
Preface

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Biographical notes: Jamil Bojei is an Associate Professor at the Universiti Putra Malaysia. His PhD was in Marketing from the University of Strathclyde and he has held a number of senior academic positions at the Universiti Putra Malaysia including Head of the MBA Program and Deputy Dean of the Graduate School of Management (GSM); Deputy Director of Halal Product Research Institute (HPRI); and currently Deputy Dean, Faculty of Economics & Management. His research interest includes customer relationship marketing, marketing strategy and services marketing. More recently, he has embarked on research in halal-related issues in marketing and management. He has published in the areas of marketing (advertising, R&D – Marketing Interface), customer relationship marketing, and ‘halal business’.

A warm welcome to this special issue of the *Journal for Global Business Advancement (JGBA)*. The varied collection of six papers reflects the advancement of research in the field of global business that serves the purpose of the very existence of *JGBA*.

The first paper, by Mujtaba, synthesises the importance of orchestrating an ethical climate for the creation of peace, prosperity and a strong government for establishing competitive business environment in the post-Mujahidin rule of Afghanistan. This requires a continuous and comprehensive ethics education in tandem with communicating and enforcing the relevant anti-corruption policies and procedures. Perceptions on bribery and corruption among local and expatriate Afghans were assessed to determine the tolerance levels of the Afghans pertaining to bribery dilemmas and ethical challenges in business. The findings suggest that education, management experience, culture, and industry background are statistically significant factors at the ethical maturity levels.

The second paper, by Al-Ghamdi, Kazmi and Banaemah, looks into how the corporations manage productivity in the private sector of Saudi Arabia. It is an empirical study examining the role of human resource management in augmenting productivity. A questionnaire was administered online to Saudi Arabian private sector companies. The context and time create a difference in the managerial perceptions of the productivity. However, the findings in this study differ from the previous study by McInnes (1984) on US, British and Japanese firms. It is evident from the current research findings that managers in dissimilar cultural contexts, at different times, operating in different types of business environment, may have differing perceptions about various issues related to productivity.

The World Bank asserts that corruption is the single greatest impediment to economic growth in Third World countries. The effect of corruption on economic growth in Nigeria is the focus of the third paper, by Aliyu and Elijah. Applying an endogenous economic growth model developed by Barro (1991) using time series data, the empirical findings partly overturn the popular view in the literature that corruption is a beneficial 'grease' that lubricates the engine of economic growth in Nigeria. From the study, it was found that a unit rise in corruption decelerates growth by up to 4% in Nigeria. In addition, there is a positive link between corruption and growth at the level of government expenditure. As such, the paper strongly suggests the shortening of the labyrinthine structure in the general administration and quick dispensation of justice in order to root out corruption and promote economic growth across Nigeria.

Moving on from an economic focus, the fourth paper by Bhatt studies the foreign trade and investment dimensions of Malaysia in comparison with other ASEAN countries and the role of FDI in promoting exports. The Vector Autoregression Model (VAR) was applied to estimate the long-term causal relationships among exports, foreign direct investment and GDP. The cointegration test results show that there exists a long-term equilibrium relationship among exports, FDI and GDP. From the estimated Error Correction Model (ECM), there is a significant relationship in which a one-unit increase in FDI in Malaysia will lead to a 7.1 units increase in exports. In addition, the Granger Causality Test (GCT) indicates that there is a unilateral relationship between FDI and exports and the direction is from FDI to exports, meaning that infusion of FDI promotes exports.

The fifth paper, by Abdullah and Chaker, discusses competency skills in accounting. Accounting education has been criticised for not training accountants to meet the changing demands of the globalised markets. As the role of accountants has changed from scorekeeper to provider and interpreter of information, the adequacy of accounting syllabi to equip professional accountants in the challenging economy has been questioned. This paper attempts to assess the sufficiency of the proficiencies, skills and values taught to accounting students at the Kazakhstan Institute of Management Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP). Research findings by Abdullah and Chaker showed that the skills required by accounting students include: communication skills; information development and distribution skills; decision-making skills; knowledge of financial accounting; knowledge of management accounting; knowledge of auditing; knowledge of taxation; knowledge of business environment; professional ethics; professionalism; and leadership development. As for the various competency skills, the study found that KIMEP accounting graduates are equipped with the competency skills to do accounting works, but there are certain skills that need to be further enhanced. The findings of the study provide the empirical evidence and will be used as input for evaluating the content of the accounting programme to develop the required competency skills required for accountants.

Finally, the influence of religion attributes of halal products on export marketing strategy is the focus of the last paper, by Hassan and Bojei. They advocate that marketing of halal products in the international setting warrants additional care in meeting not only the specificity of target markets but also securing the 'halalness' of the product. In relation to product attributes, Muslim consumers particularly are more sensitive to the integrity of halal status besides other quality aspects of the product. With the Islamic values attached to the products, the religious attributes of halal products are expected to

play an important role in influencing the implementation of export marketing strategy. From face-to-face interviews with religion and industry experts from the Mufti Regional Office, Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC) and Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) and also Malaysian halal processed food exporters, the qualitative findings have discovered two main dimensions of halal product attributes and seven themes for the development of export marketing strategies. The findings have given some thoughts on the development of export marketing theory specifically on the marketing programme adaptation in the context of halal industry.