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## Introduction

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Welcome to this issue of *WREMSD*, which is a special issue devoted to entrepreneurial, management and sustainability issues in the Middle East region. The region is an economically diverse region, which includes both the oil-rich economies and countries that are resource scarce. While economic performance has improved in the region since the turn of the new millennium, the region continues to face entrepreneurial, social and sustainable development challenges. Growth in the region has increased to an average pace of 4.0% annual real growth, mainly owing to rising oil prices and favourable agricultural guidelines in a drought-prone region. Although policymakers and experts recognise the importance of entrepreneurship for economic growth, this region lags behind in entrepreneurship and innovation compared to the rest of the developing world. Knowledge creation and entrepreneurship represent a formidable challenge to the region. The region continues to face important economic, social and consequent globalisation challenges. As the region faces up to such challenges and opportunities, it is considered both timely and expedient to publish an issue of this journal devoted to research into various aspects of entrepreneurial and sustainable development issues in the region. In the process, researchers are given the opportunity to make good the relative lack of published research pertaining to the region.

The first authors to take advantage of this opportunity are Amer Al-Roubaie and Jamal Al-Zayer, who present a paper examining the role of technology transfer in sustaining development in the Gulf region of the Arabian Peninsula. The authors' rationales for this study are based on the observation that the failure of conventional development to meet developing countries socio-economic objectives in combating poverty has given rise to the concept of sustainable development. The authors argue that decades of experience with Western economic models and theories have led to the non-industrialised countries suffering from inadequate economic stimulus to generate linkages and to sustain development. The authors suggest that technology transfer could provide alternative means for rapid growth and sustaining development in the GCC countries by substituting capital for labour.

The second paper by Ramady, M.A. and Mourad Mansour focuses on studying Saudi Arabia's accession to WTO and its impact on economic sectors and domestic economic reforms. The authors point out that Saudi Arabia's accession to WTO will promote the competitive advantages of the local industries and create both opportunities and threats for certain sectors. The paper presents the challenges of the accession and the consequences on the local economy and provides the economic reforms needed in order to succeed in the situation.

In the third paper, Syed Aziz Anwar undertakes a study of healthcare sector in the UAE. The author incorporates a two-stage research methodology, with focus group of healthcare managers being used to develop a survey instrument for the quantitative element of the study. Findings show that market orientation of healthcare managers comprises five factors, which are all rated similarly by healthcare managers.

Interestingly, the author points out that with growing competition and the practice of western economic models in UAE, market orientation has become increasingly relevant in the quest for sustainable development by the healthcare sector.

The fourth paper by Afaf Mubarak investigates into the differences in perception and practice of auditing sustainable development reports between companies in Egypt and in the UAE. This comparative study tests whether various factors such as enforcement of reporting on sustainable development by law, ISO accreditation, business excellence, competition and stakeholders' pressure affects reporting and auditing sustainable development measures. The major conclusion of this study is that there is a need to set standards for auditing sustainable development in both these countries.

The next paper is set amidst the backdrop of Qatar and focuses on examining the length of service among top managers given the long-standing argument that top managers tend to stay a longer period of time in their managerial positions. Based on an empirical study, it is revealed that top managers do not tend to stay a longer period of time in their managerial positions. The analysis also indicated that there is an associative statistical relationship between length of service and managers' personal gains, regardless. The results of this study also show that predecessor's reasons for leaving their positions evolved around issues such as promotion, resignation and getting better opportunities.

The next paper focuses on issues relating to Socioeconomic Impact Assessment (SIA) in Saudi Arabia. The authors state that SIA specialists face a host of challenges in determining the significance of the social and economic impacts. They further point out that the challenges mainly arise because of the complexities, uncertainties and varying interpretations associated with social and economic phenomena. The authors conceptualise the significance of social and economic impacts and discuss practical issues and perspectives supported by their experience in conducting SIA studies in Saudi Arabia.

The focus of the next paper is on Lebanon, but the subject changes to address issues relating to ethical sensitivity and awareness. Studies have found that unethical corporate and managerial behaviours and practices are posing serious obstacles in the move towards development and prosperity. The main objective of this paper is to assess the levels of sensitivity and awareness towards business ethics among Lebanese workers. The findings from the study show that Lebanese respondents display mixed sensitivities to various scenarios of unethical behaviours. The authors make a case for implementing strategies and intervention mechanisms to improve the current situation and pave the way towards growth and sustainable development across Lebanon.

In the final paper, Adli Abouzeedan and Michael Busler introduce the Innovation Balance Matrix (IBAM) as an analytical tool to classify economies based on their entrepreneurial conditions. Applying this tool to Arab countries, the authors provide some recommendation as how to enrich the innovation capital in the region. The analysis shows that the Arab countries can be divided into three groups and none of them has balanced innovation capital. This implies that none of the Arab countries has an entrepreneurial economy; rather all of them are less entrepreneurial with varying degrees.

Overall, this is a collection of papers, which provides valuable insights into a range of issues concerning entrepreneurial, management and sustainable development across a range of countries and a range of contexts in one of the most dynamic regions of the world.