Service firms foster innovation so as to differentiate their business from competitors and to gain competitive advantage. Literature suggests that the existing notion of innovation in the manufacturing sector cannot be directly adopted into the service sector. Further, the drivers of service innovation require an architectural approach to find effective solutions in relation with the firm’s core competency and performance outcomes. This paper investigates service delivery innovation architecture and its role in achieving sustainable competitive advantage of firms. The overarching objective of this study is to put forward an integrated service innovation framework for investigating the role of various actors of market competitiveness. Resource advantage theory of firm competition (RA) and service-dominant logic are the two fundamental approaches to discuss service innovation at the firm level. Based on these theories, the present study develops and empirically examines an antecedent based model of service delivery innovation. The enablers of service innovation include customer and business collaboration under cocreational resources; innovation orientation and market orientation under organisational resources; and knowledge integration mechanism and information technology (IT) under integrating resources. Collecting data from 203 service sector professionals working in Mexican financial and IT firms, we tested the proposed relationship under nine hypotheses. Out of the total representative sample, financial firms represent explicit services and IT firms represent tacit services. This classification is based on the service firm classification scheme proposed by De Luca and Gima (2007). The structural model has been tested using AMOS 18.0. Results show that customer orientation strengthens service delivery-performance relationship. Overall, this work contributes in understanding resource allocation of service firms to ensure sustainable growth.

INTERVIEW

THE SCIENCE AND ART OF LEARNING ABOUT CULTURES: DESCRIPTIONS, EXPLANATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS — IN CONVERSATION WITH SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR, FOUNDER, ART OF LIVING

Ritu TRIPATHI

National cultural differences pose a major threat to global business expansion. Therefore, a sound knowledge of cultural differences is imperative in today’s globalising economy. The scholarly sources that managers draw their learning from are important in the process. These sources are categorised as descriptions, explanations, and reflections in the paper. The descriptive scientific models are the ones most commonly used in managerial learning. In these models, culture is conceptualised along bipolar dimensions, such as individualism-collectivism, high versus low power distance, high versus low context, and many more. While this information is comprehensive, in that it simultaneously rank-orders a large number of country cultures, it has shortcomings such as unidimensionality, decontextualisation, and culture-level analysis. Explanatory frameworks borrowed from cultural psychology, currently under-utilised in management literature, can potentially overcome many of these problems. The explanatory frameworks throw light on the person-level processes and mechanisms that otherwise are glossed over in the descriptive frameworks. A fuller understanding of person-level cultural differences and the attendant empirical evidence is likely to draw a more empathetic response from the manager in cross-cultural business problems. Therefore, managers are urged to complement the conventional descriptive frameworks of cultural differences with explanations. At the experiential level, personal reflection and conversation with a cross-culturally fluent authority provides insights both to researchers and practitioners. I engaged in a reflective conversation with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar on themes related to: 1) adaptability and authenticity in the global workplace, 2) universal and culture-specific work values: the Indian context, and 3) managing diversity and differences in the workplace. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar’s valuable insights, offered in plain, simple terms, were also useful in drawing specific directions for future research and practice.