

Foreword

How Asia's firms are managed has gained global attention academically and professionally. Researchers, scholars and practitioners are interested in the unique management practices that result from the cultural roots of Asian societies and the economic, social, political and technological forces that shape them. They are searching for an Asian model that could contribute to the universality of management theory.

Despite the difficulties in many countries after the Asian currency crisis, the quest for knowledge has not weakened. Instead, many more questions have to be answered. What are the factors that contribute to the success of Asian firms? How should human resources be managed in a rapidly changing and uncertain environment? Why are some firms able to survive during the storm, and some not? What are the appropriate strategies firms can develop to maintain competitive advantages? Are there differences between Asian and Western management practices? How can Asian firms be globalized?

The current volume seeks to provide some clues in answering these questions. The chapters in this volume represent some of the best research work presented at the Inaugural Conference of the Asia Academy of Management. The Asia Academy of Management is a global organization designed to encourage management research, education and knowledge dissemination that are of relevance to management in Asia. The overall theme of the Inaugural Conference is "Does Asian Management Matter: Regional Relevance with Global Impact." The objective of this volume is to offer readers scholarly insights into some major management issues faced by Asian firms. The countries studied include, among others, China, Japan, Korea, India, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore. The findings of this volume are not only relevant to Asian firms, but also have impacts on the global scene.

The volume is divided into four main parts. The first part is on the relationship between Asian culture and management in general. The second part is

on the globalization of Asian firms. The third part focuses on the strategic management of these firms. The fourth part addresses the important issues of human resource management and organizational behavior in Asia.

The chapters are rich in content and they vary in approach: some propose new ways to conceptualize existing thoughts while some others go further and validate their propositions empirically. The variety of topics and approaches mirrors the current status of research in Asian management: researchers approach their areas boldly and creatively. They extend ideas that formed our current knowledge by integrating indigenous experiences that characterize Asian firms or firms operating in Asia. They also creatively develop data so that they can examine the research questions empirically.

Asian Culture and Management. This part has four chapters. There is a common theme among the authors which suggests that the Asia context presents unique opportunities for management researchers to extend existing theories. The first chapter, by Tjosvold, Hui, and Sun, develops the Asian concept of harmony. Through an empirical study, it shows how this concept affects Chinese in conflict management. The chapter by Clarke and Von Glinow discusses how overseas Chinese firms choose to locate their operation. The authors build on the existing rational-economic approach to location decision and argue that overseas Chinese firms would use culturally indigenous criteria to complement insights from the economic analysis in their location decision. Huang, Eveleth, and Huo examine some core work-related values in Asia and compare these values between Hong Kong and Taiwan. In the last chapter, Yang explains the effect of Chinese culture on employee motivation, and develops a framework in which the western theories of motivation have to be modified in order to apply to the Asian context.

Globalization of Asian Firms. The second part deals with how Asian firms are globalized and how alliances are established. The chapter by Delios and Beamish focuses on how Japanese firms' multinationality affects their performance, a central issue in the study of MNCs. They confirm that when the effect of propriety assets (R&D, marketing expenses etc.) are removed, multinationality contributes positively to firm performance. In the second chapter, Zeng and Hennart discuss how Japanese firms use their international joint venture experiences to decide on their operation mode in the US. The findings of the study suggest that the impact of joint venture experiences is

not limited to future joint venture formation. Instead, joint venture experience also increases Japanese firms' confidence to operate as wholly owned subsidiaries. Yeh and Kao compare the performance of Hong Kong and Taiwanese firms in China. They discover significant differences in strategies of production scale, labor/capital intensity, location selection, and human resource management because of the firms' different market orientations.

Asakawa examines the international research and development linkages of Japanese MNCs. He suggests several necessary management mechanisms in different stages of linkages. The next chapter by Lee, Chen, and Kao examines an important topic in managing joint ventures, the issues of management control versus equity ownership. By a comprehensive framework that includes four sets of independent variables, they find that different sets of contextual and firm resource variables affect management control and equity ownership separately. Their findings reconfirm the need to treat the two variables in their own right in future work. Gambhire and Srivastava propose a process framework to study international alliances in developing countries. They categorize alliance formation into three inter-related phases: search, formation and management. They also use indigenous experiences from Indian firms to enrich the framework. Their paper is rich in construct conceptualization and propositions development.

Strategic Management in Asia. There are eight chapters in this part. The topics covered include environmental analysis, entry mode choice, diversification and alliance strategies, strategic leadership, trade theory and institutional effects on industry. The first chapter, by Lu, Yeh, Lan, and Chow examines the relationship between diversification strategies and organizational structure, a classic strategy-conduct issue in an Asian context, and China in specific. They have identified two critical contextual factors (a firm's development path and government forces) in influencing the choice of structure. Next, Lu presents from an institutional perspective the entry mode strategy of Japanese firms in the global economy. She finds that contextual complexity has effects on isomorphic behavior of entry mode choice. Similarly, Bae and Lee develop a social embeddedness approach in alliance formation decisions. They specifically examine the social network structure in the Korean telecommunication industry.

Shen and Lau review the economic reform of Chinese state-owned enterprises and suggest that party secretaries play an important role in the reform process. The party secretaries possess critical social and human capital that are instrumental to successful enterprise reform. The next two chapters focus on the external environment faced by the firms. Tan and Lukas study the relationship between environment and firm strategies and propose a co-alignment framework. Sawyer, Ebrahimi, and Luk examine the environmental scanning issue at the executives-level by comparing Nigerian and Hong Kong executives.

The last two chapters examine industry strategies. Kaur and Dhesi develop a Strategic Trade Policy framework to examine the behaviors of Korean firms. They propose that government intervention enhanced the allocation of resources (both physical and financial) towards designated strategic sectors, and improved their competitive position in the world market. Teo and Chow, from an ecological perspective, examine the hotel industry in Singapore. They suggest that various legislative actions have distorted the industry's naturally evolving competitive processes.

Human Resource Management in Asia. Khatri examines the key success factors of Singapore expatriates in China. The findings are different from existing expatriate management literature which is developed from and for Western expatriates. Next, Lim and Teo investigate a recent trend in management - teleworking. They propose that teleworking is an effective way to retain staff and to reduce turnover. Various factors which may affect staff's attitudes toward teleworking are examined. Ip discusses the applicability of Western-based human resource management concepts in China. From an institutional perspective, the chapter attempts to seek a link between the extent of government regulatory influence, the labor market, and human resource management practices in Chinese enterprises.

The next chapter by Ghauri and Fang analyzes the Chinese business negotiation behavior from a social-cultural perspective. The negotiation process of a Swedish multinational with Chinese partners is examined. Lim, Teo, and See study an interesting occupation in Asia: police officers. It investigates empirically the perceived job image of police officers in Singapore and how the feelings of pride and confidence would influence the ability to function effectively and maintain law and order. Lastly, Ojha concludes the

book by examining the institutional effects of Japan on Japanese management practices. He suggests that the success of Japanese management may not be reproduced in other countries.

The current volume is a bold attempt. The authors address some of the many pressing issues about Asian management. They have identified a lot of interesting and important topics that are worth studying in the Asian context, both for practitioners and academic researchers. One theme that is clear from these chapters is that Asian-based management has not only regional relevance, but also global impact.

Chung-Ming Lau
Kenneth S Law
David K Tse
Chi-Sum Wong
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