

Welcome

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We would take this opportunity to extend heart-felt “welcome” to the readers of this special issue of *RIThink*, the multidisciplinary, online magazine of Rochester Institute of Technology in Croatia. An underlying belief of *RIThink* is that creativity is about making connections and imagining how things might come together differently. Such connectivity crosses national boundaries and traditionally defined spaces leading one to unique encounters with others and reencounters with ourselves.

One such recent opportunity for unique encounters occurred in May of 2013 when RIT Croatia hosted in Zagreb the annual conference of the International Management Research Academy. IMRA is a prestigious global academy, headquartered in London, UK, dedicated to the continuous and effective development of management theory and practice. This conference truly crossed international boundaries by bringing together for three days at the Weston Hotel in Zagreb research scholars, academics, and university students from 18 countries. The potential for creativity emerging from the unique encounters experienced at this conference can be observed in the articles within this special edition of *RIThink*.

In the first article in this issue, Donald L. Lester and John Lipinski of Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, USA, present an intriguing and somewhat counter-intuitive proposal in “A Contrarian View Of Synergy: Successful Merger And Acquisition Activity Based On The Military Tactics Of Coin”. Noting that at least half of all mergers and acquisitions ultimately are deemed unsuccessful due to unrealized synergy, the authors propose that the most effective method of realizing the intended benefits of a merger or acquisition is to employ counterinsurgency tactics utilized by the military.

In the second article in this issue, “Foreign Direct Investment in Indian Retail Sector: A Bane or Boon For Farmers”, Ajit Singh of the Government Postgraduate College in Ambala Cantt, Haryana, India reflects on the claim that the history of every developed country reveals the need to develop an agricultural economy before becoming industrially developed. The author then makes a case that despite various programs and schemes of the government, agriculture in India is a key area that needs comprehensive reforms, but opening of the retail sector for the foreign investors has led to debate as to how it will impact farmers and challenge the development of an agricultural economy prior to solidifying India’s industrial economy.

Rozenda Hendrickse of Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa is the author of the third article in this special edition of *RIThink*. In “Managing South Africa’s Non-Governmental Organizations In An Interconnected World”, the author identifies a multitude of factors that have contributed to the demise of many of South Africa’s non-governmental organizations (NGO’s). The author then provides a detailed discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of a NGOs legal status, its leadership, its executive management structure, the composition of the board and the principles of good governance. The article concludes by providing an appraisal framework for the South African NGO sector intended to improve management practices and sustain NGOs in the long run.

In “Brand Extension In A Borderless World: Lessons From India”, K. Balakrishnan of the IBS Business School in Bangalore, India reports on a study of how consumers form attitudes to brand extensions in a emerging market that is increasingly interconnected with other economies. The results of the two-stage study employing multivariate analysis presents findings that are relevant for marketers entering new geographies as well as scholars identifying new areas for research (i.e., gender does not mediate attitude formation but country of origin does).

Much as been reported in the U.S. and Europe regarding the rapid increase in the number of Baby Boomers who are extending their careers far beyond the traditional age of retirement from the labor force. In “Protect Gerontocracies Or Make A Path For The Young? A Sophiean Choice for the U.S. and Other Western Economies”, Ernie Stark of RIT Croatia and Paul Poppler and Greg Ashley of Bellevue University, Bellevue, Nebraska, USA, explore the underreported impact this trend is having on the careers of younger workers and potential outcomes for Western economies. The article concludes by suggesting changes in social policies having the possibility to lessen the damaging economical impact of this phenomenon.

Finally, in an invited article entitled “Explaining The Change In Employee Behavior: How Did The Evolution Of Learning Theories Lead To Employee Empowerment?”, Tomislave Cvetko, Mihaela, Calis, and Martin Rodin, undergraduate students in International Business at RIT Croatia, Zagreb, examine the influence of learning theories on the continually changing trends in the employee behavior. Departing from the basic idea that people are the necessary resource and the driving factor in the production process, and as such should be managed successfully, the authors elaborate on the importance of management’s adoption and use of various learning theories that eventually resulted in major changes in employee behavior within the workplace.

We trust that you find this special issue of *RIThink* thought provoking and worthy of your time. We would also encourage any feedback regarding this issue that you might be willing to share.