
Preface

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Biographical notes: Bassem E. Maamari is a Professor of Management at the Lebanese American University in Beirut, Lebanon. He joined the full-time rank of faculty after a long career in the business world and a long part-time faculty track. In his career path, he assumed the positions of Retail Sales Manager, Hospital Administrator, and External Auditor with a reputable global firm, then Financial Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer (CFO). As a faculty member, he taught a broad spectrum of courses before focusing on the track of management. Today, his research interests span from marketing to management. He focuses on job satisfaction, gender, the use of technology and its impact on users, these being purchase-to-use, uses at work, or personal use. His research has been published in a number of renowned journals, and presented in a number of academic conferences around the world. In addition, he is a corporate training practitioner in Lebanon and the Middle-East.

This special issue of the *Journal for Global Business Advancement* is entitled “Understanding the advancing of developing economies”. It includes a few papers presented at the 11th Annual World Congress of the Academy for Global Business Advancement (AGBA) and entitled *Advances in Global Business Research* and other new ones. These papers are enhanced versions of the ones presented in the conference. They underwent a double blind peer review and a rigorous selection process.

In the aftermath of the global financial crisis, came the ‘Arab Spring’ to shed some light on the importance of the Middle-Eastern and developing economies and regions as a geo-political entity on the world’s map. In line with this issue, and as a result of the continuous efforts by JGBA to bring valuable research to the global academic circles, comes this initiative, this special issue that focuses on this developing part of the world.

The first manuscript, a research paper on the consumption of beverages following the seasonal affective disorder, analyses the effect of weather changes on mood and beverage consumption in the Middle East setting. The paper is the result of a field work done in Lebanon by Chaanine and Chaanine, titled ‘Beverage consumption and seasonal change effect’. The study proposes a model that introduces ‘seasonal changes’ as a moderating variable. The data are analysed using a number of tools, including SEM for model fit, all of which reveal a number of interesting relationships that are of interest to both practitioners and academicians. The study highlights the role of seasonal change on the

consumption of beverages, hence indicating the need to take it into consideration when planning for a marketing campaign in the Mediterranean basin, in a country such as Lebanon having four different seasons.

The second paper, by Jannoun, is titled 'Corporate governance as a suggested solution for family business sustainability problem'. It surveys the different models suggested in the literature, including "the Mobius strip metaphor-based model"; "the family and business as two distinct systems model", and its development, "the family and business cross-system"; "the three-circle model of family business"; and "the sustainability DNA of family business model". Then the paper moves on to discuss corporate governance and its pillars of integrity transparency and responsibility in family business, to raise the flag for the handling of the sustainability of these businesses, which account for the majority of firms in the Middle-Eastern region. It suggests a solution toward solving the sustainability challenge in the long run. It discusses the factors affecting this long range and strategic concept among the Middle-Eastern family businesses, and proposes various models through an in-depth literature review.

The third paper is a research paper that examines the impact of organisational culture on employee performance in a bureaucratic setting. It is the work of Shayya, titled 'The impact of organisational culture on performance'. The added value of the study stems from its reliance on the Hofstede factors of organisational culture as a cornerstone to lead into a representative sample of a bureaucratic world plagued with a certain level of nepotism, 'bakhsheesh', and laissez-faire managerial attitudes. Thus, the study findings recommend the handling of cross-cultural differences that influence performance, through the modifications made to the Western theories, before they are transferred to the Middle East.

The fourth paper is the result of a pervasive research study on the factors affecting the adoption of business intelligence in the Middle East and African telecom world by Ghaida. The paper, entitled 'The influence of organisational and technological factors on BI adoption in the telecommunication industry across the Middle East and Africa', is based on a data collection exercise in the Middle Eastern and African dynamic and growing telecommunication service companies. The paper focuses on the internal factors affecting the adoption of business intelligence, i.e., organisational and technological, rather than the external ones, i.e., economic and social. The results convey a clear role of the internal organisational variables of the top management support, an organisational culture that embraces innovation, the availability of a champion, and the size of the firm, its multinational affiliations, revenue and its use of best practices. Moreover, the internal technical variables of technical capabilities, technology prerequisites and awareness are core.

The fifth paper by Baydoun and Anwar, visits a new path, that of how the Islamic *Sukuk* is carving for itself a share in the capital market of the GCC financial world in general, and that of the UAE more specifically. The unique structure and regulatory set-up of these religiously-based financial instruments that resemble common bonds, are becoming a game changer in the scene as both Muslim and non-Muslim investors gear-up to patronise them at an increasing rate. This increased attention has led to the creation of a platform for monitoring and handling *Sukuks*. The effectiveness of this new platform in helping investors achieve their potential and reach customer satisfaction is analysed, with implications and recommendations put forth for future development.

The last contribution is a paper by Chaker and Sabah. The authors' research interests include Islamic banking performance and customers' satisfaction. In this study, they use a

five-year secondary market data to look at the efficiency level of the GCCC financial markets. They attempt to analyse how these weak forms of efficiency affect the respective markets of the studied GCCC and their development. The study uses a number of statistical tools to validate and analyse the available data, only to conclude to the absence of a random path of development in these markets.

In general, this group of papers highlights the efforts of a number of scholars and practitioners in describing the trends in the real business world, and trying to decipher trends or attributes that may be generalisable or unique. Their efforts contribute to the filling of the research gaps in their respective fields of specialisation and environments, while also working toward adding a brick to the wall of knowledge, to the benefit of both academia and practice. We hope that these papers would instigate further future research for the better understanding of human behaviour and attitudes at work.