

## SEMINAR

### Can Western Management Practices be Effective in Other Cultures?

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The notion that employees create value for firms and that they are a strategic source of competitive advantage is a notion that is generally accepted as a North American paradigm to profit-maximization. As opposed to a management approach in which employees are treated like any other tangible resource; obtained cheaply, used sparingly and controlled and exploited as fully as possible, this notion prescribes employers to view employees as valuable assets and invest in their knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). Related to these, a number of work practices aimed at unleashing and tapping into the KSAs of the workforce have also become widespread. Indeed, many organizations in North America and other Western societies implement practices like team-based structures, information-sharing with employees, and have them participate in decision-making.

An implicit assumption underlying such practices is that employees are comfortable with increased discretion and influence through empowerment, autonomy and participation. While this assumption reflects the cultural imperatives of mostly egalitarian and Western societies, the extent to which it would hold in more hierarchical societies is less clear. In this seminar, Çolakoğlu will explain an ongoing research project where she and her colleagues investigate whether such practices and their underlying assumptions are equally effective in different societies across the globe. Analysis of multi-source, multi-level data collected from 248 facilities of a multinational company with operations in 23 countries points to cross-cultural differences in reactions to such practices and reveal different theoretical mechanisms through which such practices influence important organizational outcomes.

**About the Speaker:** Saba Çolakoğlu is an Assistant Professor of Management at Berry College, Campbell School of Business in Georgia, U.S.A. and a Visiting Assistant Professor at Koç University in Istanbul, Turkey. She received her Ph.D. and master's degrees in Human Resources and Industrial Relations from Rutgers University in New Jersey. Her research focuses on the strategic management of human resources (HR) in a global context - with particular emphasis on the use of expatriates, knowledge management, and transfer of HR practices across borders. Her research on these topics appeared in International Journal of Human Resource Management, International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management, Human Resource Management Journal, Human Resource Management Review, Thunderbird International Business Review, European Journal of International Management, and Journal of Management Education. Saba received her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Middle East Technical University and M.B.A. from Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey; and worked at Nokia Networks and Sevgi Group as a human resources professional prior to her career in academia.