



**CHAPTER**  
Middle East & North Africa

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**Academy of International Business (AIB)**

**The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Chapter**

**7th Annual Conference (Dubai, UAE)**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Abstracts / Papers**

**Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, Dubai, UAE**

**Dates: 7 to 10 December 2021**

## ***“Exploring Resilience and Agility within International Business in the MENA Region”***

The Academy of International Business MENA International Conference builds upon its 2019 conference theme of “Sustaining the Sustainable Agenda” Exploring Critical Multilayered Sustainable International Business Practices in the MENA Region”, by aiming to explore two very important and topical areas of “resilience” and “agility” in a MENA context.

The last two decades have witnessed a phenomenal rise of multinational enterprises from emerging countries (EMNEs) from an international business context. This trend is mainly due to the increased globalisation and liberalization of these emerging countries leading to a more competitive playing field resulting in more inward and outward FDI. Despite the fact that China and India have, over the years, made significant economic and technological progress, various recent economic challenges and political factors have seen Chinese outward FDI decline by 18% over the last two years (UNCTAD, 2019). Whereas emerging countries as a whole have seen a 10% fall in outward FDI, investments from the Middle East have reached their highest level of \$49 billion in 2018 (from \$39 billion in 2017), which is now equivalent to 40% of current Chinese outward FDI! Leading Middle Eastern countries, such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Turkey have significantly increased FDI in technology, finance, and infrastructure industries.

However, the MENA countries have had their own share of challenges. Since the economic crisis in 2008, the subsequent Arab Spring in 2010, and ongoing conflict in various countries, several MENA countries have been trying to transform their economies to become more diversified, competitive, and innovative with the view to allow increased internationalization of their EMNEs as well as becoming more attractive to inward foreign investors. With the aim of transforming their countries into competitive, diversified and responsible participants in the global economy, several governments in the MENA region have managed to refocus on

economic development. For example, the UAE is hosting the forthcoming Expo 2020 (in October 2021- April 2022), which has brought with it a number of policy measures to spur on economic development and the location attractiveness of the UAE. These efforts have called for government policy initiatives, which encompasses environmental, economic, cultural, and social standards, in order to foster sustainable business activities, which can help EMNEs become more resilient and agile.

According to UNCTAD (2019), the overall prospects for inward and outward FDI is positive for several main MENA countries. This is mainly due to the relatively favourable economic conditions as well as efforts to improve the business and investment climate. However, the current trade tensions, ongoing conflict, and other uncertainties calls for MNEs to be cautious and invest in their capabilities in order to become more resilient and agile.

While the existing International Business literature has focused predominantly on China and India (Buckley et al. 2007; Luo and Tung 2007; Gaur et al. 2018; Khanna and Palepu. 2004; Aulakh et al. 2016; Contractor et al. 2014; Ciftci 2019), there are far fewer studies on the MENA region, both as a host to and a source of foreign investment (see Budhwar, Pereira, Mellahi and Singh, forthcoming, for a review of the limited research). Our current understanding of the MENA countries is mostly from analysis at the aggregate level, either cross/within-country level or industry level. However, better access to primary and secondary data sources are allowing researchers to delve into the many multi-dimensional factors that characterise EMNEs and the MENA countries in their effort to become more resilient and agile. Therefore, this highlights the urgent need to research the many unique and complex characteristics that impact MNEs in the MENA region and try to uncover the MNE strategies to varied challenges to become more resilient and agile.

Resilience and agility are the most sought-after tools and strategies at individual, team, and organisational level(s) in the context of a dynamic and complex international business environment, which calls for resilient & agile characteristics (Hartmann, Weiss, Newman & Hoegl, 2019). Organisational leaders and managers who operate in the cross-cultural competitive business environment should possess key personal resources, such as resilience (Shin, Taylor, & Seo, 2012). Furthermore, several recent studies suggest that agile and resilient employees are open to change (Wanberg & Banas, 2000), engage in knowledge co-creation (Acharya, Singh, Pereira, & Singh, 2018), possess high intent to start business i.e. are entrepreneurial (Bullough, Renko, & Myatt, 2014), and adjust well in a host (foreign) country context (Singh, Pereira, Mellahi, & Collings, 2019). However, the challenge of firstly, fostering and then motivating, managing, and retaining resilient and agile talent remains a key challenge for organisations operating in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and hence calls for a multilevel & multi-country research inquiry.

Understanding how MNEs handle and overcome the unique political, religious, cultural and commercial environments present in the MENA region becomes critical for the global success of MNEs in remaining resilient and agile in the face of uncertainty. Combined with the efforts of EMNEs from the MENA region to increasingly engage in outward investments offers a rich

contextual testbed for theorising and analysing the strategic role that the MENA region can play in the global business community.

Therefore, the focus of this conference is to offer new insights into the unique challenges and opportunities that the MENA presents for MNEs. More specifically, it seeks to bring forward insights about resilient and agile international business practices in the MENA region. We welcome conceptual and empirical abstracts/papers that employ quantitative, qualitative, and/ or mixed-methods approaches to address one of the following topics or other related themes, within the four broad tracks:

**Track 1: International Management (Track Chair: Dr. Yama Temouri, Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi, UAE)**

1. FDI, mode of entry choice, and internationalisation in MENA
2. International Marketing and creating global brands in MENA
3. International relations between MENA countries
4. International/Islamic Finance and Banking
5. International entrepreneurship and family business in the MENA region
6. Crisis management (including climate change, refugees, pandemics etc.)

**Track 2: International Human Resources and Human Capital Management (Track Chair: Professor Beverley Dawn Metcalfe, ESA Business School, Lebanon)**

1. HRM in the MENA region
2. Cross/intra cultural management in a MENA context
3. Expatriate and international mobility and careers in MENA
4. Knowledge management in the MENA region
5. Employment, employability, and entrepreneurship in the MENA region
6. Indigenous management practices in MENA
7. Women studies (including diversity and inclusion) in the MENA region and beyond.

**Track 3: International Policy Relations and Historical Studies (Track Chair: Professor Vijay Pereira, NEOMA Business School, France, and AIB MENA Vice President)**

1. Regional policies, NGOs, and governance in MENA
2. Government Policy and national competitiveness in MENA
3. MENA-Africa relations: past and present trends
4. Research methods in international business in the MENA context
5. Enhancing learning ecosystem in MENA
6. MENA Business history

**Track 4: International Sustainability and Responsibility (Track Chair, Dr. Vikash Ramiah, University of Wollongong, Dubai Campus, UAE)**

1. Corporate social responsibility in MENA
2. Building Cities of the Future: Sustainability, security, and migration in MENA
3. Creating and enabling ecosystems and policies for Born Global/Health/Education/Social in the MENA region
4. Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainability in MENA

5. Social media and digital divide in MENA
6. The changing landscape of energy sector in the MENA region

Please note that those articles submitted for this conference will be in consideration for either of the two special journal issues (ABDC, ranked A and B) (*more information forthcoming*)

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE WILL BE AN ONLINE PAPER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP in collaboration with the AIB Fellow(s) (September- TBC). There will also be an opportunity to meet the editors of top-tier journals online.

Additional activities during the conference include World Expo 2021, tourist attractions, etc.

A special issue of the journal (upcoming); First preference can be given to AIB-MENA submissions.

Contact: Please contact Professor Vijay Pereira at [vijay.pereira@port.ac.uk](mailto:vijay.pereira@port.ac.uk) and cc: AIB MENA Chapter [mena@aib.msu.edu](mailto:mena@aib.msu.edu) to clarify or for details about the AIB MENA 2021 conference.

Conference Website: <https://mena.aib.world/>

Membership joining fees: <https://www.aib.world/membership/new-members/>

**Abstract\* Submission link:** <https://meetings.aib.msu.edu/mena/2021/>

\*full papers will be requested once accepted prior to the start of the conference.

*Abstract Guidelines:*

Participants may submit an A4 abstract which covers, research questions, the methodology and methods used in collating data, research findings to date, and 3 references all on A4. Size 12 Font, based on the understanding fuller papers will be developed for the conference. Abstract submission can be between 5-8 pages.

For the full paper: The maximum length of the paper is 40 pages (including ALL tables, appendices and references). The minimum length of the paper is 10 pages. including ALL tables, appendices and references).

### **Symposium (Panel)**

A symposium session is organized as a Presenter Symposium.

A Presenter Symposium involves a series of authored papers on a present theme.

Presenter Symposia: Presenter Symposia are judged on overall quality, interest to AIB members, relevance to the theme of the conference and include a maximum of 4 papers. Symposia can be singly sponsored by a single track/or across tracks.

Presenter Symposia can involve co-authored papers and co-authors will be listed in the printed program.

The Presenter symposium submission (panel) includes the following in the order:

1. A title page that includes:

a. Title of symposium (in Title Case)

b. Complete formal names and affiliations of all participants

c. Four pages which provides an overview of the symposium that includes:

a. An explanation of why the symposium should be of interest to AIB 7thconference.

b. For PRESENTER symposia: An introduction to the symposia field and its contribution., Plus an additional 2-page synopsis of 4 presentations including references.

Tables and figures must be clear and legible and should be no smaller than 10-point font.

### **Abstract/ Paper Review Process**

The blind review process exists to help protect the integrity of the submission and review process.

Abstracts/ Papers are double-blind reviewed, and are evaluated on clarity, analysis, methodological rigor and overall quality. Double-blind review means that author must submit by October 15<sup>th</sup>. The information is NOT known to the reviewers, and reviewer information is NOT known to the authors or submitter.

Potential participants do not need to be AIB members to submit but must register and become an AIB member at the time of the conference.

### **Feedback**

Feedback will be delivered before or by end of October 2021.

### **Important Dates**

**Abstract & Panel Submission system opened: 15th July 2021**

**Abstract & Panel Submission system closes: 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

**Decision Notification: By latest 30th October 2021**

**Registration opens: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021**

**Early Bird Registration ends: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

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### **References:**

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Notes:

Cases studies in IB teaching

<https://tesig.aib.world/short-video-capsules/>

<https://tesig.aib.world/mini-cases-for-teaching-ib/>