JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 1, SPECIAL ISSUE

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Carlos O. Trejo-Pech, Ph.D.
Professor of Finance, School of Business and Economics, Universidad Panamericana
Guadalajara, Mexico

John F. Manley, Ph.D.
Professor of Finance, Hagan School of Business, Iona College
New Rochelle, New York, USA

This special issue of *the Journal of International Business and Economy* (JIBE) includes five original research articles. The authors are recipients of the best paper awards of the 2014 International Business and Economy Conference (IBEC), which was held on the campus of Tianjin Polytechnic University, Tianjin, China, during January 9-12, 2014. We thank the members of the IBEC 2014 best papers selection committee for their assessments on all finalist papers: Jianing Fang (Marist College, USA), Aleksandr V. Gevorkyan (St. John's University, USA), Bruce Heiman (San Francisco State University, USA), Elsa-Sofía Morote (Dowling College, USA), Omar Rojas-Altamirano (Universidad Panamericana at Guadalajara, Mexico), Sharon V. Thach (Tennessee State University, USA), and the IBEC 2014 Conference Chair and Conference Chair Emeritus Carlos O. Trejo-Pech and John F. Manley, respectively. We also thank the JIBE Editor-in-Chief, Hwy-Chang Moon, for reviewing this group of articles, and for the opportunity he provides to publish them in JIBE.

https://doi.org/10.51240/jibe.2014.1.1

Authors featured in this journal issue are affiliated with institutions from China, the USA, Denmark, Mexico, and Australia. The article by Qing, Hu, and Liu examines consumers' willingness to pay for fair trade coffee in China. By using interval regression analysis on survey data, the authors find that Chinese consumers are willing to pay for fair trade coffee and the premiums do not follow a linear relationship. This has important implications to coffee producers and marketers since (1) while coffee is a relatively new beverage in China, its consumption is increasing (especially coffee imported from the US) and (2) where previous studies on fair trade coffee have focused on developed countries, this study reports similar findings for a developing nation's consumer characteristics (income, budget constraints, and familiarity with the fair trade concept). The article by Zhou and Huang is also related to China, wherein the authors provide a case study on the acquisition of IBM's personal computers division by the Chinese company Lenovo. The authors provide an analysis of the post-transaction integration process with the challenges this acquisition posed. Such challenges were aggravated due to the cultural differences between Chinese and US executives. To illustrate some of these challenges, the authors interviewed top executives of Lenovo.

The article by Madsen and Wu is also related to mergers and acquisitions (M&As), analyzing the worldwide beer industry during 2002-2012. The authors document economies of scale in advertising and distribution expenditures for the largest multinational breweries; but, the authors find that economies of scale in production have been exhausted. This leads them to conclude that marketing and distribution is a motivator for this M&As wave. This investment in branding (e.g., growth through acquisitions) represents a first-mover advantage in the world market for beers. However, acknowledging that this first-mover advantage has not yet shown up on the bottom line (as superior returns or on firm values), the authors discuss possible reasons for this. The Olorunniwo, Jolayemi, Fan, and Li article investigates the relationship between information shared among supply chain participants and the supplier selection processes. In particular, the authors focus on the study of lower-tier suppliers, a growing field of research. Companies are recently recognizing the importance of understanding the complete supply chain, with low-tier suppliers included. The authors collected information from a survey of 74 companies and interviewed 19 industry executives from 15 companies. The results are expected to encourage and motivate industries to adopt processes for improving lower-tier supplier visibility. Finally, the Vázquez-López article analyzes the evolution of the Mexican textile and apparel industry during 1994-2008, following the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This sector has traditionally played a key role in economic growth strategies in developing countries. This study allows for the assessment of industry performance under the implementation of a free trade agreement that has provided mixed results across sectors for the countries involved. The author finds evidence of an incipient technological upgrading after the signing of NAFTA.

Since inception, IBEC has recognized the interrelationship of the business disciplines for creating a successful environment in international business and, such as, encouraged cross-discipline and cross-border studies by participants. These award winner articles represent the essence of this concept integration. The issue of the consumers' willingness to pay for fair trade requires concept applications from behavioral science, marketing, and management; the case study concerning the acquisition by Lenovo concerns the integration of M&As concepts with others from finance and management. The study on the consolidation in the beer industry again calls upon the M&As literature from finance while relying on an understanding of management and marketing issues; these management and marketing issues are further integrated with the study of supplier selection. With the large number of international trade agreements, studies based on any one have direct impact on the study and understanding of others. As such, the study of the impact of NAFTA on international business and trade highlights once again the integration of economics, finance, and management concepts into a greater analysis and understanding of cross-border business and social issues. We are pleased to provide the opportunity to read and peruse these individual studies as a collection of the growing global community to which we all belong.