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# The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Scientific Conference on the Challenges of Contemporary Management: Leadership, Strategies, Social Responsibility

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The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Scientific Conference *The challenges of contemporary management: Leadership, strategies, social responsibility* was held on 12 March 2018 in Toruń, Poland. The conference organised under the umbrella of the Welconomy Forum 2018 was chaired by Prof. Robert Karaszewski, the head of the Department of Business Excellence, the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Management, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. Similarly to the first edition of the conference, its aim was to establish the platform for presenting research findings and discussing the issues of (Lis and Tomanek, 2017, pp. 93–94):

- “*Leadership* including: contemporary concepts of leadership, roles played by top, middle and first line managers, challenges (both external and intra-organisational) faced by leaders in business organisations, the public sector, and non-profit organisations;

- *Strategies* including: corporate, business and functional strategies, business models, organisational strategies in the public sector and non-profit organisations;
- *Social responsibility* to employees, organisations in business environment, society and the natural environment”.

The first paper session chaired by Prof. Tetyana Lepeyko and Dr Andrzej Lis included five speeches dealing with the issues of: organisational learning, styles of management, corporate responsibility towards employees, the role of CSR for building corporate culture, and company competencies needed in marketing innovation processes.

Dr Andrzej Lis and Prof. Agata Sudolska (both Nicolaus Copernicus University) presented the findings of their case study research on creating synergy effects between inter-firm and intra-firm learning processes (Lis and Sudolska, 2017). They contributed to developing the theory within the field through comparing and contrasting the model of lessons learned processes (Milton, 2011; Lis, 2016) against the 4I framework of the organisational learning process (cf. Crossan, Lane and White, 1999) and the model of absorptive capacity process (Zahra and George, 2002). In the empirical part of their study, Lis and Sudolska identified lessons and best practices of Frauenthal Automotive Toruń company in applying external knowledge to support intra-organisational learning processes and using the employee suggestion system to strengthen the company absorptive capacity.

Prof. Tetyana Lepeyko (Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, Ukraine) discussed the profiles of Ukrainian managers and reviewed Asian styles of management. In the first part of her speech, she highlighted existing contradictions between (cf. Blyznyu and Lepeyko, 2016):

- challenges of the global economy and national Ukrainian identity;
- features of the Ukrainian national culture and an international management model;
- national mentality and an effective model of business management.

In the second part of the speech, referring to the works of Chen (2004), Leung and White (2004), and Lewis (2006), Prof. Lepeyko studied the characteristic features of management styles in Asia, with the particular emphasis on Mongolia (see more Lepeyko and Batkhuu, 2017) and Japan.

Dr Sergii Vasylyk (Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, Ukraine) analysed best practices in corporate social responsibility to employees. He identified a bunch of areas where corporate responsibility to employees is manifested including: training and development, communication and consultation, health and safety, work-life balance, equality and diversity, pay and benefits. Dr Vasylyk concluded his speech with discussing the perspectives of developing corporate social responsibility in Ukraine.

Dr Aneta Szymańska presented the paper co-authored with Łukasz Połozzczański (both WSH University of Business in Wrocław, Poland), in which they consider CSR as a branding tool for building a corporate culture leading to business sustainability and employees' satisfaction. The aim of their empirical research was "to identify the most prevalent perceptions on CSR in organisations in Poland" and "to examine the opinions on the meaning of CSR and its major benefits to creating a corporate brand". The questionnaire survey was used to identify: main CSR areas and activities undertaken in surveyed companies, roles of managers in deciding about and communicating company's socially responsible behaviours, channels of communication as well as benefits and obstacles to implementing the CSR concept.

Prof. Zygmunt Waśkowski (Poznań University of Economics and Business, Poland) and Dr Anna Jasiulewicz (Warsaw University of Life Sciences SGGW, Poland) studied the role of company competencies for implementing marketing innovations. Their paper was of conceptual character and it laid down foundations for further empirical research. They pointed out the following types of firm competencies to be of paramount importance at each of the stages of the marketing innovation process:

- developing marketing strategy (managerial and organisational competencies);
- creating marketing innovations (relational and organisational competencies);
- evaluating submitted proposals (organisational competencies);
- approving marketing innovation proposals (managerial and organisational competencies);
- implementing marketing innovations (organisational and relational competencies);
- adapting and absorbing marketing innovations (relational competencies).

The second paper session was chaired by Prof. Zygmunt Waśkowski and Dr Sergii Vasylyk. It comprised three speeches focused on the aspects of: leadership in start-up businesses, diversity management and employee contribution to company CSR efforts.

Weronika Kawecka and Anna Damilak (Łódź University of Technology, Poland) analysed challenges in running start-up businesses as well as the applicability of various types of leadership and expected features of best-leaders in such organisations. The speech provoked vivid discussion among the audience, which was concluded with a call for implementing the ideas of ambidextrous leadership in start-up businesses.

Tomasz Grodzicki (Nicolaus Copernicus University) analysed the underestimated potential of women as CEOs of world's top corporations. Establishing theoretical background, he distinguished the features of feminine management style and discussed main obstacles to fully benefit from the potential of female managers in contemporary organisations. Then, employing statistical analysis, Grodzicki studied distribution of women occupying CEOs positions among world top corporations (cf. Grodzicki, 2017).

Michał Jerzy Jagielski, Patrycja Gulak-Lipka and Patryk Jakub Taciak (all three representing Nicolaus Copernicus University) investigated the contribution of employees to corporate social responsibility projects. They conducted the case study analysis in Frauenthal Automotive Toruń company, which was aimed at identifying willingness and motivation of employees to contribute to CSR initiatives undertaken by the company.

Summing up, the conference provided a great opportunity for researchers and business practitioners to share their ideas and experience in order to stimulate the dialogue between academia and business. Establishing events aimed at creating synergies between these two environments is one of leading principles of the Welconomy Forum. Therefore, as officially confirmed by the Prof. Robert Karaszewski, the Chairman of the Conference Scientific Committee, the conference *The challenges of contemporary management: Leadership, strategies, social responsibility* will remain an event of next editions of the Welconomy Forum in Toruń.

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