

Preface

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Biographical notes: Demetris Vrontis is the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research and Professor of Strategic Marketing Management at the University of Nicosia, Cyprus. He is the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of the *EuroMed Journal of Business*, associate editor of the *International Marketing Review*, associate editor of the *Journal of Business Research*, and consulting editor of the *Journal of International Management*. He has wide editorial experience and has successfully edited over 60 special issues of top tier journals. He is the President of the EuroMed Academy of Business, which serves as an important and influential regional academy in the area of business and management, and Managing Director of Gnosis: Mediterranean Institute for Management Science. He has widely published in about 300 refereed journal papers, 45 books and 60 chapters in books, and has presented papers to over 80 conferences around the globe.

Evangelia Siachou is an Assistant Professor of Human Resource Management at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. She holds a PhD in the field of Knowledge Management from the Athens University of Economics and Business, Greece. She has several years of teaching experience. In 2016, she joined the Open University of Cyprus as a Tutor and currently serves as Coordinator of the Managing Organisation Module in the MBA Program. As of Fall 2019, she teaches in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) as well as in the Executive Programs of the Department of Economics of National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. She also teaches at the Hellenic Open University. She has been awarded twice with the Emerald Literati Award.

The six papers in this special issue provide both ex-ante and ex-post responses to COVID-19 pandemic in the areas of management, governance, financial performance and strategy, which the contexts in various geographical areas implement, promote and support. Effectively, therefore, scholars based in different geographical locations, from

several academic institutions and universities address challenges from their personal knowledge, experience and know-how.

Accordingly, the ex-ante and ex-post conceptual and empirical responses to COVID-19 pandemic are presented in the three aforementioned frameworks of managing, governing, performing and strategising. Taking these three frameworks together, we develop and present a common understanding of different actions and reactions in a variety of business settings before and after the pandemic. At the same time, however, such an attempt promotes a holistic approach enabling organisations, units and individuals to shape and reshape effective and efficient responsive behaviours towards their attempted readiness to unpredictable situations and crises.

The first part of this special issue accommodates both ex-ante and ex-post conceptual and empirical *management* responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, actions that are relevant to *organisational governance* and *financial efficiency* in different contexts (including the unique sector of agriculture in relatively underexplored geographical areas) as well as studies, which are relevant to *strategising* in various contexts and settings (including the football industry and the hotel and tourism sector).

Such responses are reflected at both individual and organisational levels, shedding light on leadership abilities, entrepreneurial intentions, shaped attitudes, behaviours and oriented cultures, as well as on various business models and tools.

The first paper, 'Entrepreneurial intentions in times of economic recession: the dual role of environment', is co-authored by Katerina Voutsina (The American College of Greece, Athens, Greece), Giorgos Papagiannakis (University of the Peloponnese, Tripolis, Greece) and Spyros Lioukas (Athens University of Economics and Business, Athens, Greece). It provides an empirical investigation of entrepreneurial intention as a predictor/promoter of action undertaken by individuals who experience adverse environmental conditions. Drawing upon the reasoning of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and using data from university graduates who were all located in Greece, the authors support the view that hostile circumstances, such as recession, negatively affect one's subjective norms and self-efficacy. At the same time, such conditions may also moderate the attitudes-intention relationship such that the higher the level of perceived adverse environmental conditions (i.e., high level of perceived recession) the weaker the relationship is. The study findings depict individual responsiveness to challenging situations position entrepreneurial intentions either as a career alternative or as a policy-making mechanism and shape behaviours towards hostile conditions equally applicable to the meta COVID-19 pandemic era.

The second paper, 'Exploring the attitudes and views of pre-primary and primary school teachers for climate change education', is co-authored by Veronika Andrea (Democritus University of Thrace, Orestiada, Greece) and Dafni Petkou (International Hellenic University, Sindos, Greece). The study provides an interesting understanding of the impact of teachers' perceptions towards climate change in the development of pro-environmental attitudes in their students as well as in the formation of students' environmental consciousness in the future. Using data from 154 teachers, the authors reveal the importance of knowledge and environmental literacy as well as the pedagogical and scientific skills as apparent conditions for shaping students' awareness on climate change. The study implies that the acknowledgement of opposing environmental conditions and their potential consequences are not absolute conditions. Attention should be paid to the acquisition of knowledge and know-how as well as to the sharing of its true meaning to resolve problems, which affect society.

The third paper of this part, 'Corporate governance mechanisms and earnings management', is co-authored by Dimitris Balios (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece), Petros Kalantonis (University of West Attica, Greece) and Theodora Zaroulea (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece). The study offers a thorough review of the current literature on corporate governance mechanisms by summarising both qualitative and quantitative research work around this topic. The authors advance our understanding of the way in which earnings management can be reduced, highlight the lack of consensus in the literature about the board of directors and the committee's characteristics on earnings management, and call on organisations to adopt corporate governance practices to mitigate earnings management phenomena, as well as to make valid decisions for their smooth operation. Such observations are topical and necessary for organisations operating in the new ecosystem that is shaped in the aftermath of the pandemic.

The fourth paper, 'Measuring technical efficiency of Greek red suckler cow breed's farms in Central Macedonia region using a data envelopment analysis model', is co-authored by Maria Tsiouni (International Hellenic University, Thessaloniki, Greece), Dimitris Gourdouvelis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece), Stamatis Aggelopoulos (International Hellenic University, Thessaloniki, Greece), Demetris Vrontis (University of Nicosia, Cyprus) and Antonino Galati (University of Palermo, Palermo, Italy). This unique study offers a framework for farms to improve their economic efficiency as well as to ensure a satisfactory income for cattle breeders and assist policymakers to design efficient farm policies. Using data from 51 red suckler cow farms in Greece, the authors support efficiency of farms in terms of their size, their high revenue and the high cost of fixed capital. In addition, they support that efficiency also requires a relatively low cost of variable capital as well as better techno-economic results and managerial practices. Such indicators shape an interesting framework of farm efficiency of which applicability should be expanded to farms in other geographical areas.

The fifth paper, 'A holistic strategic perspective of football industry stakeholders', is co-authored by George Yiapanas, Alkis Thrassou and Demetris Vrontis (all from University of Nicosia, Nicosia, Cyprus). The study looks at the competitiveness and accountability of football clubs in a multifaceted industry, which involves many stakeholder groups. It offers a stakeholder framework that links the football industry stakeholders, as they have appeared in the existing literature over the last 40 years. The authors offer a fresh understanding/look at the stakeholder theory and provide solid foundations for synergies between primary and secondary stakeholders, which are based on the qualities of communication, listening, adoption of good processes, cooperation, recognition of interdependence, honesty and managing conflict.

Marcos Komodromos (University of Nicosia, Cyprus), Sameh Abadir (IMD Business School Switzerland, Switzerland), Baker Ahmad Alserhan (Princess Sumaya University, Jordan) and Daphne Halkias (École des Ponts Business School Paris, France) co-authored the sixth and the last paper of this special issue, 'Applied strategic management by managers in the hotel and tourism industry in Cyprus and Greece during the COVID-19 pandemic'. As the first indicative results in the aftermath of the pandemic show a significant drop in the revenues in the hotel and tourism sector, the authors aim at combating such adverse effects. Using qualitative data from 32 hotel managers employed in both Cyprus and Greece, a framework of business strategies and diversifications to

generate sales applicable in different sectors is proposed to keep the hotel and tourism businesses afloat. In the menu of these strategies, one can see strategic management benchmarking for improving health and safety at work: discount policy, marketing and social media advertising, and diversification.

The studies included in this special issue confirm the diverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on many different aspects of organisational life and support a common understanding of the actions and reactions of many different actors. Last, they conclude with a multifaceted approach with applicability in a variety of contexts and settings, as well as geographical locations.