Applying Dialectic Soft Systems Methodology in International Business

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Abstract: After having the motivation, desire, intentionality, and willingness to embark onto a journey of international business, one may ask the next question: “How can a candidate, as a private individual, go about acquiring the relevant information for his/her company/organization?” This paper offers an alternative route a candidate can take by applying Dialectic Soft Systems Methodology to acquire his/her required information. However, this paper is not suggesting that managerial control, and team work are irrelevant. Instead, it is attempting to convey some feelings for an approach that if practiced alone help an individual to intuitional glimpses of truth, then a whole realm of discoveries can be achieved through help from managers, colleagues, and the candidate’s team members.

Keywords: Dialectic Soft Systems Methodology, International Business, Jung’s Psychological Types, Knowledge Acquisition.

Introduction

As pointed out by Kelly (2009), Geiersbach (2010), and Hill (2011), International Business is concerned with the issues facing international companies and governments in dealing with all types of cross-border transactions. It includes all business transactions that involve two or more countries. It consists of transactions that are devised and carried out across borders to satisfy the objectives of individuals and organizations. Therefore, a candidate who pursues a career in international business, in general, needs to assist his/her company/organization to customize marketing strategies, product features, and operating practices to best match conditions in a particular country.

Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) was developed by Peter Checkland and his colleagues at Lancaster University in the 1970s using action research with an industry partner (Checkland, 1999; Jackson, 1991, 2003; Sankaran, Tay & Cheah, 2003; Tay & Lim, 2007). SSM was adopted by Checkland and his colleagues to address ‘soft’ problems in social systems in which goals were often obscure, ill-defined, or not easily quantified as distinct from ‘hard systems’ that were goal-directed. A hard system assumes that the problems are well-defined and has a single, optimum solution such that a scientific approach to problem-solving will work well.

Most people use Checkland’s seven-stage model (Burge, 2015; Checkland, 1981, 1999; Wilson, 1984, 2001; Checkland & Scholes, 1990; Checkland & Holwell, 1998; Currie & Galliers, 1999; Curtis & Cobham, 2002; Dick, 2002; Dick & Swayne, 1994; Flood, 1999; Jackson, 1991, 2003; Maani & Cavana, 2002; Tay & Lim, 2007; Tay, 2016) and the seven stages are:

1. The problem situation ‘unstructured’
2. The problem situation ‘expressed’
3. ‘Root definition’ of relevant systems. It is a statement of purpose that captures the essence of the particular situation and the transformation that is performed by the relevant systems.
4. Build ‘conceptual models’. A conceptual model is not a model of the real world that we experience but a logical model of what it could be like.
5. Compare the ‘conceptual models’ with the ‘real’ world.
6. Think about feasible, desirable changes
7. Take action to improve the problem situation.

However, as highlighted by Flood (1999), Checkland (1999), Tay (2003, 2016), and Tay and Lim (2007), Soft Systems Methodology is not a method that can be laid out in a set of stages to follow systematically. Checkland was fully aware of this difficulty when he formulated the “7-stage” model to act as a pedagogical tool to put forward Soft Systems Methodology Principles. Checkland had made considerable effort to explain the “7-stage” model as a continuous process of learning, which researchers begin anywhere and move in any direction despite it is explained within the limitations of linear prose.
The need for the “7-Stage” model to be understood as a learning cycle has prompted Dick (1993, 2002) to think of soft systems methodology as progressing through four dialectics as depicted in Figure 1 and described below.

![Diagram: Dick’s Dialectic version of Checkland’s Soft Systems Methodology](image)

- **1st dialectic** – Between immersion (rich picture) and essence (root definition, abstract model), where a candidate tries and experiences the problem situation as fully as possible and then stands back and defines its essential features – the root definitions or an abstract model (i.e. between Stages 1+2 and 3 of Checkland’s model).

- **2nd dialectic** – Between the essence (root definitions or an abstract model) and the ideal (conceptual model) where the candidate tries to find an ideal way to achieve the same transformation of inputs into outputs. (i.e. between Stages 3 and 4)

- **3rd dialectic** – Between the ideal and reality where the candidate thinks about improvement to the ideal or the actual situation. (i.e. between Stages 4 and 5)

- **4th dialectic** – Between plans and implementation where the plans are implemented and differences between plans and reality can be monitored, through which further improvements can be carried out. (i.e. between Stages 5 and 6+7 and back to Stage 1)

However, it is important for readers to note that Dialectic Soft Systems Methodology (DSSM) is not a new form of Checkland’s Soft Systems Methodology. It is the same process as the “7-stage” description except it is presented from a different perspective. This approach makes explicit the inherent cyclical nature of Checkland’s seven stages and the use of dialectic comparisons (Dick, 1993, 2000; Dick and Swepson, 1994; Sankaran, Tay and Cheah, 2003; Sankaran and Tay, 2003; Tay, 2003, 2016; Tay and Lim, 2004, 2007). These dialectics have a win/win intent (Dick, 1997, 1999). They focus on disagreements and seek to turn these disagreements into agreements. Out of the dialectic between opposing views, greater understanding may emerge.

In addition, as mentioned by Dörner (1996) and Tay (2016), in dealing with complex problems we cannot handle, in the same way, all the different situations we encounter. Sometimes we must perform detailed analyses; at other times it is better to simply size up a situation. However, there is no universally applicable rule that we can apply to...
every situation and to all the structures we find in the real world. The best approach is to have everything at its proper time and with proper attention to existing conditions. Besides, human intellectual endeavour does not always proceed through deductive and inductive reasoning. According to Davies (1992), the key to major scientific advances often rests with free ranging imaginative leaps or inspiration. In such cases, an important fact or conjecture springs ready-made into the mind of the candidate, and only, subsequently is justification found in reasoned argument. Penrose (1989) describes inspiration as a sudden ‘breaking through’ into a Platonic realm. It is important to note that this paper is not an exploration on how inspiration comes about nor is an attempt for teaching the reader the notion of Platonic realm, it is about making readers aware of the presence of inspiration flashes and the importance of capturing them with a view that they may bring about ‘breaking through’ understandings or findings.

The notion of ‘everything at its proper time and with proper attention to existing conditions’ and the notion of ‘inspirational flashes’ prompted Tay (2003, 2016) to incorporate four of Jung’s psychological types, namely, intuitive feeling (NF), intuitive thinking (NT), sensate thinking (ST) and sensate feeling (SF), as the decision-making preferences that were similar to those described by Kilmann (1979) and Dick (1994) into DSSM as shown in Figure 2. The meanings of these four Jung’s psychological types are highlighted in respective dialectic described in the next section when a candidate embarks on his/her journey in international business.

![Figure 2: Dick’s Dialectic version of Checkland’s Soft Systems Methodology with four of Jung’s psychological types (Tay, 2003, 2016)](image)

Besides, this complete learning experience of DSSM favours the transition from ‘understanding’ (via 1st and 2nd dialectics) to utility (via 3rd and 4th dialectics). As pointed by Good (1983) and Tay (2016), the path from ‘understanding’ to utility is more convincing than vice versa. According to Good (1983), people’s value judgments (also known as utility judgments) are liable to be in disagreement. For example, values can be judged with a fair amount of agreement when the commodity is money, but not when deciding between, say, universal education or universal
-rowing, or between our own life and the life of some other person. Because of the lack of understanding in the ‘utility-to-understanding’ path, we may often find there is nothing to choose between alternative courses of action, that is, we may not be able to say which of them has the larger expected utility. Both courses of action may be reasonable and a decision may then be arrived by the operation known as, ‘make up one’s mind’. As highlighted by Good (1983), decisions reached in this way are not usually reversed, owing to the negative utility of vacillation. Hence, if a person places too much value to the negative utility of vacillation, he/she is no longer a ‘learner’ but an ‘obstinate’ practitioner instead!

The Information Acquiring Journey by a new candidate in International Business

1st Dialectic
In this stage, the candidate immerses himself/herself in the context he/she is tasked to undertake. This context includes both macro and micro levels. Macro level context comprises macroeconomic and political issues (Hill, 2011). Micro level focuses on existing structure and practices adopted by his/her company/organization in home country.

NF is the dominant mode of experience in the 1st dialectic. Dick (1994, p20-24) uses the serial-parallel distinction of ‘left brain’ and ‘right brain’ as technical labels of convenience rather than geographical descriptions for explaining the meaning of NF as follows:

NF is the parallel right-brain operation and it is creative, impressionistic. In this mode of operation, perception and judgement are often rapid and compelling. On the other hand, the reasons for arriving at the percept or the conclusion are often lacking or suspect. NF mode operates at the most general level. It is applied when a problem is being noticed and no explanation can be made.

As the candidate is new to the company/organization, the information in this dialectic is usually enormous, vague, unclear and fuzzy to him/her. According to Dick (1994), our right brain is our non-verbal and intuitive brain. It thinks in patterns or pictures, composed of “whole things” and does not comprehend reductions, either numbers or letters or words. Therefore, in NF mode, the candidate is tasked to search for patterns in large masses of information by allowing the his/her brain to operate as several processes in parallel. In this way, it seems quicker for he/she to reach a perception or judgment. Because these are parallel processes operating, his/her conscious mind cannot access everything which goes on. In fact, most of what is happening takes place out of awareness and the conclusions are therefore drawn automatically. In other words, the learning experience is processed outside of awareness, there may not be much conscious reflection on the learning. There may not be many chances to generalise from it. In this mode, the candidate immerses in the context to sense, experience, and identify the important features of context (using his/her right brain) to seek out information at both macro and micro level without much analytical effort. We can take into account not just the information which is directly and immediately relevant, but other less direct information too (such as “inspirational flashes”). Because we cannot access it consciously, we have to take it on trust. Although the accuracy of detailed information tends to be lost, the processes can cope with missing or fuzzy or impressionistic information. NF mode enables our brain to operate at the most general level. According to Dick (1994), the main concern of NF mode is likely to take the form “Are we pursuing the right goal?”.

At the macro level, a candidate may consider the suggestions offered by Hill (2011) to explore the aspect of Country Differences in terms of political economy. The main concern of NF mode is likely to take the form “Are we pursuing the right goal?”.

Political system is assessed according to two dimensions: the degree to which the country emphasizes collectivism (the view that the needs of society is being more important than the needs of the individual) as opposed to individualism (the emphasis that the interests of individual should take precedence over the interests of the state), and the degree to which the country is democratic (the political system in which the government is by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives) or totalitarian (a form of government in which a person or political party exercises absolute control over all spheres of human life and prohibits opposing political parties. However, a country may exist
as a grey area in the middle. It is possible to have a democratic society that emphasize a mix of collectivism and individualism. Totalitarian society is not a collectivist. Despite people in the west associate a representative democracy with economic progress, it is important to note that five of the fastest growing economies of the past 30 years – China, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong – had one thing in common at the start of their economic growth: undemocratic governments. Therefore, Kelly (2009a) suggests the candidate to look at the home page (at http://wwwunctad.org) of the United Nations Conference on Trade And Development (UNCTAD) for statistics that are relevant to analysis of international trade, foreign direct investment (in the form of either establishing business operations or acquiring business assets in the other country, such as ownership or controlling interest in a host company) and commodities, and for understanding the economic trends of development countries over the past decades, particular, the context of globalization (growth or integration to a global or worldwide scale). In addition, to look at country profile drawn from the World Development Index (WDI) database (http://www.worldbank.org) for cross-country comparable development data.

- Economic System is assessed according to three broad types: a market economy where prices are free of controls and private ownership is predominant; a command economy where prices are set by central planners, productive assets are state-owned, and private ownership is forbidden; and a mixed economy with elements of a market economy and a command economy. The rate of economic progress in a host country depends on the extent to which that country has a well-functioning market economy in which property rights are protected.

- Legal system is evaluated according to three types: a common law system is based on tradition (the country’s legal history), precedent (cases that have come before the court in the past), and custom (the ways in which laws applied in a specific situation) and judges in a common law system have the power to interpret the law; a civil law system is based on a detailed set of laws organized into codes; and the judges have the power only to apply the law; a theocratic law system is one in which the law is based on religious teachings. Differences in the structure of law in host country have important implications for the practice of international business such as the degree of property rights are protected, the product safety and liability legislation, and the nature of contract law.

- Culture is assessed based on values and norms of a host country. Values are abstract ideals about what a society believes to be good, right, and desirable. Norms are social rules and guidelines that prescribed appropriate behaviour in particular situations. Both values and norms are influenced by political and economic philosophy, social structure, religion, language, and education. The values and norms of a country can affect the costs of doing business in host country. For example, the USD 10 million legal cost incurred in year 2001 when McDonald failed to use 100% vegetable oil to make French Fries for the Hindu community in India.

Armed with the above framework suggested by Hill (2011), the candidate proceeds his/her 1st dialectic by trying, experiencing, and clarifying the context as fully as possible and the activities include internet-search for materials related to history, geography, government website of host country, World Investment Report and current news related to host country. The candidate continues his/her 1st dialectic for macro level information until he/she is able to write a ‘Country Attractiveness’ Report. The attractiveness of a country as a market and/or investment site depends on balancing the likely long-run benefits of doing business in that country against the likely costs and risks. The benefits of doing business in a host country are a function of the size of the market (population), its present wealth (purchasing power), and its future growth prospects. By investing early in countries that are currently poor but are nevertheless growing rapidly, the company/organization can gain first-mover advantages that will pay back substantial dividends in the future. The costs of doing business in a country is greater where political payoffs are required to gain market access, where supporting infrastructure is lacking or underdeveloped, and adhering to local laws and regulations is costly. The risks of doing business in a country is greater in countries that are politically unstable, subject to economic mismanagement, and lacking a legal system to provide adequate safeguards in the case of contract or property rights violations.

For the micro level, the candidate needs to understand: the products and services offered; the infrastructure and resources needed; and the structure and operation of the company/organization. The candidate is
encouraged to undergo any available inhouse training, short-term on-the-job trainings, as well as conduct interviews with peers and superiors in respective department/unit.

The candidate continues his/her exploration for micro-level information until he/she is able to construct an abstract model for his/her company/organization. As pointed out by Tay (2003, 2013, 2016) and Giunchiglia and Walsh (1992), an abstract model is a one-to-one mapping of the company/organization, preserving certain desirable properties (such as our mental association with physical infrastructures, the roles and tasks of colleagues in the company/organization – the real world) and throwing away undesirable properties not related to the problem context (such as our mentality associated with the multifarious irritations, pleasures, worries, excitements and the like that fill our daily lives). According to Mazur (2007) and Tay (2016), abstraction includes separating what we want from what we are presented. If it is whiteness we want to think about, we must somehow separate it from white horse, white house, white car, white choclate, white bread, white furniture, and all the other white things that is invariably must come along with, in order for us to experience it at all. With the abstract mode in place, the candidate is encouraged to take up Kelly (2009a) suggestion to search the internet for “Fortune Global 500” and retrieve a list of corporations (including their respective company profile and contact information) that are relevant to the company/organization. From this list, the candidate examines the strategies, structures, and special roles these corporations adopted for international business and consolidates the findings into a set of abstract models with each abstract model represents each selected corporation from “Fortune Global 500”.

2nd Dialectic

NT is the dominant mode of experience in the 2nd dialectic where the candidate concentrates on deriving an ideal strategy for the host country. Dick (1994, p20-24) describes the NT mode as follows:

NT mode shares with NF mode the use of the right brain for perception. Ambiguity and complexity can therefore be managed. The left brain is used for analysis and judgement. The NT approach to problem solving is most valuable when the presence of a problem has been noted, but no one has yet devised a strategy for dealing with it. It allows a person to translate the initial NF problem identification into a form that allows others to engage in problem solving.

Prior to this mode, the candidate is expected to have gathered sufficient information from the NF mode (namely, the “Country Attractiveness” Report, abstract mode of his/her company/organization, and begins this mode using his/her parallel right brain operation to take in maximum information from the gathered information and makes sense of it (intuition) and then reaches a global and impressionistic judgment as to its implications (feeling). According to Dick (1994), this parallel right brain operation can manage ambiguity and complexity faced by the candidate and may also have his/her curiosity aroused. Curiosity is often a strong drive to enable a person to devise a strategy for finding the problem and solution.

The candidate may now use his/her serial left operation for analysis and judgment. Do take note if processes are serial, only one occurs at a time. Awareness can tune in to whatever part of the process is active at any moment. The process can be learned and controlled. The details of the information can be drawn on in perception or decision-making. If an outcome is reached, it is clear. The cost is that only specific information can be used with ease. Only limited amounts of information can be considered, and even then it takes time to track through the process. That explains why all the information gathered in 1st dialectic are consolidated in a “Country Attractiveness” report and a set of abstract models with a view to reduce the amount of information to be processed by the left brain. The candidate then proceeds to generalize from these consolidated information including his/her right brain’s global and impressionistic judgment by constructing a conceptual model that he/she thinks is logical for the host country. Generalizing refers to the ability of a candidate to make a justified extension of his/her conclusions to a whole category of objects or population of people (Cardwell, 2003). The next question is: How to construct a conceptual model? Kasser and Mackley (2008) offers the following three steps for applying systems thinking (the understanding of a system whereby the whole is more than its parts) to a conceptual model construction:

Step 1:
A thing to be understood is conceptualized as a part of one or more larger wholes, not as a whole to be taken apart.

Step 2:
An understanding of the larger system is sought. The system is viewed as a black box (a system whose internal workings are
hidden or not readily understood). This perspective shows the inputs and outputs and their relationships. This corresponds to the traditional ‘open system’ view whereby a group of parts creating a whole that interacts with its environment by exchanging energy, materials, and information with an aim of system renewal and growth. The black box perspective abstracts out (filters) the details of the internal nature of the system providing a view of the forest rather than the individual trees.

Step 3: The system to be understood is explained in terms of its role or function in the containing system – its environment, the closely coupled adjacent systems with which it interacts and any loosely coupled more distant systems. The explanation contains information about the external boundary of the system and the assumptions behind the location of the boundary.

Once the candidate completes his/her conceptual model, he/she proceeds to devise a strategy for his/her company/organization. A strategy is the actions managers take to attain the goal of the firm through the conceptual model(s). In most firms, the pre-eminent goal is to maximize shareholder value by focusing on increasing profitability and the growth rate of profits over time (Kelly, 2009; Hill, 2011). Therefore, according to Dick (1994), the main concern in this mode takes the form “Are we using the right strategy to tackle the problem?”

Hill (2011) suggests the best strategy for a company/organization to pursue often depends on a consideration of the pressures for cost reductions and local responsiveness as shown in Figure 3 and the company/organization can choose among four major strategic postures as described below.

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<tr>
<th>Pressure for Cost Reductions</th>
<th>Pressure for Local Responsiveness</th>
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<td>Global Standardization Strategy</td>
<td>Translational Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Strategy</td>
<td>Localization Strategy</td>
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A Firm that pursues an international strategy, taking products first produced in domestic market and selling them internationally with only limited local customization. This distinguishing feature for this strategy is that the firm is selling a product that serves universal needs and is not confronted with pressure to reduce cost. The head office retains fairly tight control over marketing and product strategy.

A localization strategy focuses on increasing profitability by customizing the firm’s goods or services so that they provide a good match to tastes and preferences in market of host country. This strategy is most appropriate when there are substantial differences across nations with regard to consumer tastes and preferences, and where cost pressures are not too intense. The customizing effort increases the value of the product in host country and supports higher pricing in order for the firm to recoup its higher costs or it leads to substantially greater local demands that enables the firm to attain some scale economies in host country.

The global standardization strategy focuses on increasing profitability and profit growth by reaping the cost reductions that come from economies of scale (the reductions in unit cost achieved by producing a large volume of a product), learning effects (the cost savings that come from learning by doing especially when a technological complex task is repeated), and location economies (the economies that arise from performing a value creation activity in the optimal location for that activity that include permissible...
transportation costs and trade barriers for that location). The goal of this strategy is to pursue a low-cost strategy on a global scale.

A firm that pursues a translational strategy is trying to simultaneously achieve low costs through location economies, economies of scale, and learning effects; differentiate their product offering across geographic markets to account for local differences; and foster a multidirectional flow of skills between different subsidiaries in the firm’s global network of operations. Despite this strategy is attractive, it is not easy to implement as it places conflicting demand on the company/organization. For example, differentiating the product to respond to local demands in different geographic markets raises costs which runs counter to the goal of reducing costs.

The candidate continues his/her 2nd dialectic until a strategy is devised for his/her conceptual model.

3rd Dialectic

ST is the dominant mode of experience in the 3rd dialectic where the candidate performs a task analysis to derive the required actions to carry out the strategy determined in 2nd dialectic. Dick (1994, p20-24) describes the ST mode as follows:

"ST mode is the left brain operation and it is serial and analytical in both perception and judgment. It is logical, systematic, and most suited to activities where there are clear-cut problems and established procedures."

This stage is the dialectic between the Strategy in 2nd dialectic and the real world. Here, the candidate performs task analysis. According to Gordon (1994) and Dix, Finlay, Abowd and Beale (1997), task analysis is the process of analysing the way people perform their jobs which include the things they do, how they act and the things they need to know. In ST mode, left brain perception takes the detailed information into account, one piece at a time. Left brain judgement then weighs up the direct implications of each piece of information, and reach a conclusion (the required action). The resulting solution is likely to be detailed, containing a step-by-step account of what has to be done. According to Dick (1994), the favourite question takes the form “What is the right solution?”

In this dialectic, the candidate may consider the Decision Framework (Figure 4) offered by Hill (2011) for the feasibility of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). FDI occurs when the company/organization invests directly in facilities to produce or market a product in a foreign country.

As shown in Figure 4, high transportation costs or tariffs imposed on imports suggests that the company/organization should consider FDI or licensing (involves granting a foreign entity – the licensee, the right to produce and sell the firm’s product in return for a royalty fee on every unit sold) over exporting (involves producing goods at home and then shipping them to the receiving country for sale).

The company/organization should take up FDI instead of licensing when:

- Are cost of transportation and tariffs high? (Yes)
- Is know-how amenable to Licensing? (No)
- Is tight control over foreign operation required? (Yes)
- Is know-how be protected by Licensing Contract? (No)
- Then Licensing?

![Figure 4: Decision Framework (Hill, 2011, p275)](attachment://figure4.png)
company/organization has valuable know-how that cannot be adequately protected by a licensing contract; the company/organization needs tight control over a foreign entity in order to maximize its market share and earnings in that country; and the company/organization’s skills and capabilities are not amenable to licensing.

Once a decision is established, the candidate may proceed to determine the costs, resources, and manpower (including the organization structure to deal with the new foreign entity) needed as well as to determine a set of eligible foreign firms that can be engaged. In addition, the candidate also needs to include actions for seeking help from legal department in drafting “distributorship agreement” for export mode, and “licensing contract” for Licensing mode. For FDI mode, the candidate needs to perform a feasibility study on two forms of FDI that can be adopted. The first is Greenfield Investment that involves establishing a new operation in host country. The second involves acquiring or merging with an existing firm in host country. This feasibility study helps top management to decide the type of FDI to be adopted. This stage is repeated where necessary until the candidate is satisfied with the derivation of all required actions. All the actions are then consolidated into a plan.

4th Dialectic
SF is the dominant mode and it is applied in this dialectic between the plan and execution in the real world. Dick (1994, p20-24) describes the SF mode as follows:

SF mode uses both brains. But perception is done with the analytical left brain, and judgment with the more global right brain. Left brain perception provides practical talents. Right brain judgment allows working easily with people. SF allows a person to take into account the idiosyncrasies of the situation and the people. A person with an SF preference is able to work well with detailed plans and modify them to fit in with the needs and wishes of the people.

As pointed out by Dick, SF mode uses both brains. Perception is done with the analytical left brain and judgement with the more global right brain. As there is a detailed plan completed in 3rd dialectic, SF mode is able to achieve implementation especially when the views and attitudes of people are important. SF mode allows the candidate to take into account the idiosyncrasies of the situation and the people. Few plans of action work entirely as expected: they have to be adjusted on the run to fit in with the unexpected, and with the views and attitudes of the people affected. In other words, a candidate with SF preference should be able to work well with detailed plans, but to modify them to fit in with the needs and wishes of people. A common SF question is “But will it work in practice?” Here, “practice” includes taking people into account.

The candidate continues this dialectic until he/she is able to put the first international business unit in place.

Conclusion
As illustrated in this paper, DSSM serves as a compass for a new candidate in international business to understand the present and navigate the future - the establishment of an international unit for his/her company/organization. It provides a candidate a journey into the unknown and challenges his/her mind with unexpected and sometimes difficult concepts. But, through it all runs the familiar thread of rationality and order. The reader is invited to share this DSSM excursion into the unknown with his/her colleagues, in search of the basis of international business that his/her company/organization can deploy with a view to help the company/organization increase its revenue and profit growth.

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