

Review of the handbook “Management of multicultural teams. Practical lessons learned from university students” by Joanna Szydło, Danuta Szpilko, Claudia Rus and Codruta Osoian

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“Management of multicultural teams. Practical lessons learned from university students” is a much-needed handbook that brings a fresh view on this complex and challenging topic of multicultural teams, which is even more valuable when the authors represent two different European cultures. The Polish and Romanian researchers bring new ideas that mix and mingle to create a captivating result, which includes hands on experiences and opinions from both cultures. The authors’ well-augmented ideas shine in new and unexpected ways with each new chapter taking the reader on a journey of theoretical and practical approaches.

What I particularly enjoyed was the fact that the handbook provides an invitation to deeper meditation by including phrases, which give your mind the opportunity to travel towards novel and captivating ideas. A good example is found in the Introduction and refers to the following: “The richness of humanity lies in the diversity of cultures”, which cannot be more accurate and truthful. We are bound to learn and understand that multicultural teams bring complex ideas, diverse backgrounds, numerous experiences, and out of the box solutions, which lead to significant improvement of any work process if managed properly. The challenges and difficulties of this process are surpassed by the all the benefits and advantages derived from such endeavors.

Audrey Azoulay, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also sheds light on the value and importance of cultural diversity, saying, “Diversity is a form of wealth, not a factor of division”¹. The best way the next generations can learn to profit of the opportunities multicult-

¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/11/1051461> accessed on the 12th of August 2020.

tural teams can offer is primarily through education. Including the topic in the academic focus being a vital start as *cultural diversity is the promotor of progress and development worldwide. Intercultural research and collaboration is much needed as this is the living proof that borders are vanishing as value is created in a multicultural environment.*

The first of the three chapters covers the cultural context of management, including cultural paradigms, definitions and typologies of organizational and national cultures, and ends with a comprising case study on Polish and Romanian values. The second chapter unveils cultural aspect in team management, starting with a comparison on how to manage a traditional versus a multicultural team. It is easy to note here the subtle remark that multicultural teams represent the future of most businesses. How teams work together and how to improve this process was the focal point of many books and studies. What this handbook brings new in chapter 2 is information on leadership of multicultural teams, based on examples from Polish and Romanian respondents. Furthermore, chapter 3 covers the sophisticated topic of effectiveness in relation to multicultural teams, by presenting some relevant and complex models and own results and team design and composition.

The handbook aligns beautifully in the body of literature on multicultural teams as it has several strong points starting with the fact that it is authored by a multicultural team and continuing with the fact that it is grounded on extensive qualitative and quantitative research, conducted in two European countries. What stands out, besides the well-documented theoretical aspects, are the practical parts. Such an example is the case study available at the end of the first chapter. In the aforementioned case study Polish and Romanian respondents provide impressive data on their values, which are describes and analyzes by the authors. Further empirical results are included in chapter 2, but also in chapter 3. Other positive aspect refers to the fact that the statistical results in chapter 3 represent a strong basis and source of inspiration in creating a spinoff research agenda.

Future research may also include design and composition of virtual multicultural teams in the light of the 2020 pandemic, which is reshaping the world of business today. We are learning each day, as we are challenged to adapt, be creative and find new ways to work and live. Our realities are changing beyond imagination and business world must keep up and adjust even faster to the social distancing and virtual solutions. Easier said than done, that is certain. Consequently, multicultural teams and their management challenges are even more relevant and worth researching in great depth.

In conclusion, the handbook “Management of multicultural teams. Practical lessons learned from university students” is a valuable piece of academic literature

grounded in complex qualitative and quantitative research, which will bring relevant information to new generations of students, independent readers and researchers of all ages and cultures. More and more such studies are needed in the academic world, as they are the best proof that collaboration between cultures can only result in progress and knowledge, especially in the current times of change and uncertainty.

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