Special Issue on "Challenges for Asian Leaders in the 4.0 Industry"

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The challenges for Asian business leaders in the 4.0 industry under the influence of technological advances of the digital age could have multiple impacts on the development of globally responsible leadership (D'amato & Bui, 2017). Advanced technologies have allowed the global workforce to be better connected, more collaborative, and have greater social impact than ever before (Lasi, Fettke, Kemper, Feld, & Hoffmann, 2014). Also, different leadership styles rooted in different contexts have emerged to deal with the ongoing changing global business environments and norms, in particular by combining the concepts and practices of leadership between East and West (Barkema, Chen, George, Luo, & Tsui, 2015; Muenjohn & McMurray, 2017a).

For many business leaders, the search for the competitive advantage is focused on maximizing human performance — and the question of how to lead and sustain a highly engaged and developed workforce is taking on new meaning and urgency in the age of 4.0 industry (McClean & Collins, 2018). For example, technological tools have made it possible for international businesses to rely more and more on virtual teams rather than traditional team structures based in one place. Everything has been changing rapidly from the volume and complexity of job-related data to the nature of work itself, all of which challenge the current leadership thinking and skills (Banks, Dionne, Sayama & Mast, 2019). Accordingly, middle managers and top-level executives need to understand the essential challenges and opportunities that arise when new human-machine interfaces become more prevalent, enabling real-time response, better targeting, greater efficiency, and deeper customer insight, among other benefits.

There seem to be two dominant ideals in Asian cultures. One is known as 'Confucian inheritance', with an emphasis on working for greater good, spirituality, and harmony (Cho & Kim, 2013); and the other is 'familism', that is, a strong sense of the importance of family, which is shared both publicly and privately (Kim, 2010). Under these cultural values, authoritarian leadership styles such as paternalistic leadership appear to be more desirable than in the West, and China is an example (Muenjohn & McMurray, 2017b). However, such cultural and leadership preferences are also evolving, as recent evidence shows that younger generations prefer more Western leadership styles (Zhu, Ren, Collins and Warner, 2017). In contrast, during the tumultuous times when performance deteriorates, East Asian leadership style might be preferred in the US because of their collective orientation (Gundermir, Carton & Homan, 2016). Hence, there is a trend that both East and West are learning and merging leadership styles from each other. Zhu, Ren, Collins and Warner (2017) investigated the challenges facing Asian business leaders that are associated with the increasing Western influence of managerial concepts and practices by addressing three relevant questions specific to Asian cultures and values: (i) What are the traditional values and thinking influencing management and leadership practices? (ii) What has changed in terms of leadership concepts and practices influenced by 'Western' concepts under the process of globalization? And (iii) What are the key concerns of business leaders in East Asia in confronting challenges and becoming successful and sustainable leaders? Coupled with these trends, advances in information and communication technologies will change the way

managers apply tools to their existing business models and processes to capitalise on the vast amount of data through AI and data analytics. These could be seen as key challenges for the current and future generations of business leaders not only in Asia, but globally.

The extant literature shows a need for further considerations on the concerns and challenges for Asian business leaders. For example, there is a need to adopt a more balanced approach between Eastern and Western practices under the process of business internationalization (e.g. Gundermir et al. 2016). More critical research on women's leadership in Asia is essential (Morley & Crossourard, 2016). Additionally, we also need to focus on sustainable leadership, leadership of different generations with different technological knowledge, attitudes towards taking risks, and tolerance towards failure for long term social transformation (Banks et al., 2019; Hou, Li & Yuan, 2018).

This special issue extends previous literature on business leadership and leadership development by offering an integrated framework to analyse, compare and contrast a number of Asian countries within the spheres of regional disparity. Such a framework enables us to sharpen the current understanding of why and how business leadership is perceived and practised in Asia, and enriches the literature by identifying practical implications for building sustainable business in the Asian region and elsewhere.

The special issue will also explore different ways business leaders improve their leadership competencies to navigate complex and dynamic environments in the digital age. Advances in information and communication technologies will change the way managers apply tools to their existing business models and processes to capitalise on the vast amount of data through AI and data analytics. Some key research areas *in the age of 4.0 industry* could include:
- Business environment and leadership style and development in Asia;
- Reforming and upgrading leadership competency in relation to Asian culture;
- National development and leadership agenda and capabilities in Asia;
- Generational differences of Asian leadership;
- Female leadership, social inclusion and development;
- New leadership concepts and practices from East and West and the implications for globally responsible leaders;

- Research gaps and future research directions for globally responsible leadership in Asia;
- Leadership and organizational evolution of platform enterprises;
- Leaderships in local unicorns' tech start-ups;
- Virtual leadership and network-based team management;
- Qualities, attributes and skill set of business leaders to bridge the gaps in understanding business demands, challenges, priorities, and the technicalities of technology-enabled innovations;
- New leadership concepts for flexible and adaptable organisations;
- Diversity and leadership in Asia.

Initial submission should be received by 15 December 2020. We encourage quantitative, meta-analysis and qualitative studies as well as systematic review manuscripts tackling different aspects of business leadership and leadership development in the 4.0 industry within the Asian region, and in comparison with other regions in the world if relevant. Submission should be accompanied by an assurance of originality and exclusivity. Papers should adhere to the 'Instructions for Authors' guide for authors that can be found at this link https://journals.sagepub.com/home/gem .

Manuscripts should be submitted at this link (https://journals.sagepub.com/home/gem), and designated under Manuscript Type as "Special Issue- Challenges for Asian Leaders in the 4.0 Industry".

For further information, please contact: Journal of General Management by email: journalofgeneralmanagement@gmail.com.

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