

The current edition of *International Journal of Business and Economic Development* (IJBED) contains eleven thoroughly researched and scholarly articles. Conforming to the Academy's editorial policy, they have all been selected such that the basic objective of dissemination of knowledge, both applied and theoretical, is adhered to. Most of the papers have an economic development orientation while others are more industry specific with obvious implications for national development. Like in the previous issue, the articles in this edition too have themes that focus on strategy-sensitive areas that should invite the attention of policy makers. Readers will find them both of interest and thought provoking.

The opening article in this edition is entitled "**Micro-enterprise lack of access to credit – the Israeli case**" by Hassman *et al* focuses on an issue that has universal relevance, especially in these times of economic austerity. An important aspect of this research is that it highlights the difficulties caused by the knowledge that exists, especially in regard to micro-enterprises. This "information lacuna" is not only an impediment to entrepreneurial activity, but it would appear to be a feature of both those who are seeking finance as well as those who may in a position to offer it. These challenges in the case of Israel are made all the more challenging by a regulatory framework that to date makes appropriate bespoke credit mechanisms less likely.

This paper further corroborates the existing body of evidence in support of micro (a subset of small) enterprises and their contribution that they can make to the local economy, as well as to capacity building and job creation. Even in a more remote area of Israel such as Beer Sheva the number of micro businesses is very substantial, the authors of this paper quote a figure of 43,000. In seeking to examine why such enterprises are unable to access organizations that can provide credit it is evident that here is a topic that is not only worthy of interest, but has the potential to affect significant change. As a whole micro businesses could contribute substantially to the economy as whole, a fact that brings to mind the remarkable contribution that the *kibbutzim* make to the Israeli economy (Today there are more than 260 *kibbutzim* and incredibly they are responsible for approximately 40% of Israel's agricultural output (worth \$1.7 billion per annum)

The findings of this research are certainly thought provoking, especially as from the sample of businesses questions a sizeable proportion were not only well established but also had owners of whom over half have degrees. Having examined their business and entrepreneurial profiles (e.g. personal characteristics, competencies, family responsibilities etc.) of these microenterprises, the authors identified the areas of concern in regard to heterogeneity and access to credit. The major constraints to business were identified were: access to information about funding institutions as well a marked lack of guidance in regard to navigating the processes. In acknowledging that it would be useful to see similar research undertaken in core districts within the Israeli economy the authors have laid down a challenge for further research that would add substantially to a subject that is both pertinent and of great value.

The theme of the second article focuses on an issue that that has generated considerable discussion and analysis ever since the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008, namely corporate culture in the banking sector. Titled: "**The influence of corporate culture on organizational change of the First National Bank of Namibia**" by Chiloane-Tsoka examines the role of the Independent Variables that are such a feature of corporate culture and the

Dependable Variables that influence organizational change. In analyzing the internal variables the author reminds us of the hold that hierarchy and clan affiliations have over organizations, a fact that no consultancy or management team regardless of their experience and pedigree can afford to ignore. For those organizations that operate in the business arena, evidence has confirmed that companies which place particular emphasis on key managerial components, such as customers, stakeholders and employees, and leadership, outperform those that do not have these cultural characteristics (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Wagner & Spencer, 1996). As such this means that an organization must be alert and ready for change. The Literature Review underscores this point by reference to Susanto (2008) and the importance of management and employees being mentally prepared for change. This point is particularly significant because regardless of the time frame and degree of preparation, if certain elements are not psychologically attuned and commensurate with and accepting of change then fear persists and myopia and occasionally resistance are a very real danger. This goes some way to explaining the phenomenal success of Dr Spencer Johnson's *Who Moved My Cheese?* (1998)

The fact that this study was limited to branches situated in Windhoek, the Namibian capital, is itself of interest and does raise the question as to what factors act as key drivers of banks that themselves are situated in environments where they can both attract a broader pool of managerial talent whilst at the same time facing greater competition. The findings of this study throw up some interesting challenges for the bank branches concerned. The fact that over a quarter of those who responded viewed change in a negative light raises a whole raft of questions, a point made all the more alarming by the fact that nearly a third stated that; "they find it difficult to adapt". The author in her conclusions picked up on this body of resistance and duly noted that this appeared to be due to a lack of reward and recognition, as well as that traditional impediment to change, an absence of ownership of change by the employees. The author's portrayal of Perceived dominant existing organisational culture is a useful reference point from which those responsible for the First National Bank of Namibia could appraise their current strategy and practices.

The third article is also connected with Africa's most populous nation: "**Job Burnout and Intention to Quit: an Empirical Study of the Nigeria Police**" by Faloye *et al* investigates as the title indicates, a timely and pertinent piece of research concerning the reasons for dissatisfaction in the Nigerian Police Service. Staff recruitment and retention is of paramount importance to all organizations, yet there is an increasingly body of evidence to suggest that both the public and private sector manifest serious weaknesses in this regard. As more evidence emerges as to the various costs incurred as a result to rapid turnover of personnel, poor morale and workplace stress there is a realization that these rising costs both monetary as well as in well-being cannot be ignored. Human Resource related issues, especially in regard to Police and Security Services and the Armed Forces have tended to be viewed as superfluous to requirements and on occasions even suspect and thus the findings of this research are all the more revealing.

By setting out the local context in which the Nigerian Police operate this study elucidates something of the particular challenges and pressures that are faced, especially those that are over and above normal operational policing. Mention of Boko Haram and Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) reminds the reader that these are times of exception pressure for the Police Service as well as likely to be period in which there are

particular expectations from national and regional government and the public, along with additional scrutiny from the media and human rights groups. In examining the relevant literature this research makes clear that stress is by no means unique to the police, but goes on to demonstrate that the very nature of the police service and its means of operation results in particular manifestations of stress and burnout that might not be the case elsewhere. The fact that certain other factors lead to a propensity to burnout and the intention to quit are themselves telling and thus make this study all the more relevant.

The research whilst not exhaustive throws considerable light onto a number of key determinants, namely: Age, Gender, Qualifications and Experience. The findings in regard to gender probably tell us more about societal expectations, but should not be ignored with regard to the formulation of a working environment and promotion structure that is gender blind. Issues around qualifications, incentives and existing appraisal systems also seem particularly pressing. Whilst the authors found that there are significant lessons to be learned, one notable omission was with regard to the initial recruitment process and whether tools such as psychometric tests might help the Nigerian Police Service to better identify the employees best suited for Departments A – G so clearly explained in this research paper.

In the next paper, the discussion goes to the very essence of motivation in regard to so-called 'green products'. Titled: **"The impact of between the environmental interest, concern and sensitivity level and on purchasing behaviour of environmentally friendly product"** by **Ayetkin *et al*** have endeavoured to gain an understanding of what are the drivers that cause individuals to consider the environment when making purchases in the five largest shopping malls in Gaziantep, Turkey. In seeking to discover whether there is a direct correlation between concern for the environment and the purchasing of environmentally friendly products some 1074 face to face interviews were conducted (with a total of 891 being analysed). The questions posed are ones gauged to gain not only empathy and attitudes, but also the propensity of certain demographics to make conscious purchase choices. All businesses need to be sensitive to factors that affect purchasing decisions and by so doing they can potentially gain competitive advantage.

Green consumerism is a relatively new concept and as such the authors recognized the importance of homing in on various aspects of the subject following on from their literature review. By ensuring a clear understanding of the following trinity: environmental interests, environmental concern and environmental sensitivity, the authors were better placed to discover the motivators that were resulting in certain purchases. Education level emerged as one of the significant factors, one that not only potentially has a bearing on shopping patterns, but also on responsible citizenship nationally.

The results collected seem to echo those of studies of Van Liere and Dunlap (1981: 651–676), Roberts, (1996:79–89), Roberts and Bacon (1997:79–89), Bacanlı (2000:25), Ay and Ecevit (2005:238–263) in literature. In so doing this research raises questions as to how product manufacturers and retailers are of the added value that can be gained from ensuring that customers are aware of the ethical and environmental credentials. In view of these findings it would be interesting to know who the various malls themselves compared and whether they had factor this dimension into their own retail strategies. The authors themselves conclude that; "If the reason behind why some customers show sensitivity to environment can be understood,

desired change on purchasing behaviour for environment can be generated.”

The fifth article in this edition is entitled **“Ethical concept and professional judgment in corporate financial reporting: empirical evidence from Nigeria”** by Akenbor and Onuoha focuses on an issue of paramount importance, one with universal relevance. Accurate corporate reporting is essential to all organizations, both for an understanding of the internal dynamics of a company as well as for external players who require a thorough and holistic view on which to make judgments or proffer advice. Management, investors and regulatory bodies are all dependent on the accurate use and implementation of financial tools and mechanisms, but equally need to be aware that their voracity is dependent upon the professionalism and integrity of those that deploy them. Ethical judgment is an area open to interpretation and it is made clear that there are those who fall short of accepted norms or are in need of greater support and training in this regard, both *in situ* as well through more robust frameworks within professional bodies. Rather than being a dry and seemingly arid area of endeavour it is made clear that those engaged in the financial reporting have to confront some of the most challenging aspects of human interaction. Competence, confidentiality, independence, integrity and objectivity are all areas that can be open to interpretation, and yet are fundamental to the success or otherwise of any processes undertaken. The authors acknowledge that there evidence of professional judgment becoming more significant and that this would appear to reinforce the views as expressed by Magmu (2010). The authors bravely state that there are those in Nigeria who fall short of accepted ethical standards and this in itself raises some interesting questions about the existing guidelines, safeguards and sanctions. Data gathering would appear to have been largely successful, although in view of the observations appertaining to ethical standards it would have been interesting to have seen whether there were any variations in findings on the grounds of gender and if so what baring this might have for the research as a whole.

Certain moral imperatives are stated with clarity, especially in regard to Integrity and Objectivity, but the subject of human frailty and commercial pressures are largely left to one side. Accountants are described as having “unique ethical responsibilities” yet it is all also acknowledgement of the fact that in actuality these are according to Holmes (2001) being eroded. The cogent analysis of data appears to reinforce the prevailing view that integrity and objectivity have a significant implication on the credibility of professional judgment in financial reporting. The authors conclude that actions taken with regard to further strengthening of regulations and guidelines, as well as in regard to disciplinary processes must be nationwide and not just applicable to Rivers State.

The sixth paper in this series **“Indonesia’s textile and its products industry: Recent development and challenges”** by Kuncoro investigates, as the title indicates the role of the textile industry and the products associated with it in one of the fastest growing economies in Asia. Since the Second World War various economies in South Asia and the Far East have developed significant textile trades that have secured a sizeable share of export markets. In turn these respective national industries have undergone periods of often rapid change thanks to advances in technology in regard to production, printing, natural and synthetic materials as well the impact of computers. The fact that the textile industry and its products currently provide 11% of jobs in Indonesia is not only significant for the economy, but also highlights the importance of endeavouring to secure market share. No country that wishing to be a significant

player in this field can afford to ignore developments and trends going on elsewhere and the fact that the this industry makes up 9% of Indonesia's exports underscores the need for investment and continuous research and development.

The author makes clear that over the last forty years a significant structural re-alignment has taken place in the economy as a whole, with a significant shift away what an essentially agrarian economy, to one that is more mixed, with manufacturing and attendant industries demonstrating significant growth. Here we see the classic signs of what some might see as economic evolution, a process that takes place due to a combination of the internal dynamic and external factors and needs. The fact that Indonesian Government managed to navigate the economy through the various economic vicissitudes in recent years has certainly helped ensure that various industries are better placed to survive and prosper. Certainly the IMF figures quoted in this research support this, even throughout the period of the recent Global Financial Crisis that began in 2008.

Indonesia's textile industry is shown to shown both depth and breadth, a point that it made clear by the author through the analysis of the upstream, midstream and downstream analysis of the sector. The study in referring to the industry's division into two different subsectors (EKONID, 2001) acknowledges the fact that traditional as well as "modern technology and knowledge" appear to operate successfully. One point of potential concern for the future could well be the sheer numbers of unskilled workers involved in the manufacture of labour-intensive goods. Interestingly the fact that the lion share of the industry is concentrated on the island of Java raises interesting questions concerning the value of centres of excellent and expertise, but equally the vulnerability of such centres in the event of an industry wide depression. The author concludes that the signs are indeed promising for the industry at present, certainly with regard to the export market; a fact that means more of us should become familiar with garments and other textile related products that originate from Indonesia.

The next paper in this edition "**The Future of Global Education**" by Yusuf highlights a topic that has universal relevance. In this era of globalization technology has afforded opportunities for connectivity, interaction and knowledge sharing as never before. For many this opens up a world of opportunity, but for others lacking in research skills or the ability to discern there is a very real danger that individuals become satiated by all that they are presented with by the Internet and what is more alarming may be seduced or duped by that which masquerades of content of value. The technological revolution that has taken place in recent decades is staggering, and whilst some educational institutions and policy makers have embraced it with enthusiasm, others are at best wary and occasionally downright suspicious. Traditional means of education both in terms of pedagogy and andragogy cannot ignore what has and still is taking place, yet the very fluid nature of what raises significant questions about content, methodology, assessment, plagiarism, integrity, and value. With considerable discussion taking place about the place of Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) it is clear that global education is a subject that will continue to exercise many people both in academia and beyond.

In examining the role of E-Learning the author gets to the heart of the matter and ensures that there is a clear understanding of the current debate and especially the pros and cons of this phenomenon. In describing what has taken place as a "paradigm shift" it is clear

that whilst change may have been incremental in technological terms, the overall effect has been seismic in the opinion of many. ICT has not only “changed our learning methods (Ryder and Wilson, 1996)” it has changed expectations and in the case of Tim Berners-Lee’s brain child the World Wide Web has opened up a world of possibilities for learning without borders. Whilst democratization of learning appears exciting the author highlights that in the case of more conservative societies such as Saudi Arabia the process has not been without difficulties. Cultural and especially gender considerations remain problematic, even though as a whole the Kingdom and its seats of learning recognize the value of learning portals and the scope for learning partnerships. Quality and evaluation of E-Learning remain an area that requires more attention, especially as so much is in a state of flux. This paper certainly elucidates some of the fundamental concerns about these new frontiers of learning, yet appears to be optimistic that with rising expectations from individuals and organizations e-learning might well help meet specific needs whilst also providing a cost-effective alternative to traditional methods.

The eighth paper also hails from Saudi Arabia and is entitled: **“Improving Decision Making by using Hazard Analysis Model for the City of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia”** by authors **Momani and Fadil**. Major urban centres from Dhaka to Jakarta wrestle with a multiplicity of issues that cause irritation and risk to inhabitants and visitors alike. As humanity is drawn to live and work in towns and cities the sheer concentration of population results in infrastructure and various services being strained to breaking point. Growing pains are visible, as are the tensions between various stakeholders. Historic cities such as Jeddah have to find a way to work with often conflicting interests, whilst striving to minimize risk and foster a spirit of complimentary interests. Urban and peri-urban communities the world over are undergoing a period of change and those responsible for planning and policy often find themselves in the metaphorical firing line for their action or apparent indifference or inertia.

In seeking to develop a framework to develop weighting criteria the authors chose to conduct seven community based workshops across the Jeddah Municipality with the aim of eliciting insight into community concerns and hazards. Such an undertaking is fraught with potential challenges, not least the fact that some who may have the most legitimate concerns may well prove to be the very individuals who for a variety of reasons miss out on the consultation process. The authors themselves state that; “The respondents have been selected to represent different views for Jeddah City districts.” In surveying communities feedback was arranged into three key categories: the likelihood of occurrences of each risk, its magnitude of consequences and potential effects. The subsequent analysis enabled concerns to be tabulated and prioritized so that recommendation can be made to the Jeddah City Council in order for it to better prioritise its resources as well to have a clearer indication of specific needs. Whilst the paper indicates that urban planning has been taking place since 1962 population growth has been such that planning and policy making has in common with comparable cities has failed to keep up with the growth of the city. The array of problems that are thrown up by such research tells us much of the complexities of the urban environment in the 21st Century and of the difficulties faced by those endeavouring to address present and future problems. The authors have certainly collated some valuable data that if assimilated, processed and acted upon in a thoughtful and constructive manner could well prove beneficial to the health, well-being and overall effectiveness of one of Saudi Arabia’s most prominent cities.

Article nine is **“Collaborative learning in English for specific purposes (ESP) courses - Effectiveness and students’ attitudes towards it”** by Ayon seeks to address the current dearth of empirical research into Collaborative Learning in a Lebanese context. Whilst it has long been established that we all benefit from a range of learning strategies and experiences, past experience often shapes our perception of the benefits or otherwise of certain ways of learning. Many individuals are self-reliant or resistant to change, others resent the uncertainty of having to study or work with individuals that may or may not be of their own choosing. Whilst theory is all very well, ultimately the best learning of all is heuristic learning, a process by which individuals are fully tested and have a far better understanding of their capabilities and those of others with which they work. As education is seen as an essential precursor to the world of work it is imperative to create a learning environment that in some measure at least accurately reflects the sought of experiences most of us face during the course of our working life.

The author acknowledges that from the outset there existed a degree of resistance to collaborative learning, this having grown out of negative past experiences or the fact that the reasoning and purpose had not been clearly articulated. In choosing to engage in both quantitative and qualitative research the author chooses a blended process of data collection involving questionnaires, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Such research requires careful framing as there is often a genuine fear as to its intended purpose, especially if conducted in an environment where attitudes and reputation are of matters of particular sensitivity. The fact that students concerned were studying in English at a private university adds an additional challenge, for some individuals become especially self-conscious and anxious that if they team up with less mature or studious individuals their own grades will be adversely affected.

The findings show significant relationships amongst the variables investigated. As a confirmation of their hypothesis, the author notes; “Students perceive CL as having a positive impact on students’ learning. Their grade achievement, their written and oral work, as well as their learning process seem to be positively influenced by their collaborative experiences.” In addition the benefits with regard to the workplace were striking, with the positive impact in regards to flexibility being particularly striking. The implications from this research are relevant across the learning environment in addition the suggestion of possible further research in relation to the role of gender and status seems eminently sensible.

The tenth and penultimate paper titled **“Marketing research as a proactive strategy for the performance of business: The Nigerian experience”** by Ewah explores a topic that is vital importance not only for business growth, but also for their survival. The Government of Western Australia in its online portal aimed supporting Small Businesses states: “Market research is important for every business, and should not be just a one-off activity. Successful businesses conduct research on a continual basis to keep up with market trends and to maintain a competitive edge. Regardless of whether you’re starting or expanding your business, market research is vital to understanding your target market and increasing sales.” Yet in many parts of the world, including according to the author, Nigeria, market research is often ignored and neglected altogether. There are of course a whole raft of reasons for such neglect, for some companies it is a lack of awareness, for other budgetary constraints, a market absence of expertise in this field is another factor as is a general institutional myopia with regard to corporate best practise. All too often market research is not viewed as integral to business

planning, but is seen as an unnecessary expense that serves as an optional extra for those companies that have the funds to indulge in such things. The author makes clear that this is not only an attitude that affects micro, small and medium enterprises, but is equally prevalent amongst companies listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange, where on average two thirds have failed to establish relevant departments or utilise appropriate expertise.

There are of course a range of reasons for such indifference to one of the key elements of modern corporate activity. Management styles, particularly a dictatorial approach to management appears to have little time an outlay that does not deliver instant returns. The marked absence of regional specialists in this field hampers companies as well as ensuring that market research remains largely below the corporate radar, a point that was ably articulated by Olakunori (2002) Market intelligence and the ability to reconnoitre the lie of the land should be of paramount importance and in the words of the author; "form the basis for all the diagnostic and prognostic efforts of managers."

In carrying out research into the prevailing attitudes and practice the author makes clear that this was carried out across several states, and yet it would have been interesting to know which these were and whether there were regional differences. The findings themselves raise some serious question about business education. One of the most telling results was in response to Question 7 (What are the demerits of not conducting marketing research?) where 130 (13.4%) of the respondents said that not conducting marketing research would contribute to the winding up of companies. If this is indicative of nationwide attitudes and understanding, it is essential that there is a concerted effort to build local capacity as well as working towards a sea change in approach to the study of and implementation of purposeful market research.

The eleventh and the last paper "**Green Economy: A pathway to Sustainable Economic Growth in Egypt**" by Ramzy present a fascinating insight into the challenges faced by a country in its such to find a solution to economic woes borne out of political instability. Egypt takes immense pride in its rich cultural heritage and the fact that traditionally its tourist industry has generated billions of tourist dollars as well as being a major employer. Such is the pivotal nature of tourism to the economy that the country's marketing budget has been lavish by African standards and has in the past yielded very healthy returns. The Egypt Tourism Authority's slogan: 'Egypt - where it all begins' has adorned countless buses and billboards in many capital cities and as a consequence tourism in locations such as Sharm el Sheikh and Hurghada as well as those within the environs of Cairo has become a mainstay of the Egyptian economy. The Arab Spring and Egypt's own political revolution and subsequent crises have proved devastating both for the country's international image as well as for the economy as a whole. A variety of factors both internal and external have coalesced to such a degree that even conservative minded business figures and policy maker have begun to recognized that lasting solutions need to be sought. The fact that Ethiopia has begun work on the Grand Renaissance Dam has raised questions about water security, whilst the rapid encroachment of Cairo and its attendant chaotic construction and pollution to the iconic pyramids has underlined the need for a holistic approach to environmental matters. Adversity, if not always the mother of invention certainly concentrates minds.

The author acknowledges that tourism is central to development. Were Egypt a wheel tourism, certainly in an economic sense, would be seen as the hub. Radiating off from that hub

are other elements: agriculture, energy, water and waste management, and it is evident that there is a direct correlation between all five elements. Prior to 2011 Egypt's approach to these sectors was often lackadaisical and half hearted, with not a single Egyptian municipality signing up to the Istanbul Water Consensus. Now with the economy contracting and growing unemployment there is a pressing need to find a way forward that will bring lasting benefits. The present paper examines the issues relating to the green economy and specifically green tourism, something which is revealed to be a fairly novel concept in Egypt. The use of the Delphi technique brought key stakeholders into the process and thus increased the credibility of the findings, but also strengthening the likelihood of this research helping to inform debate and contribute to future developments in this field. There is always a danger that both the public and private sector will engage in 'eco-window' dressing, but in view of the parlous state of the Egyptian economy at present all parties have a vested interest in ensure that any new approach works, and continues to do so. In concluding that; "tourism could be the starting point to transform to green economy in Egypt, because it is connected with all other sectors in the country." the author recognizes that the potential is there, but whether that is fully realized in regard to the green economy in Egypt only time will tell.

Mark T Jones

Advisory Editor of the International Journal of Business & Economic Development (IJBED) and
Director of the Centre for Innovative Leadership Navigation (CILN), London, UK