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# Guest editorial: Entrepreneurship activities among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) enterprising communities

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## 1. Introduction

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established in 1981. The GCC is made up of six countries: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the Sultanate of Oman (Dana *et al.*, 2021). The main purpose of the GCC is to share common cultural values and benefits, which are based on Islamic beliefs (Dana *et al.*, 2021). Free movement of people, goods and capital ensured this region's very fast development. The economy of these countries is dependent on world oil production and its prices. Recently, these countries recorded declines in their GDP due to decreases in oil prices. All currencies of the GCC members are pegged to the US Dollar (US\$). Qatar has the highest GDP per capita (US\$59,324), the UAE (US\$37,622), Kuwait (US\$27,359), Bahrain (\$22,579), the KSA (US\$20,028) and Oman has the least GDP per capita (US\$14,982) (Dana *et al.*, 2021).

In the past few years, all countries began to base their budgets on the real economy, production and export. To do that, they promote education for locals, which will allow them to take crucial positions in the economy from expatriates so that they can run their economies independently. The number of expatriates in these countries varies, and the biggest number is in the KSA with approximately eight million. Additionally, the GCC's governments promote entrepreneurship development across the countries (Dana *et al.*, 2021). A huge amount of funds is available in each country to promote entrepreneurial activities. They have realised that dependence on oil is not a long-lasting solution. Their population should be involved in these processes, and thus, respective governments support education throughout universities as well as via lifelong learning centres. Business incubators at universities or separate are being established.

From the research perspective that had been done regarding the GCC development, it is still a very young area and fairly undiscovered in terms of applied research. Actually, new researcher horizons are yet to be discovered.

To discover trends and research opportunities, this special issue (SI) call for papers emphasised on GCC entrepreneurship from variety of perspectives. Therefore, the main objective of this call was to invite researchers, academicians and practitioners to respond to the call by bringing original and novel studies that will discover undiscovered in this region and open future works for researchers. To put the shed on this research light, the SI welcomed both micro- and macro-level studies, quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches as long as they are well grounded in the literature. Specifically, but not limited to, the SI welcomed the following areas:

- government support and GCC enterprising communities;
- gendered entrepreneurship in GCC communities;
- social entrepreneurship in GCC communities;
- small business in ethnic enclaves in GCC;
- religion and entrepreneurship;



- business education/teaching, ethics, values and social responsibility;
- cross-cultural management/marketing, cross-disciplinary business areas; and
- informal and home-based self-employment in GCC communities and others.

## 2. Contributors of the special issue

This region lacks of research that will treat research themes like entrepreneurship from general to very tiny part of this field (Dana *et al.*, 2021; Ramadani *et al.*, 2021). As the region is getting a momentum in attracting researchers to discover novelties and contribute theoretically and practically, this call for papers had the chance to contribute to the research development of this region. Among seven papers submitted to this issue, four of them were accepted. In these four papers, diverse research was noticed. Authors in this issue brought the factors that are argued as very important for further development of this region, such as economic sustainability, factors that impact of entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial behaviour and socio-cultural perspective of women's entrepreneurship.

By examining the impact of family income, family business experience and family size on females' perceptions of cultural, financial, training and education and entrepreneurial attitudinal and behavioural barriers to entrepreneurship, Abd El Basset *et al.* (2023) tried to advance their understanding the role of family characteristics in enabling female entrepreneurship in Oman. Their study indicated that reducing the perception of impediments to entrepreneurship among fledgling entrepreneurs was not really supported by the family factors taken into account. They argued that their findings conflict with earlier study conducted in the West, which emphasizes the significance that family support plays in fostering and supporting entrepreneurship. According to the research, none of the three family traits under investigation could foresee a shift in how entrepreneurial restrictions were perceived. This deviates from earlier research done in Western contexts and signifies possible gaps in family support for female entrepreneurs in Oman and the region, as the region's cultural settings are similar. Along the same line, the authors call to enhance women's entrepreneurial activities via government and academic institutions to overcome financial and educational barriers. Finally, the authors they explored the future research by calling for studies that will address these barriers across the region.

Pejić Bach *et al.* (2023) introduced the paper entitled: "The Economic and Sustainability Priorities in the United Arab Emirates: Conflict Exploration." Their study looked at how stakeholders perceived the development priorities and offers more practical solutions to support the UAE' sustainable economic growth. Furthermore, based on the World Bank data, the exploratory factor analysis has identified two primary categories of development priorities: (a) economic priorities and (b) sustainability priorities. Additionally, four clusters have been identified: Cluster 1 (high economic – high sustainability), Cluster 2 (high economic – medium sustainability), Cluster 3 (high economic – low sustainability) and Cluster 4 (high economic – poor sustainability), which are based on the amount of motivation for the economic and sustainability priorities (low economic – low sustainability). The cluster members that prefer a high degree of economic and sustainability priority (Cluster 1) also favour a more diversified economic growth that offers greater employment possibilities as well as better education and training for young people in the UAE. The practical reflection of this study regarding education and media coverage can be summarised in several useful implications. (a) A media campaign could be created and implemented to raise sustainability awareness because respondents give economic development factors a higher priority than sustainability factors. (b) A campaign might

target individuals in particular who are men because, according to the data, men are more likely than women to acknowledge having a high priority for the economy and a low priority for sustainability. (c) There is no need to further diversify media advertising based on age because the analysis did not find any significant disparities between age groups, indicating that there is no generational divide among respondents. Besides the identified limitations, the study further proposes several future works by exploration of bigger sample covering the whole GCC in which (a) examining and contrasting all of the GCC nations, (b) looking into the perspectives of expatriate managers who are not from the GCC nations and who are residing in the UAE and (c) including other distinct groups that are lagging, such as female entrepreneurs. Finally, the paper contributes to a novelty approach in data analysis of this kind of study as well as to the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the GCC context. The article brings an idea of exploring different ways in research methods, as discussed earlier by [Dana and Dana \(2005\)](#) and [Dana and Dumez \(2015\)](#), as well as envisaging idea of the long-term of socio-economic development and sustainability ([Palalic et al., 2017](#)).

Another study done by Al Boinin (2023) in the paper: “Women’s Entrepreneurship in the GCC: A Literature Analysis From a Socio-Cultural Perspective” tackled the issues of socio-cultural elements on women’s entrepreneurship experiences in the GCC region. Using a qualitative approach of analysing 65 articles, the author argued on major socio-cultural determinants influencing women’s entrepreneurial realities in GCC countries. Al Boinin discussed the predominant societal norms with regards to the definition and application of gender roles were shown to have a significant impact on the experiences of women entrepreneurs. Additionally, the study shows the importance of family support (or lack thereof) and the availability of networking opportunities to launch and expand businesses have a big impact on how successful women entrepreneurs are. His research also demonstrates how Islam is thought to provide a comprehensive set of ethical principles and guidelines for living in general and conducting business in particular. Besides practical implications of the study, which are in regards of introducing “inclusive policies” in regards of women entrepreneurship in the region, the study contributes to the women or gender entrepreneurship theories. Besides existing limitations, the study suggests future research that will tackle the digital technology used by women entrepreneurship. By this, it emphasizes the importance of the gender entrepreneurship and role of women in the socio-economic development ([Knezović et al., 2020](#); [Palalic et al., 2017](#); [Palahć et al., 2023](#); [Ramadani et al., 2013, 2020](#); [Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2020](#)).

Abubakar *et al.* (2023) explore “effects of entrepreneurial education, trait competitiveness, and psychological capital on the entrepreneurial behavior of university students” in their article “Impact of Entrepreneurial Education, Trait Competitiveness, and Psychological Capital on Entrepreneurial Behavior of University Students in GCC.” By implementing quantitative approach in their study, they have examined a sample of 857 students from Oman to examine the aforementioned effects. The findings demonstrate a favourable impact of entrepreneurial education, trait competitiveness and psychological capital on the entrepreneurial activity of university students in the GCC region. The study also discovered that psychological capital serves as a link between entrepreneurial education, trait competitiveness and entrepreneurial behaviour. Furthermore, from the practical point of view, the study’s results urge the evaluation of the efficacy of entrepreneurial education initiatives. Moreover, it suggests policymakers to continue funding higher education institutions (HEIs) for research and initiatives in the field of entrepreneurship, particularly the development of new curricula, courses and extracurricular activities. The government and universities have confirmed the value of entrepreneurial education in the time of socio-economic development of the country.

The study contributes to theories of psychological capital and entrepreneurial behaviour. In terms of limitations, the study should be conducted on the GCC level to have generalisable results for this region's context.

Similarly, Raihan *et al.* (2023) contributed with the article entitled: "Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education Institutions across Gulf Cooperation Council Countries: A Bibliometric Review of the Research," which explores the current state of the entrepreneurship development in higher institutions (universities). The study used the systematic literature review (SLR) approach to identify the most influential articles according to country, author, journal and year of publication. In summary, their work was organised into major emergent clusters led by several topics done by content analysis approach. Also, the article proposes to develop a future regulatory framework and strong entrepreneurial ecosystem that can help HEIs across the GCC countries through which it can foster entrepreneurship development. This will all lead to socio-economic progress in the future. Besides the limitations of the article, the study contributes to entrepreneurship development in higher institutions in the GCC context.

Raihan *et al.*'s article corresponds to the need of literature to be explored in this field and to bring the new perspectives for future works (Ahmad *et al.*, 2022). The article addresses the importance of the method used that can bring lots of important clusters for the researchers, academicians and policymakers (practitioners) (Smajić *et al.*, 2022).

### 3. Conclusion

Although the SI has a diverse collection of papers, however, it is not enough to provide greater value to this call. It addressed the sustainable development goals, entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention in one part of GCC. Additionally, an additional diversity goes to women's entrepreneurship perspective from the socio and cultural perspectives in the GCC. Having this collection of diverse studies, however, the small number of articles limits its invaluable results. Thus, this call is a predecessor for the future calls in this region to explore more diverse approach in terms of entrepreneurship from the variety of areas that will contribute to better development of the region. As this region has invaluable cultural settings (Biyygautane, 2015), this seemed to be a great venue for the future research in the field of entrepreneurship. Besides rich cultural perspective (Lalond, 2013), one of the areas that can be explored by future calls is to have entrepreneurial ecosystem in focus, which actually paves the way for further entrepreneurship development (Stam, 2018) of any country and any region.

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**Further reading**

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