

lieva 2017), while strategic customer orientations suggest that customer understanding and satisfaction can be optimized for IT companies. Developing customer service skills, understanding consumer behavior, and anticipating customer needs with good technological solutions and products can constitute a basis for training and development programs within software companies.

Moreover, the introduction of systems for measuring customer satisfaction could contribute to elevating the competitive technological advantage provided by Bulgarian teams, regardless of whether they are units within Bulgarian or international organizations.

The cross-cultural comparison we have undertaken can be further developed by employing the strategic orientations questionnaire in other countries and in other industries so that an extended data base on the issues we have addressed can be made available to IT companies. An important issue for further research is to investigate whether differences in strategic orientations reside upon national values or involve other issues.

CONCLUSION

Studies in the field of strategic orientations have shown that an effective configuration includes, on the one hand, dimensions that focus on internal business priorities (development of new technologies) and external influences from the environmental (customers), and, on the other, a process that determines how such priorities are combined within a given company (entrepreneurial orientation and learning orientation) (Hakala 2011). Insofar as Bulgarian IT companies prioritize the technological or product sustainability of software solutions, their focus remains within companies insofar as they emphasize learning and development. Such companies invest in both technology and their customers, but likely do not take full advantage of the latter in that they respond to customer needs rather than anticipate them. A more balanced orientation profile and greater customer understanding can help to achieve better customer satisfaction and provide a competitive advantage, which helps foster

sustainable organizational growth. It should be noted in this regard that Finnish IT companies may improve their capacity to meet international competition by directing greater attention to innovation and new technologies.

The results of the study we have presented here may serve as a reference point for managers of international IT companies in their efforts to promote organizational development and define effective strategic orientations by making possible a comparison of their own work practices with those of their Bulgarian and Finnish counterparts. Employee training and development programs for managers and for those working in operations can also be developed on the basis of the results we have presented. Furthermore, the latter can assist organizational leaders, consultants, and/or researchers in identifying policies and activities that will improve team effectiveness and elevate the overall organizational performance of IT companies.

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Asst. Prof. Tsvetelina Panchelieva, PhD
Institute of Population and Human Studies,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
 BULGARIA, Sofia 1113, Acad. Georgi Bonchev St., Bl. 6
 tsvetelina.ts.p@gmail.com