ends the paper with recommendations for managers to better communicate with their employees.

The third paper, entitled, ‘Website words matter: an analysis of business schools’ online brand personalities’, by Blake Frank, Sri Beldona and Scott Wysong, all from the Satish & Yasmin Gupta College of Business at the University of Dallas, Dallas, Texas, USA, looks at the brand personalities that business schools signal via the words on their websites. The authors advocate that the brand personality of an organisation must be in alignment with its customers (i.e., students) particularly in times of economic and racial distress.

The fourth paper, entitled ‘A model of duopolistic patent contest with private provisions of industry collective goods’, by Hamdan Al-Fazari from Sohar University, Sultanate of Oman, and Jimmy Teng from the American University of Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates, develops a mathematical model that compares monopoly vs. duopolistic competition in pursuit of innovation patents. The authors offer public policy recommendations to increase innovation based on results of the study.

The fifth paper, entitled ‘Barriers to change implementation process by public and private organisations in Saudi Arabia’, by Salem M. Al-Ghamdi, Azhar Kazmi and M. Sadiq Sohail, all from the King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals, Saudi Arabia, and Abdullah Aldhafeeri, from Transactions Management, Saudi Water partnership Company, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, examines four dimensions of resistance to change among employees in both public and private organisations. Results of data from 179 survey responses indicate that simply desiring routine is the main reason why people don’t want to change. Emotional reaction, cognitive rigidity, and short-time focus also cause significant resistance to change. After validating the scale in a Saudi context, the authors offer managers various methods to reduce each of the barriers to change.

The final paper entitled “Employee retention during Cooperative banks’ mergers and acquisitions”, by Nakis Antoniou, Demetris Vrontis, Alkis Thrassou and Ioanna Papasolomou, all from the University of Nicosia, Cyprus, examines what affects the retention of key employees when banks merge. Results of 55 interviews with bank employees throughout Cyprus suggest that banks need to keep open and honest communication, and state clear objectives and strategies, while assuring employees of job security. In addition, training programs that provide new skills for potential job

advancement, autonomy, and empowerment with participation in decision-making all help to retain key employees through motivation and strong relationships.

The six papers of this special issue provide insights to various organisational situations arising from a desire to maintain consistency while the environment is becoming more dynamic through human innovation, organisation restructuring, or natural disaster. In general, these global scholars found that transparency, visibility, openness, fairness, and communication reduce the negative effects of change, while culture, corruption, and ignorance (lack of education or training) limit organisations' abilities to adapt to the new circumstances.

Future research might test some of the models proposed by these studies with field experiments sponsored by local or national governments. Other studies might attempt to determine the actual causes of corruption or counterfeiting to find ways to reduce or eliminate these barriers to progress. Further studies might examine ways to reduce the negative effects of culture on needed change while maintaining the positive effects of behavioural prediction from cultural stability. Most of the research in this special issue is exploratory or focuses around theoretical model development. The next step in knowledge development suggests that causal model testing or experiments, both lab and field, would help managers and policy makers develop policies and practices to improve organisational, economic, and social life and performance.