

SOUTH ASIAN JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT

- Abdulfattah Yaghi and Badreya Al-Jenaibi** 7
Organizational Readiness for E-governance:
A Study of Public Agencies in the United Arab Emirates
- Nazrul Islam, Md. Mohsan Khudri and Sharmina Afrin** 32
Impact Factors of ICT on the Learning Process of Students:
A Study on Private Universities in Bangladesh
- Manoj Kumar Choudhury and Prabina Rajib** 56
Informational Efficiency of National Stock Exchange (NSE), India:
A Comparison with Seven Selected Markets
- Reena Shah** 81
Development of a Bi-directional and Multi-dimensional Measure
of Work-life Balance
- Amar Nath Das and Arindam Laha** 98
Extent of Credit Rationing and its Determinants:
Micro-empirical Evidence from Rural West Bengal, India
- Kajole Nanda and Mandeep Kaur** 114
Bank-led Financial Inclusion and Human Development:
Evidence from India
- Manish Das and Victor Saha** 141
A Study on Consumer Ethnocentrism and Social Comparison
in Rural India: Implications for Marketing Strategy
- Case Study**
Vikas Goyal 165
Target Chemicals India Private Limited (TCL):
In Search of Distribution Efficiencies
- Book Reviews** 189



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Organizational Readiness for E-governance: A Study of Public Agencies in the United Arab Emirates[†]

Abdulfattah Yaghi * and Badreya Al-Jenaibi**

In order to make public services accessible to a wide range of end users around the clock (i.e., smart services), Smart Government (SG) utilizes advanced Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Using ICT enables people not only to apply for services, retrieve information or download forms and applications, but also to receive the final product and services through smart phones and remote-controlled devices. The present study aims at assessing employees' perceived organizational readiness to implement smart government within their agencies. One thousand and five hundred surveys were developed and administered to a randomly-selected sample of employees and managers working in public agencies. Statistical analyses reveal that public agencies have relatively suitable environment to implement smart government but major challenges persist. The most serious challenges are the availability of accessible Internet for clients and employees, underdeveloped legal infrastructure, clients' literacy in information technology, and inadequate funding. These findings are discussed and recommendations are outlined for decision makers and researchers.

Key Words: E-Governance, Public Sector, Organizational Readiness, Responsiveness, Smart Government (SG), United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Impact Factors of ICT on the Learning Process of Students: A Study on Private Universities in Bangladesh

Nazrul Islam*, Md. Mohsan Khudri** and Sharmina Afrin***

In today's internet-enabled era, the learning processes of students are not effective without the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the learning practices. This study aimed at identifying the impact factors of ICT on learning processes of the students enrolled in different private universities of Bangladesh. A total of 277 respondents were chosen through convenience sampling and were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. The results obtained from Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) divulged that eight factors integrated students' learning processes and the use of ICT. Subsequently, five factors were found to be significant through multiple regression analysis. Among the eight factors identified, the role of factors for training skills and willingness of Information Technology (IT) staff and internet-based communication were further corroborated using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis. This study concluded that ICT facilities of the private universities significantly influenced the effectiveness of learning process of the university students. If the authorities of the private universities in Bangladesh would emphasize upon improving the aforementioned factors, the overall learning process of the students would become more effective and could lead to better academic performance thereby.

Key Words: *E-library; Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Internet-based communication, Learning Processes, Private University*

Informational Efficiency of National Stock Exchange (NSE), India: A Comparison with Seven Selected Markets

Manoj Kumar Choudhury* and Prabina Rajib**

The efficiency of a stock market can be illustrated either by the condition such as investment and behavioral patterns, and bubbles, or assessed by exclusive measures, such as the Hurst exponent. The Hurst exponent methodology brings about a measure for long-term memory and probability of the future values based on past information, without making assumptions about stationarity. In the current study, the Hurst exponent has been estimated for past 10 years' daily values of eight stock indices and the corresponding financial sector index series. The markets chosen include those from India, Brazil, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA). These financial sector indices were considered for this study as they had the highest weight percentage and number of constituents in all the exchanges. Empirical analyses showed that the Hurst exponent values of the series varied for different stock exchanges and corresponding financial sector index, but were in the range of 0.5, confirming the market to be efficient. A comparison of India's National Stock Exchange (NSE) with selected markets of the seven other countries revealed that India's NSE had one of the efficient indices with regard to its peers. It was also found that most of the indices, though locally persistent, went through phases involving herding behaviors of market participants.

Key Words: *De-trended Fluctuation Analysis (DFA), Fractal Dimension, Hurst Exponent, National Stock Exchange (NSE), Range to Standard Deviation Ratio*

Development of a Bi-directional and Multi-dimensional Measure of Work-life Balance

Reena Shah*

Issues related to the interactions between personal and professional life have gained popularity amongst academicians as well as practitioners in recent times. In spite of this development, research in this area is not holistic as it has been mainly focusing on the adverse or favorable nature of interactions between work and life. Moreover, the scope of research in this area is largely restricted to the study of individuals with family responsibilities or is developed and appropriate only in distinct western cultural contexts. There is a lack of reported scale of work-life balance that assesses holistically the bi-directional and multi-dimensional nature of work-life interaction. In this study, an attempt has therefore been made to develop a holistic scale for measuring work-life balance. Data was collected from 400 working professionals working in diverse sectors and based in four major cities in India. Quantitative analysis has yielded a 19-item, four-factor scale for measuring work to life and life to work interference and enhancement with high reliability and validity measures. This paper further discusses the strategic implications of this scale for human resource management in general.

Key Words: *Bi-directional, India, Multi-dimensional, Scale Development, Work-life Balance*

Extent of Credit Rationing and its Determinants: Micro-empirical Evidence from Rural West Bengal, India

Amar Nath Das* and Arindam Laha**

Credit rationing is an inherent characteristic of institutional credit market. In the context of credit rationing in institutional credit market, non-institutional credit market performs a market clearing role as the excess demand in formal credit market spill-over to informal credit market and hence raise the cost of loanable funds there. In this backdrop, this paper attempts to measure the extent of credit rationing of the farmer households by using micro empirical evidences from rural West Bengal. In addition, the study employs sequential choice model in the first stage to analyze the decision of a borrower for applying formal credit and the possibility of being credit rationed by the institutional lender in second stage. Empirical results revealed that households endowed with large land holding and greater work force participation rate in agriculture are more likely to apply formal credit. On the other hand, credit-worthiness and education level of the borrowers significantly influences lenders' decision in rationing credit.

Key Words: Credit rationing, Horizontal interlinkage, Institutional credit, Sequential choice model, West Bengal.

Bank-led Financial Inclusion and Human Development: Evidence from India

Kajole Nanda and Mandeep Kaur***

Financial inclusion and equality of finance are topical on the agenda of 'inclusive growth', especially in a class inequality smitten country like India. With this backdrop, the study proposes an Index of Financial Inclusion (IFI) and uses it to examine the magnitude and spread of financial inclusion in 25 states, 4 Union Territories (UTs), and 6 geographic regions of the country. It also examines the nature and extent of its relationship with the level of human development for the year 2007-08; and further proposes a modified and financial inclusion incorporated measure of human development. The results indicate high financial inclusion in Chandigarh, Delhi and Goa throughout the period of the study. The states of the Southern region of the country reflect the maximum progression in financial inclusion. On the flip side, the North-Eastern region of the country, along with its constituent states exhibits a tremendously poor stance of inclusion. With the exception of these (North-Eastern) states, financial inclusion and human development are noted to be highly correlated. Additionally, financial inclusion (IFI), prosperity of states (Per Capita Net State Domestic Product) and Human Development Index (HDI) reflect a tandem movement with each other. Equality of access to finance is imperative to ensure human development, thus, financial inclusion should also be considered as a dimension of social/human development.

Key Words: *Financial Access, Financial Inclusion, Human Development Index (HDI), Index of Financial Inclusion (IFI), India*

A Study on Consumer Ethnocentrism and Social Comparison in Rural India: Implications for Marketing Strategy

Manish Das* and Victor Saha**

Though rural India is the next growth destination for firms, rural-specific marketing research is scarce in literature. Rural marketing strategy for majority firms in India is based on generalized urban findings irrespective of significant differences between rural and urban consumers and their preferences. This study is an attempt to evaluate the utility of Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) and Attention to Social Comparison Information (ATSCI) as possible drivers of a rural-specific marketing strategy in the Indian context. Data were collected from 177 rural consumers belonging to both the tribe and non-tribe category from Tripura, a hilly state located in North-Eastern India. Data analysis was carried out by using appropriate statistical techniques such as Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), and Friedman's Test. From the results of the analysis, it could be concluded that rural consumers were open towards foreign goods and that social comparison was an important factor during purchase. Age and education were found to be predictors of ethnocentric tendencies and gender was a predictor for social comparison. CE and ATSCI were also found to be the two independent constructs in case of rural India. These findings of this study would be helpful in formulating a rural-specific marketing strategy in the Indian context.

Key Words: Attention to Social Comparison Information (ATSCI), Consumer Behavior, Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE), Rural India, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Target Chemicals India Private Limited (TCL): In Search of Distribution Efficiencies

Vikas Goyal*

Target Chemicals India Pvt. Ltd. (TCL) is a leading manufacturer of industrial chemicals. TCL primarily produces Phthalic Anhydride (PA) that is regarded as a commodity chemical in Indian market. The case focuses on the challenges that TCL faces with its distribution channels design with the current scenario of PA market in Western India. The case highlights the mismatch between customer buying processes and the company's selling process as a major factor for inefficient distribution. Uncertain consumer buying patterns and regulatory and related factors in PA market further complicate this already competitive and complex commodity market. The case discusses the distribution channel design of TCL and elaborate on several associated factors such as, managing relationship with downstream agents and dealers. Furthermore, the case discusses the challenges in formulating the structure and processes of TCL's distribution and the resulting implication for distribution channel design. It brings forth various distribution strategies that a firm operating in commodity B2B market could use to maintain its distribution efficiencies and foothold with changing market variables. Besides providing a note on the challenges that firms operating in such industries face, the case also presents an overview of the commodity chemical industry in India and an elaborated view of the Indian unstructured B2B market.

Key Words: *Developing Economies, Distribution Challenges, Distribution Channel Design, Distribution Channel Relationships, Distribution Restructuring*
