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## Editorial

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**Biographical notes:** Satyendra Singh is Director of Centre for Emerging Markets, and Associate Professor of Marketing and International Business in the Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of Winnipeg, Canada. His interest lies in the area of emerging markets with particular emphasis on Africa. He has published in journals such as *Thunderbird International Business Review*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, *Journal of Services Marketing*, *Services Industries Journal*, among others, and presented papers at international conferences such as *American Marketing Association*, *British Academy of Management*, *European Marketing Academy*, among others. He is the author of *Market Orientation, Corporate Culture and Business Performance* (Ashgate, UK 2004), and *Business Practices in Emerging and Re-emerging Markets* (Palgrave, USA 2008). His edited book entitled *Handbook of Business Practices and Growth in Emerging Markets* (World Scientific, Singapore, 2009) is forthcoming.

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This issue of IJBEM has five papers from five emerging markets – United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Eastern and Central Europe, India and South Africa. In the lead paper, Budd considers Off-Balance Sheet (OBS) activities to determine banking efficiency and productivity performances in the UAE. Despite overall growing profits and increasing total factor productivity change in the UAE banking sector, this study indicates evidence of over-banking and inefficiency in this sector as a whole and several banks in particular. The inclusion of OBS activities increases efficiency and productivity levels for most banks, reinforcing the prevailing view that the exclusion of non-traditional activities leads to a misspecification of banks' output. Further, the proportion of OBS activities to total assets is negligible and therefore does not statistically affect the misspecification of the banks' output in the case of UAE national banks.

In the same region of the Middle East, Sohail and Alashban examine buyer-seller relationships in the industrial environment of Saudi Arabia. Based on literature review, the authors develop a model and focus on the relationship between dependence and trust, and the antecedents of trust and dependence. Results based on a survey of purchasing managers from small- and medium-sized firms reveal that trust and dependence of Saudi buyers is positively related to sellers' long-term relationship. This paper provides

the managers with an understanding of how a critical function such as procurement can be better performed in the Saudi market.

In another paper in the industrial setting of Eastern and Central Europe, Abraha and Hyder highlight the extent to which industrial networks impact strategic alliances' functionability and performance; determine if strategic alliances help firms build new or strengthen existing networks; and, find out whether strategic alliances succeed or precede industrial networks. Results indicate that established and developed networks have a positive impact on strategic alliances function, and that strategic alliances strengthen and defend existing networks and also enable firms to build new ones or penetrate those of their alliance partner(s), and that it is inconclusive to determine whether strategic alliances succeed or precede networks.

Rena, on the other hand, looks at the multi-sector structural reform policies aimed at enhancing productivity, efficiency and international competitiveness of Indian economy. The reforms in the financial sector have been most effective. The main thrust of the financial sector reforms has been the creation of efficient and stable financial institutions and development of the markets, especially the money and government securities markets. In addition, fiscal correction was undertaken and reforms in the banking and external sector were initiated. Findings suggest that the reforms, though slow paced initially but well synchronised, have begun to yield results. The economy has recorded consistently high growth rates, built substantial foreign exchange reserves, pre-paid some of its external debt and restructured its domestic debt.

In the concluding paper, Quan-Baffour and Arko-Achemfuor examine environmental conditions and their impact on small businesses in South Africa in the context of tourism industry. Prior to 1994, the Western minority discriminated against South Africans; for example, the inferior education given to South Africans denied them the opportunity for gaining relevant knowledge and skills for employment. The democratic government emerged in 1994 sought to curb the unacceptably high unemployment situation, and thus enacted an economic development policy in 1995 that allowed the unemployed to initiate self-employment projects. This led to emergence of small businesses. This paper investigates the conditions under which small businesses operate, their impact, and the implications for managers. The results indicate the actions of police, home affairs, labour and criminals are the main barriers to the development of small businesses in South Africa.