Notes from the Editor

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Notes from the Editor

In the first quarter of 2024, we have witnessed global uncertainties in political and economic environments around the world--inequality, poverty, food, and water insecurities, not to mention war, violence, and cyber insecurity. Compounding these issues, the global economic order is now shaken, with deglobalization and volatility, and is driven by multiple nations, including the US, China, and Europe. Another major global trend is that people of all ages around the world depend on digital technology in their everyday lives—from shopping necessities to buying airline, bus, or train tickets.

This online direct-access journal continues to attract audiences with its mission of global awareness. The ninth issue of the Journal of Global Awareness brings to its readers and scholars worldwide an understanding of contemporary Latin America, economic inequality insights, Latina challenges in healthcare access, Western musical influence on the Republic of Korea, and how global value chains create competitive advantages for Pepsi, Target, Zara, and Marriott.

The first research article by Sullivan Padgett is on “Latin American Participation in the Current Process of Economic Globalization.” Despite United States efforts of the late twentieth century supplantation of the region’s earlier state-led development model, Latin America has shown minimal global engagement. The region is split among Mexico, Central America, and South America. Mexico and Brazil compete for regional dominance. Latin American countries chose regionalization, with recent China’s influence growing in the region as well. However, the current process of economic globalization is quite uncertain. There is an enormous gap between the Global North’s rich nations and the Global South’s poor countries. The countries in the South are aware of the developmental approaches, and scholarly research is well presented.

The second article by Francesco Rigoli is on “Attitude Towards Economic Inequality in a Global Perspective: Evidence from the World Value Survey.” According to the author, attitudes towards economic inequality (ATEI) studies focus on Western countries. To address this limitation, this insightful article uses data from the World Value Survey, covering more than one hundred countries. The research reveals that people tolerate economic inequalities more when they have higher salaries and better education, even when living in poor countries.
Additionally, a country’s level of income inequality has no impact on the attitudes toward economic inequality, as reported by their citizens. What an observation! People think about economic inequality in rich nations, but this article is a revelation about the ATET in poor countries.

The next article is by Thor Kock Søndergård, which is “Pepsi’s Global Success in a Market Characterized by Intense Competition.” Though Pepsi is a globally recognized company, its challenges to remain successful are not widely understood.

This article fills that void. PepsiCo has many separate supply chains because of their more than five hundred brands, each with a different supply chain depending on the variation of products. According to the author, distinct brands have separate popularity in different countries and cultures, making the retailers different from brand to brand. So, with the new initiative “The PepsiCo Way,” PepsiCo is making every aspect of the supply chain faster, stronger, and better to get a competitive advantage in a market characterized by high competition. The article provides an in-depth analysis of a well-known global multinational company.

Michael Lee and Deborah Kessler address healthcare issues that affect all over the world. Their article on “Latinas in the United States Facing Healthcare Access Challenges in a Mid-Size Urban Community” discusses discrepancies and underlying factors on the issues in accessing healthcare resources. This is further exacerbated by the migration of Latinos from large urban areas to smaller cities and rural regions of the United States. This poses challenges to health services for underserved populations. Studies show that the fastest-growing Hispanic communities are in the Southeastern United States and the Midwestern region. In addition, the population trends in urban Midwestern communities indicate stagnation or decline.

In contrast, there is a rise in the Latino population in many Midwestern communities. Historically, it is reported that regions with a high population of Hispanics are better equipped to accommodate multilingual and multicultural communities. This study shows that cervical cancer cases are more prevalent among populations with limited health resources and with higher rates of poverty. Also, screening rates reveal disparities between racial and ethnic groups, and Latinas are among the most at-risk groups. The article reveals differences among Latinas according to individual subgroupings by country of origin. Latinas of
Mexican, Central American, and South American descent have a lower likelihood of preventive screenings than Latinas from other regions. Overall, the article is informative and presents awareness of healthcare access challenges.

The following article is on “Zara, the Global Fast Fashion Pioneer from Spain,” by Hibah Ahmad. Zara, a Spanish multinational company, is truly a global pioneer in the fast fashion industry and still holds a leadership position as of this writing. Zara has successfully integrated its supply chain, which spans 3,000 stores across ninety-six countries. It is a leading company that has embraced the “fast fashion” business model and continues implementing it successfully. The founder, Amancio Ortega, was the first to purposely take the unconventional business route. The business model is to manufacture at exceptionally low capacities, which has allowed Zara to be able to make swift changes to product lines to ensure the evolving consumer demands are met. The author states, “a product line can take as little as 25 days to reach retail stores from start to finish. The brand has been known to release at least twenty-four new collections every year, and over five hundred contemporary designs in a week to adapt to the evolving consumer trends. As soon as their team spots a new trend on social media, their designers get to work immediately to create their own replications.”

The sixth article, “The Influence of Western Music and the Wind Band in the Republic of Korea,” focuses on music, and the author, Mark Reimer, is an academician and conductor who has published on the influence of global cultures on music. This contribution traces the history of South Korea’s Western Musical influence dating back to 1885. According to the author, “The United States and the Western countries have had a tremendous influence on the development of classical music in South Korea—incorporating composers, ensembles, performers, and repertoire—and the evolution of its music has often been a fusion of the present with the past, tradition with innovation. The wind band is a product of this influence owing to its close connection with Western military musicians and South Korea and their changing musical tastes towards American popular music, a development rooted in a cultural evolution that began over a century ago.” The article traces the history of South Korean music's evolution until the present day, dating back to court music, folk songs, dance music, and recently to American jazz music. Since industrialization, both Korean and Japanese societies used music to accompany the work of labor teams. This music is highly democratic owing to the varying levels of expertise in rhythm, dance, and choreography to ensure group participation.
The article notes that in 1947, musicologist Lee Hye-Ku was hired to teach Western music at Seul National University, and in 1948, he founded the Korean Musicological Society, which formalized the study of both Western and traditional Korean music. A string quartet and an opera performance appeared a few years later. Until 1960, many Korean musicians chose to study in Japan, and Korean composers wrote in the Western style regarding instrumentation, harmony, and form. Orchestra musicians used to sit on the floor, whereas now they use the seating, on chairs, of the modern orchestra but with the provision for two-string fiddles, long zithers, bowed zithers, and back rows of winds and percussion. It is a great piece of musical history for global awareness, and the insights are amazing. The readers will find the article an excellent resource for a better understanding of intercultural engagement.

The next article is changing gear from music and culture to global business. It is by Gloria Clarissa on “Target: How a Top Retailer Overseas Global Sourcing Challenges.” As customers and shoppers, we ignore the work involved in getting the product to the shelves in a physical store or what is required in managing inventories in warehouses and distribution centers in online deliveries. Target has and continues to face many global sourcing challenges, including ever-changing market and value chains. Target, founded in 1902, is a general merchandise retailer with store locations in all 50 US states and the District of Columbia. In addition, Target has an active online presence that carries a wide range of products, having separate supply chains. The research identifies SuperValue, Good&Gather, and Apparel supply chains, among others. The article provides insights on global sourcing, which creates value and competitive advantages for Target.

The ability to offer high-quality goods at reasonable prices sets Target apart from other department store chains—especially for low- and middle-income customers to purchase everyday necessities, by creating a positive purchasing experience. The article is both informative and instructive for students and scholars of business administration.

For travelers worldwide, a short stay outside a permanent residence has become a necessity, and it is both a physical product and a service. The hospitality industry has a global market value of 4.7 trillion US dollars. The next and last article is on
Marriott International, Inc., an American international hospitality company with a broad range of portfolio of hotels and related lodging facilities around the world. The article “Global Brands Value Chains Create Competitive Advantage,” by Adriana Marchetti, is a well-researched piece that deserves attention for general as well as business students and scholars worldwide. Marriott is aware of the challenges in its industry. One prominent challenge is the intense rivalry from other hotel chains competing for their market share and customer loyalty. These research findings show that Marriott is constantly pushing the boundaries of innovation and differentiation to capture customers and maintain the loyalty of its clients. The advent of online travel agencies (OTAs) and platforms such as Airbnb have the potential to jeopardize the conventional hospitality landscape. So, Marriott has its own direct booking channels and digital infrastructure, using data analytics and tailored marketing strategies to enrich the guest experience and foster brand loyalty. Additionally, this research introduces a unique business model of Marriott that allows global reach with global brands and sustains its competitive advantage by reaching out to customers across 139 countries with 8000+ properties, offering about 1.5 million guest rooms.

Finally, the 9th issue ends with a book review by Jay Nathan. The book is titled, “Build, An Unorthodox Guide to Making Things Worth Making,” by Tony Fadell. The book was on the New York Times Bestseller list. This is an unusual book yet offers the readers huge insights and a deeper understanding of what goes into creating new products and innovative approaches to processes. There is an authenticity about the author, his work experiences, and being part of a team, building such products as “Pocket Crystal,” “iPhone,” “iPod,” “iPad,” and “Nest.” The book is presented as the narrative of the author’s career; however, it is more than that. It can be called a “mentor in a box,” since it offers a sort of guidance to “how to, or, how not to start a business.” It is worth quoting the author: (1) true heroes are humble, (2) stay focused and align with the mission-driven team, (3) think beyond prototype, (4) make the intangible tangible, and (5) make customer co-designer. It is a fascinating book, and for anyone interested in understanding the history of such famously popular products as iPad and iPhone, this is the book to read.