

FOREWORD

The articles in this issue concern both business and economics and also the learning of second languages. In each case, however, the topic is significantly wider in scope and significance than might seem to be the case. As is appropriate for a journal that addresses itself to a general intellectual audience rather than merely to specialists, the articles begin from a base of particular expertise and extend out to larger areas of concern.

Very often social well-being and development are measured simply in monetary terms, particularly in terms of a nation's Gross National Product. This purely economic measure can, from some perspectives, be considered to provide a non-optimal goal for economic and social policy.

No one would argue that some degree of economic wealth is needed for the well-being of a nation's citizens, but is it necessarily the case that this is the only measure of well-being? In their article, Dr. D.K. Chakraborty and Dr. P.K. Gogoi argue that a more appropriate guide for planners would be a Grand National Happiness Index, that weighs pure growth against environmental degradation and other negative factors that are associated with development. As the ancient philosophers suggested, money is not valuable in itself but is only an instrument for obtaining the more intrinsic goods associated with happiness.

If such a model were implemented, it would require training generations of businesspersons who balance their concern for profits with a sense of civic responsibility, and a concern for the effect of their business activities on the society as a whole. Dr. Wasalee Chatsuthipan considers the enhancement of civic responsibility in undergraduate business students through a Service Learning System, finding that such a program is effective not only in creating more socially conscious businesspersons but also better professionals.

The next article considers the difficult process of teaching and learning a second language. In a globalized world, such language skills are very important and thus it is critical that effective training methods be devised. Ronald W. Simmons focuses on the specific problem of advanced learning, on the acquisition of the skills that lead to full fluency in a second language. In particular, the author emphasizes the need to meet the specific needs of each student rather than provide a more generic approach. Language is an essential part of culture and the learning of a language cannot be separated from the larger social context in which that learning takes place.

Caroline Suelin Tan's article provides a fascinating consideration of the marketing of cosmetics to Japanese men. This will be of interest not only to our readers interested in marketing and branding strategies but also to a broader audience with an interest in contemporary culture and lifestyles and how decisions are made within the context of these factors.

The article by Dr. Md. Zahidul Islam, Hanif Mahtab and Dr. Zainal Ariffin Ahmad on knowledge management treated within the context of organizational cultural characteristics and goals moves from the very specific to the quite general. Knowledge is the life blood of every business and its organization and use is critical for the health of every business. More than anything, this concern for knowledge provides a connection to the wider intellectual currents that are at the heart of every educational institution.

Assumption University has its origin as a business college, and business education remains an important part of its mission, but it is important to be reminded that business and economic life cannot be separated from cultural life as a whole, as the business and economics oriented articles in this issue suggest.

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