Preface

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Biographical notes: Demetris Vrontis is the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research and a Professor of Strategic Management at the University of Nicosia, Cyprus. He is the Founder and the Editor-in-Chief of the *EuroMed Journal of Business*, an associate editor of the *International Marketing Review*, an associate editor of the *Journal of Business Research*, and a 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 the Managing Director of Gnosis: Mediterranean Institute for Management Science. He has widely published 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. She holds a PhD in the field of Knowledge Management from the Athens University of Economics and Business. She joined the Open University of Cyprus as a tutor in 2016 and is currently serving as a coordinator of the Managing Organization Module in the MBA Program. She teaches in the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) as well as in the Executive Programs of the Department of Economics of National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. She also teaches at Hellenic Open University. She has been awarded twice with the Emerald Literati Award.

This special issue of *JIBED* focuses on challenges being faced by the contemporary organisations operating in various and different contexts. In so doing, it accommodates both conceptual and empirical research and offers new insights on employee-driven innovation and capacity building to ensure safety and avoid risks, as well as perspectives

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on change initiatives and managing teleworking. Further scholarly research is also offered on the topical issues of effective communication, brand loyalty and promotional challenges in contemporary entrepreneurship.

The first paper, entitled 'Employee social media usage, workplace social capital and employee-driven innovation: finding the missing pieces of the puzzle', co-authored by Georgia Sakka, Alkis Thrassou, Ioanna Papasolomou, Christiana Stylianou and Chrystalla Markou, examines the relationships between social media, capital and employee-driven innovation within contemporary workplace contexts. It attempts to explain how the use of social media for work-related purposes advances workplace bonding, fosters collaborative interactions, and ensures trust among employees. At the same time, it sheds light on interesting work and employee outcomes evolving from such relationships, including knowledge exchange, expertise and resource sharing, increased task creativity and effective decision-making. Such a multi-dimensional framework, emerging mainly from the interplay between social media and social capital, offers both theoretical and managerial implications that promote organisational and employee vitality.

The second paper, entitled 'Capacity building in aviation safety risk management through risk taxonomy', co-authored by Ayse Kucuk Yilmaz, Konstantinos Malagas and Triant Flouris, examines the role that the human factor plays in aviation operations. By investigating the taxonomy that is applied to the risks that employees in this sector face, three main groups of risk sources are revealed, namely, risks that are relevant to cognitive ergonomics, physical ergonomics, and organisational structure and managerial systems, as well as sub-groups. The study facilitates awareness-raising on ergonomic risks and aims to improve the capacity and performance of the human factor. In addition, it provides us with a framework that various aviation stakeholders require to efficiently allocate resources and efforts towards achieving useful capacity building.

The third paper, entitled 'Can I regulate the work-from-home to balance my life? An empirical investigation of female employees in the Greek financial sector', co-authored by Evangelia Siachou, Iosif Famelis, Amalia Stafyla, Fotis Kitsios and Maria Kamariotou, focuses on the emerging line of research on work-from-home and its impact on work-life balance. The study expands our knowledge and understanding of how work-from-home can be regulated, either promotionally or provisionally, in relation to work-life balance outcomes. Drawing on the principles of regulatory focus and analysing data from 287 female employees in the Greek financial sector, the study highlights the challenges they face to offset their work from their personal life. The study outcomes provide a novel insight for female employees who work-from-home to achieve a work-life balance. It suggests that employees should act using their promotion focus. The study contributes to the existing body of research by highlighting work-from-home conditions in the Greek financial sector, and it also tackles issues of gender diversity within the context of telework. The study also provides new implications for ongoing work-from-home tenets and illustrates implications for future research.

The fourth paper, entitled 'The drivers of effective communication elements: key pivotal role in the successful implementation of change initiatives during turbulent times', co-authored by Badih Arnaout, Sam El Nemar, Hani El-Chaarani, Mark Esposito and Demetris Vrontis, tackles the very interesting element of communication in the context of small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) and highlights the necessity for successful change management and implementation in turbulent environmental times. Data from 187 SMEs operating in various sectors (e.g., technology, hospitality, food

service, education, retail) confirm the relationship between well-designed communication channels and organisational effectiveness as an absolute condition to manage change. The study outcomes resulted in a framework that integrates communication with the constructs of trust, leadership and change, and it provides interesting theoretical insights applicable to the practice of contemporary SMEs.

The fifth paper, entitled 'The role of wine festivals as catalyst for promotion of fruit wine tourism: the case of Meghalaya, India', co-authored by Sharad Kumar Kulshreshtha, Ashok Kumar, Aleksandra Figurek and Alkis Thrassou, brings to our attention a novel and interesting sector; that is wine tourism. The research investigates local festivals as an important means to attract tourists and visitors to relatively unknown and less popular destinations. At the same time, it aims to evaluate the efficacy of such efforts to increase awareness and public knowledge for wine tourism. Extensive research conducted over a two-year period reveals the significance of local festivals to entrepreneurial activities and growth. Furthermore, the findings progress our theoretical knowledge and understanding of this unique industry, as well as tourism-related promotion, by providing applicable knowledge for businesses, regions and policymakers.

The sixth and final paper, entitled 'Factors that influence brand loyalty during times of economic depression', co-authored by Yara Maassarani, Kareem Obeid, Sam El Nemar and Demetris Vrontis, investigates issues that may promise companies long-term success and subsequently ensure repeat customers. By looking at social-media interactions and the applicability of exclusive offers for loyalty card holders, it aims to explain the symbiotic relationship between companies and highlights potential loss that the reduced purchasing power might have for the companies. In this vein, the brand power of supermarkets is examined through the consumption of grocery items in Lebanon. Data from over 200 households identify the relationships among variables that influence consumer decision-making (e.g., economic and marketing factors, product characteristics, as well as brand image factors). The study outcomes confirm a significant dependency between such variables and the brand loyalty, and discusses fruitful implications for both theory and practice.

We hope that this special issue advances our awareness, knowledge and understanding of how challenges in the contemporary business environments are managed. Future research may further explore such challenges and/or add new ones to the research agenda, shed light on relatively unexplored industry contexts and geographical areas with intense entrepreneurial actions and interactions, and propose frameworks for successful employee and organisational outcomes.