

Editorial

Dear Readers,

Welcome to Volume 8, Number 1 of the ASEAN Journal of Management and Innovation (AJMI). As the pandemic continues to impact communities all over the world in spite of widespread vaccination and relentless efforts to stem its spread, AJMI Editorial Board would like to offer once again its heartfelt good wishes to all those who have been directly affected by Covid-19.

With the Thai capital, and much of the rest of the country, still under partial lockdown, consumers remain very cautious about venturing out of their home and online shopping continues to grow. While e-commerce was already on the rise prior to the pandemic, Covid-19 has been accelerating its adoption as it has made acceptable practices that some consumers were slow or reluctant to endorse. This makes Lokweetpun Suprawan's article on social media influencers especially relevant. As reported in *The Mediator Role of Trustworthiness in Influencer Marketing of Food Products*, influencers have become a major source of e-words of mouth and can help to create a positive attitude towards a brand in ways a store's direct communication with consumers may not. As emphasized in this article, however, trust in influencers plays a key role in the level of influence they can have.

As discussed by I-Ching Tung, Yue Huang, Jia Zhao, Wari Chokelumlerd, and Arewan Cheewaprapanan in *Factors Influencing Chinese Consumers' Continuous Use Intention for Cross-Border E-Commerce*, online shopping knows no border. In China, thanks to the favorable perception of Thai culture, Thai products enjoy a positive image among online Chinese shoppers. Given the vast reservoir of potential Chinese consumers of Thai goods, developing a solid understanding of their online shopping attitude towards Thai products may prove quite helpful in gaining market shares. Clearly, for many businesses, the old playbook is unlikely to be relevant in the future.

With the exponential development of online activities, whether teleconferencing, telemedicine, teleconsulting, or online teaching, to name a few, the demand for advanced computer skills has been soaring. They are critical to reimagining the future and meeting the needs of the industry. They also require literacy in math and science. Yet, as a recent international student assessment test conducted in Thailand indicates, 40-60 percent of Thai students are illiterate in these subjects. Still, as Anita Causaren, Sasima Ratanasut, Augkana Tiyajamorn, and Orasa Pojeakpong argue in *The Determinants of Willingness to Study Mathematics and Actual Performance: An Application of the Theory of Planned Behavior*, illiteracy in math is not ineluctable. As they point out, one critical remedial step is to develop a solid understanding of the factors at the root of students unwillingness to study math.

As Natthanit Srimaserm explains in Strengthening Mahidol University Institute of Molecular Biosciences' Innovation and Research Policy toward a World-Class Research Institute, improving the country's competence in math and science, however, also requires an across-the-board steady and efficient implementation of existing policies designed to bring Thai research institutes on par with international ones. Too often, though, efforts are hamstrung by bureaucracy.

The need for innovation is not just limited to labs and research and development units across the country. It also pertains to management and involves employees at all levels in every industry. Focusing on the aviation sector, Nguyen Le Hoang Long, Nguyen Thi Thu Huong, and Ho Viet-Anh's article, entitled Service innovative behavior in Aviation Industry: An empirical Study of the Contribution of Perceived Organizational Support, confirms the key role an organization plays in promoting innovation among employees, in this case, flight attendants.

The pandemic has had a major impact on the inflow of foreigners entering Thailand, whose entry, either as tourists, migrant workers, or students, has been drastically curtailed with severe adverse economic consequences for all stakeholders, most notably a shortage of labor in some sectors. As noted by Kaniya Nantamontry in "Most Wanted Maid": The Route to the Right Product Strategy of Domestic Worker Service Business in Thailand, a good portion of Thai families employing maids prefer maids originating from neighboring countries, which in once-in-a-life-time crises poses a challenge. The article also discusses the main qualifications sought and possible avenues for domestic workers businesses to meet their clients' requests.

If the few last few before the pandemic broke out are any indication of future trends, once borders reopen, Thailand is likely to witness see a surge in the number of international students coming to Thailand to pursue their university education. As was increasingly the case before the pandemic, a great portion of them will hail from China, now the main country of origin of foreign students in Thailand. This makes I-Wen Chou's article on Chinese students' capacity to adjust to the Thai environment especially relevant. As she reports in Thai-Chinese Cultural Differences: A study of How Cultural Intelligence and Gender Affect Subjective Well-Being among Chinese Students Enrolled at Thai Universities, their capacity to adapt is largely a function of the level of cultural intelligence.

Finally, this volume also includes a contribution on rice brand equity in the context of Yunnan, China's most southwestern province. With many companies competing for market shares in a crowded field, it is especially important to understand what factors most contribute to brand equity, which is precisely what Chanchai Bunchapattanasakda, Yue Huang, Martin Feichtenschlager, Piotr Curtis, and Yun Wu do in an article entitled, Factors Influencing Chinese Rice Brand Equity: Yunnan Consumers' Perceived Value. This article may also be of interest to Thai rice retailers contemplating entering the Chinese market via Yunnan.

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