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Turning Kurt Lewin on his head: Nothing is so theoretical as a good practice☆

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ABSTRACT

Kurt Lewin is acknowledged as the “father of social change theories” because his work has affected many models. Inspired by Lewin's massive contribution to science, this special issue of *Journal of Business Research* (JBR) collects papers regarding “Turning Kurt Lewin on his head: Nothing is so theoretical as a good practice.” These papers are presented in the 6th Conference of the Global Innovation and Knowledge Academy (GIKA 2016), in Valencia, Spain, from March 20 to March 23. After double blind reviews, only 75 papers are recommended to this special issue.

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1. Introduction

Kurt Zadek Lewin was a German–American psychologist and one of the modern pioneers of social, organizational, and applied psychology. Lewin was born on September 9, 1890 in Mogilno (modern-day Poland, then part of the Kingdom of Prussia). He immigrated to the United States in August 1933 and became a naturalized citizen in 1940. There, he made a new life for himself, continuing his outstanding work on psychology research. He passed away on February 12, 1947 in Newtonville, Massachusetts, United States.

Researchers consider Kurt Lewin as the “father of social change theories” because contemporary models build on Lewin's work (Kaminski, 2011). With Lewin's massive contribution to science as an inspiration, this special issue of the *Journal of Business Research* (JBR) seeks studies embracing the following three steps: (1) deep observation of real-life practice (behavior); (2) inductive theory building from practice cases to models of multiple realities; and (3) testing the new inductive theory deductively using additional sample of 5 to 30 or more practice cases. Lewin (1945) famously stated, “Nothing is so practical as a good theory.”

☆ The guest editors of this special issue thank the participants of the Conference of the Global Innovation and Knowledge Academy (GIKA) at the University of Valencia, Spain, March 20–23, 2016. We especially thank Arch G. Woodside, Co-Editor, and Naveen Donthu, Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Business Research*, for offering a special issue to the challenging theme: Turning Kurt Lewin on his head: Nothing is so theoretical as a good practice. We thank all reviewers who provide authors with constructive comments and suggestions.

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The objective of this JBR special issue is to provide theoretical and empirical evidence using multiple methods and to present conceptual studies that look at different theoretical perspectives. This special issue collects research demonstrating that the reverse thought is useful: good theory follows from bad or good practice and executives' attempts to recognize and solve paradoxes in practice.

Lewin's change management model still affects many recent studies, such as action research (Beaulieu, 2013), activity theory (Langemeyer, 2011), conflict resolution (Edmund, 2010), role playing in conflict resolution (Bowman, 2013), changing practice in early years settings (Davis, 2012), relationships of marriage (Lavner, Karney, & Bradbury, 2014), cultural–historical research (Chaiklin, 2011), experiential learning theory (Kolb & Kolb, 2012), and organizational development (Burnes, 2012). Key contributions on practice-to-theory provide useful insights and tools (Eisenhardt, 1989; Tsoukas, 1989; Van de Ven, 1989; Weick, 1989; Woodside, 2010).

The 6th Conference of the Global Innovation and Knowledge Academy (GIKA 2016): “Turning Kurt Lewin on his head: Nothing is so theoretical as a good practice” takes place in Valencia, Spain, from March 20 (Sunday) to March 23 (Wednesday), 2016. GIKA 2016 attracts more than 540 submissions but only accepts 250 articles for presentation. The double blind reviews recommend only 75 of these articles for this special issue.

2. Contributions to the special issue

Seventy-five articles in this special issue analyze and explore different aspects of the spirit of strategy in five sections: networks; corporate innovation; social issues; marketing activities; entrepreneurship.

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2.1. Networks

Networks are a key factor to the detection of opportunities, to the testing of ideas, and to garner resources for the formation of the new organization (Zimmer, 1986; Ballestar, Grau-Carles, & Sainz, 2015). Potential partners are often very reluctant to put their reputation, capital, or other resources at risk in a start-up, whose financial prospects, if not its longevity, are uncertain (Chen, 2003).

The first contribution of this special issue, by Mota, Castro and Brito is “Powered by...’ Whom? A Network Perspective on Replication as Strategy” and addresses the replication of a template, that is, a configuration of resources and activities, among firms as a strategy to improve the firms’ position in a network of relationships. They also demonstrate that change in the network position can result from two interwoven processes: the development and replication of a template in some sections of the network, and a rearrangement of the web of relationships with its counterparts. In his article “Collaboration modes, preconditions and coordination contingencies in organizational alliance: A comparative assessment” contextualizes collaboration modes, collaboration contingencies in specific situations and coordination preconditions as key assessment dimensions in collaboration activities. His research concludes with a remark on the roles of conveners in directing and assessing collaboration. In their article “Corporate Venture Capital: The role of governance factors” Anokhin, Peck, and Wincent offer theoretical arguments for the role of governance factors including board, CEO, and institutional ownership characteristics. They conclude that the role of governance factors is potentially important in open innovation arrangements and CVC. The next contribution by Navarro-García, Sánchez-Franco and Rey-Moreno, “Relational governance mechanisms in export activities: Their determinants and consequences,” analyzes the determinants and the consequences of the relational governance mechanisms between exporters and their foreign distributors. Their results show that relational norms have a positive effect on the exporter’s result and that the greater the exporter’s dependence on its distributors, the exporter’s international competences and the volatility of the foreign markets, the greater the exporter’s need to maintain a relation with its foreign distributors based on information exchange, flexibility, and cooperation. The main objective of Parker’s “Team effectiveness and open discussion of conflict in collaborative new product development: A cross-national study” is to contribute to the understanding of the mechanisms through which relational governance and formal contractual governance influence new product development performance. His results indicate that team effectiveness mediates the relationship between governance and new product development performance and that the ability of collaborating firms to create an atmosphere of openness to discuss conflicting views positively moderates the relationship between team effectiveness and performance. Szopiński in his article “Factors affecting the adoption of online banking in Poland” identifies the factors exerting influence on the use of online banking in Poland. The paper contributes to the development of the literature concerned with electronic banking by providing knowledge on the factors which seem to produce impact on the acceptance of online banking on the emerging market in Poland. As the results obtained by Yuen et al. (2015) demonstrate, the users of online banking are different from the non-users, depending on the country of residence.

Bhatti, Larimo, and Carrasco deal with the “Strategy’s effect on knowledge sharing in host country networks” and analyze how knowledge strategy affects multinational firms’ knowledge sharing in host country networks. The results suggest that learning and new knowledge acquisition from knowledge sharing in networks adds to firm competence and consequently to its performance. De Fuentes and Porcuna, in their article “Main drivers of consultancy services: A meta-analytic approach” examine the research on consultancy services models, in particular research that captures when the same company provides both the statutory audit of the financial statements and consultancy services, also known as non-audit services (NAS), to the customer. The findings

indicate a number of key determinants of consultancy bills: client size, audit fees, auditors being from a “Big Audit Firm,” client’s financial difficulties, and prior experience with the legal auditors. Otero-González, Rodríguez-Gil, Martorell-Cunill, and Merigó-Lindahl, in their article “The effect of financial innovation on European banks’ risk,” study the effect of the use of securitization and credit derivatives on the risk profile of European banks. The results show that securitization and credit derivatives had a negative impact on financial stability, indicating for credit derivatives the predominance of trading positions on hedging ones. Also, their results support the higher capital requirements in the new international banking regulation, known as Basel III. The contribution by Lim and Lee analyzes “The effects of industry relatedness and takeover motives on cross-border acquisition completion”. The authors aim to identify national- and firm-level factors that affect decision-makers’ expected returns, perceived risk, and attitude toward risk, which jointly lead to ultimate completion or abandonment of a cross-border acquisition after a public announcement. Their results show that a cross-border acquisition completion is more likely when the excess economic development level of the target firm’s country over the acquirer’s is greater. In their article “Data analytics in banks’ audit: The case of loan loss provisions in Uruguay,” Gambetta, García-Benau, and Zorio-Grima analyze the benefits of implementing an ERP system and using XBRL format to report in the banking industry considering the industry’s specific risks and complexities and they show that ERP and XBRL are necessary to successfully use CAATs while performing audit procedures to verify the compliance of certain crucial regulatory requirements. The contribution entitled “Demographic preferences towards careers in shared service centers: A factor analysis” by Koval, Nabaresh, Klimek, and Chromjakova analyzes talent attraction and employee retention, two main challenges that currently affect the growth of the shared service industry worldwide, and in Central and Eastern Europe in particular. The results and findings are not generalizable for all students globally because of cultural differences, but present a unique starting point for further research and comparative analysis on a regional basis. In their manuscript “Unity is strength: A study of supplier relationship management integration,” Oghazi, Rad, Zaefarian, Beheshti and Mortazavi illustrate a case study built over the concept of SRM process integration between the manufacturer and its first upstream tier within the construction equipment industry of Sweden. Their findings allow them to state that the integration of the SRM process between the manufacturer and its first upstream tier of supplier within the Swedish construction equipment industry can take place through the integration of the SRM sub-processes. Nonetheless, firms must tackle some obstacles to enable the SRM sub-processes integration. The next contribution is “Forecasting incoming call volumes in call centers with recurrent neural networks.” The authors Jalal, Hosseini, and Karlsson explore the proposition and application of the prediction model based on Elman and NARX neural network and Back-propagation algorithm in call volumes forecasting. Their experimental results indicate that the proposed method is efficient for forecasting call volumes to call centers. They also compare the performance of the Elman–NARX neural network model with the time-lagged feed-forward neural network for the same problem. Parida, Patel, Lahti, George and Wincent in their article “Influence of subjective interpretation, causation, and effectuation on initial venture sale” demonstrate variations of subjective interpretations of strategy-relevant cues in the external industry environment. The results show support for greater likelihood of initial venture sales when the entrepreneur increasingly relies on causation and has greater perception of controllability. In “Manager competences in logistics and supply chain practice,” Derwik, Hellström, and Karlsson use shadowing and practice theory to explore the nature of manager competence in L&SCM. The purpose of this study is to address the literature gap on L&SC manager competence by focusing on “managing” rather than “management”. The results suggest that L&SC managers use general managerial competences in practice rather than SCM expertise, and identify multitasking ability as a

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