

# **Introducing the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Plymouth Postgraduate Symposium**

## **“Making Better Decisions”**

### **A Review of Plymouth Post-Graduate Student Research in 2014**

*The 2014 symposium represents the ninth edition of papers produced by the Faculty of Business at Plymouth University, UK held on 2 July 2014 and preceding the international conferences on Finance ICFME, Strategy ICSMR & Society ICSHH on 3-4 July 2014. For the first time this year the committee were pleased to not only offer a selection of recorded presentations online, but supplement this with a move to broadcasting live presentations via the internet (following additional sponsorship from the Plymouth Postgraduate Society). This enabled our presenters to talk and show slides on the internet during the morning session as well as receive text questions from remote delegates listening from across the world.*

*A best poster award was again presented at the event. A total of five posters competed for the prize. The poster prize recognises that not every student would want to present to an audience but may prefer to discuss their research on a one to one basis throughout the day and the rising numbers of students who now present their research in this way is testament to the increasing level of popularity for this communication medium. Presenters demonstrated their skills involved in summarising and abstracting their research by means of diagrams, photographs and text (just search for summarised theory using your browser's picture filter to understand another's ideas rapidly). More traditional publications were also encouraged by providing feedback on how they might be improved from peers offering reviews. Of course all those presenting live via webinar expose themselves to questions not only from the room but now from across the internet.*

*Home page details now extend beyond the introduction of keynote speaker slides this year to encompass many of the research talks delivered by postgraduate students (see website home page below). The topics echo the decision making theme for this year's event. In addition, there is now also an electronic version of the 2014 Symposium Proceedings available as a brochure. A website for the event and previous archives are available from [www.pbs.plymouth.ac.uk/ppgs](http://www.pbs.plymouth.ac.uk/ppgs).*

*Fifteen postgraduate presentations (posters and talks) were provided by students who explained their research findings to the interactive audience throughout the day. There were presentations from students in the Schools of Management, Hospitality and Tourism, plus School of Law.*

*The event was opened by the Dean of the Faculty of Business, Professor Nikolaos Tzokas followed by each of the two panels in succession with their themed keynote lecture. Postgraduate Research Director, Doctor Jonathan Moizer closed the symposium by presenting the best poster award to Ali Elwerfelli for his poster on “Oil: blessing or curse; A comparative assessment of three countries: Nigeria, Norway and UAE”.*

*The diverse group of delegates at this year's symposium engaged those presenting with their energetic questioning decided the poster prize winner following a popular vote.*

## **Acknowledgements**

### **Organising Committee Members**

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### **Technical support**

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**Decision for sustainable companies.** *Mr Ian Ridley introduced his views on social responsibility and corporate sustainability and reviewed how companies presented their positions on this key subject.*

## **Sustainability Reality or Corporate Hype** **(or is it bit of both)**

### Introduction

Sustainability is not a new concept, though sustainability as a buzz word for business and politicians is something that has only really arisen in the last 20 years.

My first encounter with the ideas behind sustainability was when I read Edward Goldsmith's book *A Blue Print for Survival* in 1974 it had been published two years earlier in 1972. Goldsmith set out his view that unless man changed the way he related to the planet then man's future was doomed. He advocated green industries, green economies, green energy, walk to work communities and man living in harmony with the planet earth. In 1972 most of the people who heard about or read about his ideas dismissed them as being unnecessary, it should also be remembered that the vast majority of people in the UK have never heard of Edward Goldsmith or his *Blue Print for Survival* or the part he played in starting the current sustainability agenda.

The three main areas of corporate sustainability will now be discussed:

1. Corporate Economic Sustainability
2. Corporate Social Responsibility
3. Corporate Environmental Sustainability

### Corporate Economic Sustainability

Today, in 2014 every self-respecting company of a reasonable size will have a sustainability policy where they will set out how they intend to ensure that they pursue the triple bottom line of:

1. Environmental Sustainability
2. Social responsibility
3. Economic viability

These companies then see it as their duty to tell anybody who will listen about how they will achieve their triple bottom line in the future and how they have achieved it in the past.

This has resulted in a plethora of corporate videos of varying quality and styles. Some are cheesy, others seem to talk down to the viewer, while others have senior managers and executives telling the viewer why they are so green.

When developing this Keynote the author watched a great number of these videos and realized that at least for him, the ones that come over as honest and sincere use images of ordinary workers at work and captions along with a great uplifting music track. These videos don't push the corporate message explicitly. It is a very subtle implicit message that these videos give out. In the opinion of the author one of the best of this genre is the video used by Northern Rail, a passenger railway company that serves the North of England. A link to the video is at the end of this Keynote.

Getting the correct message out to the public and trying to make a positive story out of a negative event is all part of getting the corporate sustainability message out to the public. An example of this is the way Shell went about trying to regain the confidence of the

public after the Greenpeace campaign over Shell's proposed disposal of the Brent Spar oil storage facility by sinking it in the North Atlantic. Instead the Brent Spar was cleaned up and cut up and used to provide the basis of a ferry terminal a plan that Greenpeace approved of. Unfortunately, one aspect of this option that received little or no publicity was the fact that this option resulted in the material from the living accommodation and the crude oil sludge from the storage tank being put in Norwegian landfill sites.

Companies and corporations nowadays want to push the message that they are here "forever", that they are sustainable. But in many cases what is sustainable are brands rather than companies. An example of this is Jaguar cars. Jaguar has not been an independent company since 1966. Currently the company that manufactures Jaguar cars is owned by a subsidiary of the Tata Group and before Tata the brand was owned by Ford Motor Co. But all through the decades since Jaguar Cars stopped being an independent company, Jaguar cars has been seen and has been portrayed as a strong independent company, even though Jaguar is really only a brand of much larger corporation.

#### Corporate Social Responsibility

The second strand for a company that wants to be seen as sustainable is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Companies address this in various ways, for example: It can take the form of employees doing things for the community, or companies giving money to community groups, or companies will give resources and loan skills to community groups, or a combination of the above.

While the above is often the case, some global corporations vary the approach they take to CSR from one country to another, a good example of this is McDonalds. In the USA McDonalds promote their CSR activity very heavily, from their charitable work to their push to use only sustainable beef. By contrast in the UK McDonalds appear to have little or no CSR agenda and certainly make no mention of it on their UK website. Also, considering more that 86% of McDonalds staff in the UK are paid less than the UK living wage of £7.65 per hour, one has to question how sustainable is the wage that over 86% of UK crew members are paid.

Edinburgh University has an interesting slant on CSR. They have all the usual things like walking to work or using public transport, but then they also have the unexpected. A big part of their CSR and sustainability policy is to promote the eating of less meat and fish by their students and staff. This is because meat and fish protein is far less sustainable than vegetable protein.

#### Corporate Environmental Sustainability

Returning to the McDonalds objective to move to using only sustainable beef, there is a problem. The main problem being that currently there is no universal agreed definition of what is sustainable beef, with several groups each working on their own definition of sustainable beef. One of the issues that the various definitions of sustainable beef seem to ignore is the very clear link to substantial global warming emissions generated by cattle and beef production. These emissions are significantly and substantially higher than the emission generated by vegetable protein production, for example soya beans.

Another issue of beef production is the substantial size of beef production's water footprint. The total water footprint over the whole lifecycle from conception of a beef calf to cooking the beef burger is nearly fifteen times that of a soya burger over an equivalent lifecycle.

A totally different type of industry is marine transport. Ship operators and owners are not known for their green credentials which is why the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has been pushing mandatory changes to merchant ships to help reduce their impact on the environment and to increase their sustainability.

One of the most successful ship operators is Maersk. As the IMO tighten up the regulation affecting the building and operation of merchant ships Maersk set about trying to create a ship that would meet these regulations and also produce a ship that was highly competitive in the container shipping market. The result was the Maersk Triple E, a container ship that has lower operating cost per container than previous container ships and therefore more profit. But the amazing thing is that it does all this whilst still being much more environmentally friendly and sustainable than previous container ships. A link to the video about Maersk Triple E is at the end of this Keynote.

To end this Keynote there is a video by my favorite sustainability campaigner Majora Carter. This is a video that was produced during the run up to 2009 US presidential elections. In this video Majora Carter sets out a wonderful vision of how she would like to see a future sustainable USA. The author thought that this was very uplifting way to finish the keynote. While re-watching the video the author realized that what Majora Carter was proposing was virtually identical to the vision of Edward Goldsmith back in 1972 which is where this Keynote address started. This suggests that very little has really happened in the past forty years with regard to us actually becoming more sustainable. A link to the Majora Carter video is at the end of this Keynote.

## Conclusion

With regards to sustainability there is a lot going on in some parts of the corporate world but the question has to be "is it enough to make a real difference?"

Unfortunately, there is also a lot not happening in some parts of the world and some parts of the corporate world. In fact, in a large number of countries they do not want to embrace sustainability as they see sustainability as something that would damage their economy and businesses.

So is Sustainability reality or corporate hype or is it a bit of both?

As for the answer well this is for you to decide.

## Video Links

Northern Rail

<http://www.northernrail.org/northern/social-responsibility/>

Maersk Triple E

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxFs5LpDsQU>

Majora Carter "If I were President" video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Cc4NiAo5r0>

**Policy decisions for Health Service** *Dr Sion Cave discussed the decisions that large public sector organisations have to consider in association with governments.*

Abstract:

1. Problem statement/rationale, including reference to key literature:

An organisation's strategy dictates the long term direction for the organisation. Strategic policies are initiatives or actions that are developed to move the organisation in the direction dictated by the overriding strategy. It can be difficult to select optimum policies. For example, there can be interdependencies across systems within organisations, the potential for unintended consequences and large numbers of stakeholder groups with differing individual goals. In addition, strategic policies will potentially have a large impact on the organisation and can be costly to implement.

Policy analysis can be considered as "determining which of various alternative policies will most achieve a given set of goals in light of the relations between the policies and the goals" (Nagel, 1999). Policy analysis also requires the development of viable policy options.

In 2012, DAS supported the Centre for Workforce Intelligence (CfWI) in the strategic policy analysis of long term requirements for training doctors using SD. The CfWI is an independent agency working on specific projects for the Department of Health and is the UK's national authority on workforce planning and development, providing advice and information to the health and social care system. The project was carried out by the CfWI for the Department of Health (DH) and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (Department of Health, 2012).

In 2013 the English NHS employed a total headcount of 1.4 million staff, of which 148,000 were doctors including hospital consultants, registrars and general practitioners (HSCIC 2014). Supply of a single specialist doctor costs the UK Government approximately £250K to £550K in training (University of Kent, 2011) and over £2Million in lifetime salary (NHS Information Centre, 2013), so over-supply is expensive. Equally, under-supply has a considerable, if harder to quantify, impact on the health and well-being of the population. Finally, it takes many years to train these professionals (typically 15 years or more for a hospital consultant), so an under or over-supply cannot be corrected quickly or easily. An SD model was developed in order to represent the future demand for, and supply of, doctors (Willis, Woodward & Cave, 2013; CfWI, 2014b). The model was developed using a robust development process (CfWI, 2014).

2. Research design and methods of data collection and analysis or method inquiry:

Systems thinking can be considered to encompass a set of techniques for capturing and communicating diverse concepts, elements, and factors that make up an organisation, an

objective or a problem situation. The techniques can be used to identify and represent structure and understand relationships. The techniques provide ways of analysing and better understanding a system, helping to decide what interventions may be required to achieve a goal and avoiding undesirable consequences. One particular method that can be used to assist in strategic policy analysis is system dynamics (SD).

SD is a method that enables the behaviour of complex systems over time to be understood and simulated. System dynamics was initially developed over 50 years ago (Forrester J. W., 1961) and has subsequently been extensively applied to studying and managing complex feedback systems, such as business and other social systems. SD models represent changes in system behaviour over time by using the analogy of flows (e.g. people, money, materials) accumulating and depleting over time in stocks. Often these flows and stocks will be highly interdependent. The SD method can be considered to consist of two key components:

- Qualitative – A graphical description, or map, of the cause and effect relations that define system behaviour is developed with system stakeholders
- Quantitative – The relationships within the system map are quantified, and specialist software is used to simulate the behaviour of the system over time

### 3. Main findings:

During the qualitative stages of model development the relevant processes of the training and career pathways were mapped out with stakeholders from the medical system. In addition, the process maps were presented at a series of national road shows hosted by the CfWI, which enabled over 80 people to comment and amend them. Key stakeholder groups involved in this process include the DH's Workforce Data and Analysis Team, the Health and Social Care Information Centre, the British Medical Association, the General Medical Council and specific deaneries, University and Colleges Admissions Service and NHS Pensions. The large degree of stakeholder engagement throughout the process mapping stage ensured high levels of stakeholder buy-in to the modelling process (Willis, Woodward & Cave, 2013).

During the quantitative stage of model development, the process maps were converted to an SD simulation model that could calculate the demand for, and supply of, doctors over a 30 year period. The SD model contained a significant amount of segmentation, and represented the workforce by age and gender to enable societal factors such as retirement changes and gender differences to be factored into the analysis. The simulation model was extensively tested, including the involvement of several hundred numerous stakeholders in sense-checking the accuracy of the dynamic behaviour of the model (Willis, Woodward & Cave, 2013). The model enabled rapid quantitative policy analysis within a risk free environment.

#### 4. Discussion of implications:

The system dynamics approach meant that robust, evidence-based supply and demand models could be created to test potential policies and their impact. It also meant that the model was “transparent” and enabled the expertise of several hundred stakeholders from the healthcare system to be captured and synthesised.

The SD modelling carried out as part of this project influenced decisions taken by the DH and the HEFCE to adjust the numbers of doctors being trained in order to prevent a future under or over-supply. Decisions that were informed as a result of this work included a 2% reduction in medical school intakes which was introduced with the 2013 intake and that a rolling cycle of reviews of medical student intakes should be established; to be undertaken every three years.

#### 5. List of key references/resources:

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## 2014 EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

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<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Anticompetitive Behaviour of Credit Rating Agencies
<b>Keywords:</b>	Credit Rating Agencies, Competition, Anticompetitive Behaviour, Tying, Notching, Unsolicited Ratings

**Abstract:**

**1. Problem statement/rationale, including reference to key literature:**

Since the subprime market crisis of the late 2000s, Credit Rating Agencies (CRAs) have received increased attention from the academic community and the press for their alleged role in overestimating the creditworthiness of failed financial entities and securities (Darbellay 2013). This contemporary focus on CRAs has impelled wider discussions on the mathematical rating methodologies of CRAs (Hunt 2008), perceived conflicts of interest (Partnoy 1999), under regulation of the industry (Sy 2009), excessive reliance on credit ratings (Masciandaro 2013) and the lack of competition that manifests in an oligopoly led by three leading agencies known as Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings collectively known as the big three (Cantor & Packer 1994).

This study focuses on the latter aspect of competition and the allegations that the big three exhibit certain anticompetitive behaviours in a bid to maintain their market dominance. The specific anticompetitive behaviours have been cited as notching, tying and the issuance of unsolicited ratings (Galil 2003, Dittrich 2007 & Staikouras 2012). To explain these behaviours, firstly, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has described notching as 'a predetermined methodology to discount

ratings of other CRAs on the basis of the type of structured products and rating category or even a refusal to produce ratings for such products unless they rate a substantial portion of the underlying assets' (Staikouras 2012). Secondly, Viscusi et al (2005) depict tying as 'the practice of a seller conditioning the purchase of one product on the purchase of another product' so that issuers are compelled to purchase all their ratings from that seller. Lastly, unsolicited ratings are ratings produced without formally engaging the issuer and are solely based on publicly available financial information (Poon 2003). The rationale for this study is that there is no researched evidence of notching and tying in existing literature (Rousseau 2005 & Dittrich 2007). Hence, Dittrich (2007) has classified the market for credit ratings as a natural oligopoly protected by natural barriers to entry.

The objective of this study is to gather conclusive evidence on notching and tying to inform prevailing market reforms in the European Union that have potential for international equivalence. A more functional regulation of competition in the industry will produce an optimal number of CRAs which is key to sustaining investor confidence, preventing collusion, supporting consumer protection and furthering large scale financial stability. Optimum competition will not necessarily translate into more players in the industry as Becker & Milbourn (2011) have established that a mere surge in the number of highly active CRAs has a negative effect on the quality of ratings and therefore what is needed are organisational and institutional alterations which warrant state interference. A more competitive market in theory will also temper the problem of conflicting interests between CRAs and issuers of debt security.

In part, the novelty of this study lies in its underpinning theory of industrial organisation. To the researcher's knowledge no existing study has wholly conceptualised and analysed anticompetitive practices in the credit rating industry using the principles of industrial organisation as affirmed by Tirole (1989), George et al. (1992) and Lipczynski et al (2005). The principles of industrial organisation that relate to the objective of this study include oligopoly, concentration, barriers to entry, innovation, pricing, competition policy and regulation.

## **2. Research design and methods of data collection and analysis or method inquiry:**

To gather evidence on notching and tying as anticompetitive behaviours in the industry, this study will be conducted by field research with experts and analysts in the financial services sector. 3,000

questionnaires will be sent by post to a random but nominated UK sample so that a 10% response rate will suffice after the exclusion of outliers. The sample will be purchased from HedgeCo Securities which is an online financial service subscribed to over 1,750 hedge fund companies and private equity firms.

The method of inquiry will be mixed research method resulting from the quantitative leanings of associated studies as well as the prevailing subjective inferences in the credit rating discourse that will warrant qualitative interpretation and coding.

### 3. Main findings:

The study has not advanced past the review of extant literature therefore only speculative findings can be suggested at this stage. Current literature implies that CRAs and market participants disagree on the occurrence on notching and tying. In their defence, CRAs claim that notching is not the discounting of the securities rated by rival CRAs. Rather, it is the issuance of dissimilar ratings to various tranches within a pool of securities. For example, Galil (2003) affirms that debt issuer rated A, for example, can obtain varied ratings for bonds within its debt issue. Hence, within a portfolio, secured bonds could be rated at A- while unsecured bonds could be rated at B+. What is abusive and constitutes anticompetitive behaviour is the fact that Moody's and Standard & Poor's downgrade and/or refuse to rate certain bonds except when they also rate the majority of the bonds within the same asset portfolio (Setty & Dodd, 2003). Similarly, Elkhoury (2008) reports that Fitch and Egan Jones Rating have accused Moody's and Standard & Poor's of initiating an automatic downgrade of structured securities that they have not been hired to rate.

As market participants take mixed positions on the theory and effects of notching, there exists a nonaligned position based on fundamental principles. Rousseau (2005) advises that the practice of notching arises when CRAs base new ratings on the ratings assigned to underlying assets by other CRAs. The rationale for this practice is for CRAs not to charge issuers for assessing underlying securities that have already been assessed. By this principle, notching is an option offered to issuers to lessen rating fees. Even Dominion Bond Rating Services, one of the accusers, acknowledges that it could rely on third party ratings when rating issuers' underlying assets (Rousseau 2005).

Therefore, the provisional findings of this study will confirm the existence of notching and tying but present varied positions amongst market participants. Ultimately crucial for the study will be a

determination of how much notching and tying constitute anticompetitive behaviour.

#### 4. Discussion of implications:

In the event that notching and tying are proven to constitute anticompetitive behaviour, policy makers will be able to revise existing guidelines to eliminate artificial barriers to entry that have restricted emerging CRAs and an optimal number of players. On the other hand, if notching and tying are not proven to constitute anticompetitive behaviour, the assertion by Dittrich (2007) that the credit rating agency is a natural oligopoly will be further upheld.

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<b>Keywords:</b>	IFRS, AAOIFI, Culture Dimensions, AAOIFI Compliance, AAOIFI Adoption, Economic Consequences

#### **Abstract:**

##### **1. Problem statement/rationale, including reference to key literature:**

Since 1990 a standard setting agency, 'Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Accounting Institutions' (AAOIFI) started along with other bench marking agencies to help regulate the Islamic Finance Market and ensure the flow of information disclosure. Stability and steady growth are the main features of this industry even during the recent financial crisis (IFSB 2010). Therefore, this study focuses on testing how far some of these market regulations have encouraged the growth in the Islamic market. In particular, this study will investigate the determinants of adopting the AAOIFI accounting standards to report the Islamic financial transactions along with an examination of the economic consequences of those reporting standards.

There are many possible determinants affecting the adoption of accounting standards. This study aims to investigate the possibility of national and organizational culture dimensions as determinants. An exploration of these determinants will give an explanation of the standards that the policy makers adopt. This can help AAOIFI as an organization to find new approaches to promote their accounting standards in addition to being Sharia compliant. Moreover, this study will also enquire about the consequences of adopting AAOIFI standards by the policy makers of all countries that mandatorily or voluntarily adopt AAOIFI based on empirical evidences. This study will provide a comparison between the consequences of adopting AAOIFI accounting standards and the consequences of adopting IFRS standards in recording Islamic transactions. This comparison will

help in determining whether it is the IFRS or the AAOIFI that is more scientific. Such a comparison can prove to be of immense help to the policy makers in countries such as Malaysia, South Africa, Indonesia, Pakistan and India who are currently using IFRS to report Islamic transactions. This study will also help fill many gaps identified in the international financial accounting literature.

The needs for accounting and its relation to socio economic studies are discussed by many seculars. For example, Biondi and Suzuki (2007) highlighted that accounting is not a one-off scandal like the Enron case. It is a straightforward routine which has a socio-economic impact. Zeff (1978) and Leftwich (1983) explain that accounting reports are used in useful decision-making by stakeholders which in turn affects the wealth of those stakeholders. Hence, accounting certainly has economic consequences. In accounting financial theory, Scott (2009) emphasised that accounting standards should directly contribute to economic growth of nations. Therefore, the researcher will investigate this issue to fill in the gaps by empirically investigating two sets of accounting standards and their economic consequences. This research aims to fill other gaps related to Islamic accounting literature as well.

The need for Islamic accounting studies are highlighted by Haniffa & Hudaib, (2010) for two reasons. First, it is to overcome the weaknesses of the existing conventional financial model and secondly because of the growth in the IFIs in the global market and the growth in the innovative products offered (without interest) by this young industry. Earlier, Lewis (2001) pointed out that the principles of Islamic finance cannot be met by the current conventional accounting. Sarea (2012) argues that most of the studies about AAOIFI either discuss the understanding or acceptability of AAOIFI standards. Vinnicombe (2012) states that for the last twenty years only a few studies in AAOIFI have empirically tested the level of compliance to the standards of this organization. Therefore, the objectives of this study is designed to help address the gaps and contribute to the international financial literature and the Islamic accounting literature.

## 2. Research design and methods of data collection and analysis or method inquiry:

**The first objective** of the study is to find out the determinants of adopting AAOIFI standards in Islamic banking industry taking into consideration that the reporting practices depends on many factors such as culture, legal systems, enforcement regimes, capital market forces and firm-level factors (Ahmed et al., 2013). This study will test three levels of possible factors in the adoption of AAOIFI accounting standards: national culture dimensions and the organizational culture dimensions suggested by Hofstede will be dealt with at level one and two respectively while Level 3 will study the firm level factors. **The second objective** is to study the level of compliance of Islamic banks to their

adopted accounting standards, either AAOIFI or IFRS. Then, the study will investigate the economic consequences, both positive and negative, of AAOIFI and IFRS in the same industry. Two indexes will be designed one for banks that use AAOIFI standards and another one for banks that use IFRS standards to record the Islamic transactions. Each Index item will be broken down further to mandatory or voluntary to allow measurement of the level of compliance in both cases. Disclosure indexes items will be identified from the IAS1 and SAIFS1. To investigate economic consequences, the researcher will use the Return on Asset model and the Equity Models. The **third objective** of the study is a comparison between the economic consequences of adopting AAOIFI and IFRS in the Islamic banking industry, which has never been carried out hitherto.

This study will cover all the Islamic banks in the GCC countries for the last three financial years: 2010, 2012 and 2013. The Islamic banks have been identified from the published survey of the Banker Magazine for the top 500 Islamic institutions by country.

### 3. Main findings:

### 4. Discussion of implications:

The originality of this study is not only in meeting the research objectives explained above but also in the methodological design. Testing of Hofstede's national and organizational culture dimensions as determinants for the accounting standards adoption in the Islamic banking context is the novel contribution of this study. Also to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no other study has investigated the economic consequences of AAOIFI accounting standards so far.

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<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Harnessing the entrepreneurial behaviour of employees in UK SMEs
<b>Keywords:</b>	Entrepreneurship, Human resources, SME

#### **Abstract:**

##### **1. Problem statement/rationale, including reference to key literature:**

Entrepreneurship is recognised as a significant driver for economic growth (Schumpeter, 1934; Shane, 2004; Drucker, 2007; McClelland, 2010). Corporate entrepreneurship (CE) is the study of entrepreneurial activity within existing organisations, and is focused on their ability to adapt to change in the external business environment by using innovation as a mechanism for growth, sustainability, rejuvenation or redefinition (Guth and Ginsberg, 1990; Covin and Miles, 1999; Hayton, 2005; Zhang et al, 2008; Ireland et al, 2009; Kuratko, 2009; Peltola, 2012). CE can be adopted as a deliberate strategy and where this is effective it may result in enhanced, sustainable competitive advantage and improved organisational performance, however, such a strategic approach to corporate entrepreneurship is difficult to cultivate (Covin and Miles, 1999; Ireland and Webb, 2007; Ireland et al, 2009; Kuratko, 2009; Peltola, 2012).

It has been argued that Human Resource Management (HRM) may improve individual and organisational performance, including the development of CE (Huselid, 1995; Delery and Doty, 1996; Kinnie et al, 2000; Guest et al, 2003; Guest, 2011; Allen et al, 2013; Jiang et al, 2013). The impact of HRM policy on employee behaviour may be both direct and indirect, according to how it is implemented in practice by organisational actors such as owner-managers, line managers, and HRM specialists (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2007; Wright and Nishii, 2007; Gilbert et al, 2011). Consequently, both line managers (Hornsby et al, 1993; Kuratko, 2009) and HRM specialists play a key role in helping organisations retain and harness the innovative or entrepreneurial skills of their employees (Hayton, 2003; Laursen and Foss, 2003; Hayton, 2005; Zhang et al, 2008; Jiang et al, 2012). It is therefore argued that the effectiveness of CE is fundamentally reliant on an organisation's ability to harness the entrepreneurial behaviour of individual employees through effective HRM.

Existing research within the entrepreneurship and HRM literature has almost exclusively focused upon how HRM policies and practices may encourage entrepreneurial behaviour amongst all employees, treating them as a homogenous group (Chandler et al, 2000; Hayton, 2003; Laursen and Foss, 2003; Zhang et al, 2008; Jiang et al, 2012). As such the existing literature tends to take a positivist approach aimed at making generalisations through the use of large scale surveys (Chandler et al, 2000; Hayton, 2003; Laursen and Foss, 2003; Zhang et al, 2008; Jiang et al, 2012). Furthermore the study of HRM has been dominated by a focus on larger organisations whilst small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have been largely neglected (Hornsby and Kuratko, 1990; Bacon et al, 1996; Kaman et al, 2001; Hornsby and Kuratko, 2003; Allen et al, 2013). As a result it is proposed that it is necessary to conduct an examination of the role that line managers and HRM specialists play in supporting or suppressing the entrepreneurial behaviour of employees within SMEs based in the United Kingdom (UK).

## **2. Research design and methods of data collection and analysis or method inquiry:**

The proposed research will adopt a phenomenological, social constructionist research paradigm (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002; Howell, 2013) and grounded theory methodology, which are both strongly linked to deductive research and the use of qualitative data (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002; Anderson, 2009; Howell, 2013).

Primary data will be collected through the examination of a small number of SMEs as case studies (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002; Anderson, 2009; Howell, 2013). Within each SME the attitudes, behaviours, perceptions and experiences of line managers, HRM specialists and employees will be assessed through the use of semi-structured interviews and critical incident technique (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002; Anderson, 2009; Howell, 2013). Grounded analysis techniques will then be used to examine the collected data in terms of identifying themes within the language used in participants' responses by coding phrases of similar content or meaning (Alexiadou, 2001; Easterby-Smith et al, 2002; Anderson, 2009; Howell, 2013).

## **3. Main findings:**

It is anticipated that new or distinctive issues will be identified with regards to the implementation of CE within SMEs, the role of HRM strategy, policy and practice within SMEs and how this affects employee behaviour, and the ways in which the perceptions, attitudes, behaviours and experiences of organisational actors at different levels interact and influence the implementation of CE through HRM within SMEs. Such findings may allow for models, including that of Hayton et al (2013) which integrates CE and HRM, to be revised and updated.

## **4. Discussion of implications:**

Revised models of CE and the interaction between CE and HRM may have significant implications regarding how CE, HRM and the entrepreneurial behaviour of employees is understood, managed and studied within SMEs. On a practical level such findings may help organisations to improve how

they train their managers to deal with entrepreneurial behaviour amongst employees so that it is directed in ways that enhance competitive advantage. They may also help aid in the retention of entrepreneurial talent and development of HRM policy.

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<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Reverse Logistics in Small Businesses : A Resource Based View Perspective
<b>Keywords:</b>	Reverse logistics, Small business, RBV, Capability

**Abstract:**

**1. Problem statement/rationale, including reference to key literature:**

Reverse logistics is the process of planning, implementing, and controlling the efficient, cost effective flow of raw materials, in-process inventory, finished goods, and related information from the point of consumption to the point of origin for the purpose of recapturing or creating value or proper disposal (Rogers and Tibben-Lembke, 1999). Reverse logistics is seen as a unique capability of the firm that is capable of effectively using resources that were not previously considered or utilized, as goods flowing backwards are seen as valuable resources (Dowlatshahi, 2000). Backward flow of product is to be managed in situations where products are returned by customers due to reasons such as liberal return policy (Rogers & Tibben-Lembke, 2001). This system also manages products that are unsold, excess or obsolete in the supply chain, (Bernon & Cullen, 2007) .Overall, goods flow back in the supply chain due to legislative, environmental and economic reasons, (de Brito & Dekker, 2004). These goods are collected, disassembled and processed for value extraction (Ravi, Shankar & Tiwari, 2005; Rogers & Tibben-Lembke, 1999).

The situations such as Increased landfill costs (Atling, 1993), general demand on quality of logistics (Rogers & Tibben-Lembke, 1999), value of the product that would otherwise be lost (Smith, 2005), profit enhancement & improved customer satisfaction (Li, 2007) and sustainable competitive advantage (Mollenkopf & Closs, 2005) are some of the driving forces which are leading firms to

implement reverse logistics program.

The existing research on reverse logistics based on large business seems to be contrary with the nature of small business. This research will investigate if small business, as large businesses, can use their capability in executing reverse logistics to gain sustainable competitive advantage (Mollenkopf & Closs, 2005) based on RBV(Barney ,1991).

There are various reasons for researching reverse logistics in small business context. First, small business from the very beginning have been operating as small retailers (McGee & Rubac), small wholesalers(Saleh, & Ndubisi, 2006) and small manufacturers (Wilkerson,2011) who may deal with all sorts of business and product that may go through the process of reverse logistics. Secondly, the literature review concerning small business has depicted that there are fundamental differences between large and small business (Welsh and White, 1981). Because of these differences, both, strategic and operational factors concerning reverse logistics may be different in small business than that of large business. Thirdly, the economy of any nation consists of high number of small businesses. These businesses are the source of employment and income generation (Storey, 1994). The reverse logistics aspect concerning small firms at micro level, relatively, may be small in size. However, they may create a dramatic effect on the macro level.

## **2. Research design and methods of data collection and analysis or method inquiry:**

Research question is derived on the basis of the theoretical foundation of RBV. The phenomenon reverse logistics, itself, is comparatively new, complex and in developing stage. This phenomenon is to be taken to the small business context, which is vague and diverse (Storey, 1994). A multiple case study method (Yin, 2003) under phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994) will be used which will allow the researcher to use the range of data collection method (Perren and Ram 2004) to understand and explore the small businesses capability on reverse logistics.

A brief questionnaire on the aspects related to reverse logistics will be sent out to the potential small businesses. This survey will allow the researcher to filter the most relevant companies with whom an in-depth interview and site observation can be made.

## **3. Main findings:**

Two initial findings has been made;

1. The first finding is related to the gap in the literature. Reverse logistics has been investigated in terms of large business supply chain echelons such as, large manufacturers, large wholesalers and large retailers. Research has been made in terms of different product categories and also

in different nations. However, research in this area in terms of size of the business remains under researched where reverse logistics concerning small business remains enigmatic.

2. Due to the unavailability of the research on small business reverse logistics, making an initial analysis on how small business would address reverse logistics has not become an easy task. However, due to the connection between reverse logistics and traditional supply chain, an initial understanding on the small business reverse logistics was made possible. The review on small business supply chain has shown that supply chain is an important issue for small business, however, struggle persist on the way supply chain management (SCM) shakes small- and medium-sized enterprises. SCM even if brings bonuses for the SMEs this can again expose and push the SME to a complicated managerial style with threats that could lead in plummeting the SMEs uniqueness (Arend and Wisner 2005). This analysis has shown that reverse logistics may bring the similar consequences in small business.

#### 4. Discussion of implications:

Theoretically, this study will add knowledge in understanding the capability of small business in terms of reverse logistics. The owner manager of small businesses' and policy maker will benefit by understanding the effect of reverse logistics on the profitability and environmental sustainability of these types of businesses.

This study will be one of the first of its kind as no study on small business reverse logistics has been found. This study, for the academics, will serve as a basis for making future research on small businesses' economic and environmental sustainability.

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<b>Title of Paper:</b>	The 'doing' of equality and diversity: an analysis of human resource practitioner talk
<b>Keywords:</b>	Human Resource Management, Equality, Diversity, Discourse.

**Abstract:**

**1. Problem statement/rationale, including reference to key literature:**

This developmental paper considers the 'doing' of workplace equality and diversity and an analysis of human resource (HR) practitioner talk on this subject.

Diversity scholarship identifies that there has been a discursive shift from 'equal opportunities' to 'diversity management' in the workplace context (Tatli, 2011: 249, Oswick, 2011: 30). It is acknowledged that this shift remains discursive, i.e. that it is not necessarily reflected in a change in practice, and that compliance to equality regulation continues to drive 'diversity' agendas (Healy *et al.*, 2011; Tatli, 2011; Foster and Harris, 2005). Despite this acknowledgement, research continues to seek 'diversity management', concentrating on large organisations (e.g. Tatli, 2011; Foster and Harris, 2005) and organisations recognised for 'good' diversity practice (e.g. Zanoni and Janssens, 2003; Janssens and Zanoni, 2005). In seeking good diversity management practice, existing empirical studies direct attention away from how the regulation designed to protect employees from unequal treatment is applied in the workplace.

Mainstream HRM research similarly focuses on large corporations (Delbridge and Keenoy, 2010: 805) with a lack of research into 'the nuts and bolts of HR practices' (Thompson, 2011: 365). Paradigms of HRM, most notably Ulrich's (1997) model of the strategic HR business partner, have claimed the discursive terrain over more operationally-oriented, personnel paradigms since their 'launch' on 'status-conscious personnel specialists' (Keenoy, 1990: 3). The CIPD has however voiced frustration that the HR function continues to be viewed principally as operational rather than strategic (Francis

and Keegan, 2006) suggesting that the shift to strategic HRM is similarly aspirational and discursive and may not reflect the realities of HR practice.

The daily doing of diversity, and particularly equality, by operational HR practitioners is therefore largely omitted from both diversity and HRM scholarship, arguably constituting a double 'blind spot' (Janssens and Steyaert, 2009) in our understanding. This doctoral research project seeks to analyse this gap in our knowledge.

## 2. Research design and methods of data collection and analysis or method inquiry:

The initial research findings are based on 40 semi-structured interviews with operational HR practitioners in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset.

The ontological and epistemological perspectives underpinning this research reflect a critical social-constructionist paradigm of inquiry. Drawing on Edley and Wetherell (Edley, 2001; Wetherell, 2001; Edley and Wetherell 1997; Wetherell and Edley, 1999), the lower-case critical discourse-analytic approach of this paper takes the position that 'the social world is not constituted *ab initio* in every conversation' and that particular discourses attain more stability than others (Edley and Wetherell, 1997: 182). Wider cultural analyses are considered where the empirical focus remains wholly discursive (Wetherell and Edley, 1999: 204).

Following Tatli and Özbilgin (2012), categories of difference are not presumed to be salient before data is gathered; rather which equality and diversity matters are 'salient' from the perspectives of human resource practitioners in the South West of England emerges from the data.

## 3. Main findings:

The coding stage of the data is currently ongoing and, as such, the findings presented here are emergent and will be subject to further analysis and discussion for the final project.

The initial findings support and develop Foster and Harris' (2005) observation that line managers require control and consistency, positioning HR as the gate-keepers of good equality practice on the basis of their knowledge of employment law. Notably, discussions of devolution of HRM to line managers tend to pre-date the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, the breadth of which has arguably increased the gate-keeper role of HR. The significance of this role is evident in practitioner talk which demonstrates a belief in HR's ownership of fairness and compliance.

Practitioner talk features frequent, apologetic references to a lack of diversity 'down here' in the South West; as such 'diversity' is constructed as meaning ethnicity, whereas 'equality' is related to a number of different equality strands in talk. Of these categories that are 'good to think with' (Parker, 2007: 79),

disability, age, and sex emerge as salient in the current South West context.

Practitioners are often keen to clarify that they perceive employees as individuals, reflecting both scholarly and managerialist diversity discourses. Their discussions of practice indicate, however, that the 'business case' for diversity (Hyman *et al.*, 2012: 280) applies to 'hi-tech, knowledge-based' roles and not to routine production roles (Wrench, 2005: 79).

#### 4. Discussion of implications:

This research project aims to provide a deep and rich analysis of what equality and diversity mean in the context of workplaces in the South West of England through the lens of human resource practitioner talk.

By highlighting the significant work of HR practitioners in achieving compliance to equality regulation, it is an aim of the researcher that the HR profession recognises the importance of overtly championing equality regulation as well as diversity management. Without the force of regulation, HR processes designed to promote fairness are unlikely to be accepted or appropriately implemented in organisations (Guest and King, 2004: 419) and this, the researcher argues, would both reduce equality in the employment context and the need for human resource practitioners.

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<b>Stream and Title No:</b>	
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Europeanization as Process, Mechanism and Transformational Content: Understanding EU Aid Policy
<b>Keywords:</b>	Europeanization, Aid, Official Development Assistance

**Abstract:**

**1. Problem statement/rationale, including reference to key literature:**

Ongoing integration of the EU influences many policy areas as they move towards supranationalism through communitization, or development of the community method. This is demonstrable within the Copenhagen criteria and accession of new member states (Horký, 2010), but also within core states. Evolution of policy surrounding overseas aid is of particular interest for its sparse treaty obligations within the *acquis*, and the predominance of norms and values (Orbie, 2012).

The period under scrutiny (2001-2011) is situated within both external and internal changing realities; the Global War on Terror (GWOt) and the Eurozone crisis, which impact the environment within which European aid policy operates. This is evident within the supposed securitisation of agendas towards Africa (Donnelly, 2007; Olsen, 2008; Walker and Seegers, 2012) and the example of the UK's Department for International Development's (DfID) priorities towards Afghanistan and Islamic extremism (Gross, 2009:77-80; IDC, 2014:9).

EU Official Development Assistance (ODA) has evolved, as with the Statement on Development Policy (2000) and the European Development Consensus (2005) (see Dearden, 2008:114; Hout, 2010:141). However, there is still a coherence and capability gap (Carbone, 2008:339; 2010:25-27). A debate exists as to how successfully the EU has de-linked security from aid (Hout, 2010:153;

Versluys, 2008:211).

### *Europeanization*

EU aid policy *acquis* comprising few hard rules (Horky, 2010; Orbie, 2012) guides the research towards more interpretivist conceptualisations of Europeanization (see Howell, 2002:21-23, 2004:11). Europeanization has been approached foremost as a theory explaining the downloading of content unto member states in relation with European integration (Haverland, 2006; Howell, 2004:11; Moumoutzis, 2011:612; Quaglia et al, 2007:405-406; Radaelli, 2003:30; Radaelli, 2006:58-59). However, development of Europeanization theory has seen it further conceptualised as 'uploading' of content, and 'cross-loading' (or 'horizontal loading') (Howell, 2002, 2004; Olsen, 2013:411).

Focus is on the 'process', 'mechanism', or 'situation' of change (or 'transformation') of content. Of specific interest here, Europeanization has seen some application to EU aid and development policy (see Bučar, 2012; Horký, 2010; Horký and Lightfoot, 2012), and Africa Policy (Olsen, 2013). This research design pursues Borneman and Fowler's succinct definition that Europeanization is best dealt with "as a spirit, a vision, and a process" (1997:510), in investigating developments within the policy area.

### *Problem*

Disparity amidst EU and member state overseas aid may be identified as problematic. Changing contextual realities further challenge the adaption and coherence of aid policy *acquis*, and its subsequent adoption by member states. The aim of this research is to expand thick understanding of norms and strategies of European aid, inclusive of origins, learning and dissemination of content, and compliance within this historical context. Questions of interest involve: What (directionality of) Europeanization is predominant within EU aid policy norms and beliefs? How are they learned/developed? How have they been employed?

## **2. Research design and methods of data collection and analysis or method inquiry:**

This research on Europeanization and its utility for investigating aid policy is part of a larger doctoral research project; its design entailing an empirical, non-experimental and qualitative small-N case study, with description and thick understanding its foremost purpose. Analysis is levelled at decision-making, discourses and counter-discourses of departments, with cases such as UK DfID and Irish Aid, following the precedent of Jordan's departmental perspective (2003).

The paradigm of inquiry, ontology and epistemology are derived from critical theory (see Howell, 2013:29). This is justified for its reflective nature, seeking power structures within historical context (Guess, 1981:55-56), while being well suited to more interpretivist modes of Europeanization. With a focus on analysing contextual policy texts, the research employs a hermeneutical methodological

approach (see Howell, 2013:154-156).

This text is collated through archive strategies, and supported by semi-standardised interviews to strengthen internal validity through multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2009:41). Analysis of this data employs Critical Discourse Analysis, derived from Fairclough (2006) and Goffman's (1981) precedent, to interrogate policy to uncover (underlying) meanings. Fairclough's approach to CDA has also been proven in examining European external-actorness (see Larsen, 2004:63-65).

### 3. Main findings:

- A) EU aid policy *acquis* contains relatively little by way of hard rules (Hórky, 2010; Orbie, 2012). As a result, integration and implementation of this policy area is largely dependent on interpretation.
- B) The more eclectic, interpretivist conceptualisations of Europeanization are most valid in understanding the policy area (see Bučar, 2012; Hórky, 2010; Hórky and Lightfoot, 2012).
- C) Europeanization of aid policy within new member states has been shallow in instances (see Horký and Lightfoot, 2012; Kopiňsky, 2012; Krichewsky, 2003; Szent-Iványi and Tétényi, 2008), while ongoing Europeanization of aid policy amongst established member states is less well understood.
- D) Two broad schools of thought or 'consciousness' exist which underpin aid policy (see Glennie, 2008:108-110; Hout, 2010:153; Versluys, 2008:211):
  - 1) The 'American School', linking overseas aid provision with foreign policy and external threats;
  - 2) The 'European School', de-linking aid from foreign policy, and pursuing distinct ethical considerations centred on poverty reduction.

### 4. Discussion of implications:

The EU holds the reputation of "an economic giant, but a political pygmy" (Sonyel, 1998:1). Through liberal ideals the EU is an established provider of overseas aid and ODA, inclusive of the European Development Fund and state owned agencies. However, socio-political and historical context may impact policy, as with the financial crisis and communist legacy impacting new member state's policy (see Horký and Lightfoot, 2012; Szent-Iványi and Tétényi, 2008). Of interest here is how established member states and greater EU aid policy has fared through the GWoT.

Europeanization has proven its usefulness within academia. Its application here is in fitting with extant usages applied to external-actorness and aid policy (see Bučar, 2012; Hórky, 2010; Hórky and Lightfoot, 2012). The findings cumulative contribution to knowledge is in expanding thick understanding of aid policy, including its coherence, transformation and dissemination of content, while accounting for changing realities within the historical context.

The research should reveal false consciousness of aid and inform communities of practice to encourage change and assist what Hill termed "realistic expectations" of this policy area (2003:17) and contribute towards Europe's ongoing determination to develop coherence amidst its collective external-actorness (Olsen, 2008:157). Within the GWoT context, findings may also benefit extant debates concerning the conflict/development nexus, reform-development-liberal peace model and liberal interventionism.

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<b>Keywords:</b>	SMEs, Export promotion, Export performance

**Abstract:**

**1. Problem statement/rationale, including reference to key literature:**

It is widely acknowledged that exporting enhances the firms' growth, competitiveness and survival. In fact, several scholars seem to be in line with the premise that exporters perform more effectively than non-exporters in terms of productivity, innovation, and performance (Bernard et al., 1995; Bigsten et al., 2004; Damijan et al., 2010; Ganotakis & Love, 2012). However, exporting can be challenging and hampered by a number of barriers that are likely to stop companies from internationalizing (Leonidou et al., 2011). For this reason, governments are increasingly offering a range of export promotion programmes aiming at improving the firms' performance in export markets.

Nonetheless, in the literature, the number of research dedicated to these export promotion programmes and their impact on the SMEs' export behavior remains relatively limited (Freixanet, 2012). Indeed, the few existing studies looking at the effectiveness of public assistance were criticized for their narrow focus on the direct effects between GEPPs and export performance (Lages and Montgomery, 2005; Leonidou et al., 2011). The authors argued that studies using direct relationships may have been misleading the thoughts on the GEPPs' impact on export behavior.

In this sense, this paper aims at exploring the indirect effects of GEPPs on the SMEs' export performance. In this regard, it is acknowledged that most empirical studies were narrowly focused on the direct effect of EPPs through bi-variate studies (Lages and Montgomery, 2005; Leonidou et al.,

2011).

This research draws on the Resource Based View theory (RBV), according to Dhanaraj and Beamish (2003), the RBV addresses the central issue of how firms can achieve and sustain superior performances through acquiring and exploiting unique resources. The authors posited that this principle is particularly relevant for export behaviour as it presents a strong theoretical basis on which export models can be developed and tested. In addition, because external resources can play a crucial role in enhancing the SMEs' export behaviour (Lavie, 2006), several scholars have extended the RBV to cover these resources (Dyer and Singh, 1998; Griffith and Harvey, 2001; Priem and Butler, 2001). Precisely, reviewing the export literature has clearly revealed that the organisational, the managerial and the relational resources are considered as key determinants of SMEs' export. In this respect, it was argued that export assistance aims at improving the SMEs' organisational and managerial resources and capabilities (Czinkota, 1994). Similarly, it was also posited that a substantive part of the role of the government export assistance is dedicated to boost networking activities in foreign markets (Welsh et al., 1998). By linking the RBV rational with the export assistance literature, the aforementioned resources can be considered as crucial for the firms' internationalisation which would contribute to the development of competitive advantages in export markets. Hence, the present conceptual model suggests that GEPPs may affect the SMEs' export initiation and performance indirectly through enhancing these resources.

## **2. Research design and methods of data collection and analysis or method inquiry:**

The data collection was conducted between November 2013 and February 2014. A combination of email and postal surveys were used to administrate the questionnaire. The response ratio of this investigation was 145 out of 800 sent, recording a response rate of 18.12%. Although such response rate may be considered as relatively low, it is still within the 15-20% average return rates in studies involving top managers (Menon et al., 1999; Sousa et al., 2008). All the firms included in this investigation employed less than 500 employees and were located within the UK. The data are analysed using the PLS structural equation modelling.

### 3. Main findings:

The results suggest that the use of government export promotion programmes affect the firms' export performance through the organisational and managerial resources only. Their effect through the relational resources was found to be non-statistically significant. As for the mediation effect, it was found that while the direct effect was statistically non-significant, the indirect effect through the firms' resources was found to be significant suggesting that a full mediation has taken place and hence conforming the indirect effects (through organisational and managerial resources only) of the GEPPs.

### 4. Discussion of implications:

The results have illustrated the mechanism through which the GEPPs enhance the firms' export performance. The findings confirmed their indirect effect and illustrated that such programmes affect the firms' export performance only through the organisational and relational resources. Nonetheless, one cannot argue that their role in increasing the relational resources is not important the firms' internationalisation. Rather, it could be suggested that their role in improving the managerial and organisational export-related resources is more important in the international context. Similarly, such results do not question the new emerging perspective of extending the RBV to external resources but rather confirm the primacy of the internal resources over the external ones when it comes to exporting. In fact, analysing the influence of all three types of resources simultaneously allowed the researcher to compare the effects of these resources in the same context. This is believed to be one of first attempts to compare the effects these types of resources in the exporting context.

These results have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study has confirmed the mediated effect of the firms' resources and capabilities in the correlation between the use of EPPs and export performances. This has answered the call for exploring the indirect influence of the export assistance programmes on the firms' export performances. Moreover, from an extended RBV perspective, the study has shown that although the external resources may be important in the firms' internationalisation, internal resources remain the most influent and crucial factors leading the firms to gain competitive advantages and increase their performances.

Practically, this study has verified and proven the important role that export promotion programmes play in enhancing the exporters' success in foreign markets. Hence, managers should be encouraged to make the most out these assistance programmes and use them as an external "resource supplement" to cover the lack of resources that many small businesses suffer from. It is highly

recommended that the decision maker should be committed to personally engage with government bodies offering the EPPs as the manager's perceptions, orientations, knowledge and commitment were revealed to be the first drivers for export success. As for the policy makers, these should concentrate their efforts on the internal resources when designing the GEPPs.

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<b>Title of Paper:</b>	The Main Determinants of Economic Growth and the Role of Oil and Non-oil Sectors in Oil Countries' Economies: The Case of Saudi Arabia
<b>Keywords:</b>	Saudi Arabia, Economic Growth, Neoclassical Production Function, VECM

#### **Abstract:**

##### **1. Problem statement/rationale, including reference to key literature:**

The research aims mainly to study the most important determinants of growth of the Saudi economy. The primary objective will be to develop a model that can successfully predict economic growth in Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich countries. A secondary objective will be to test the new model in the Kingdom. In order to achieve such objectives, the model will have to take into account the importance of the oil industry, as well as the overall economic structure of Saudi Arabia. The following specific research questions will be addressed:

1. What is the role of the oil industry in the Saudi economy?
2. What are the roles of key non-oil sectors, such as tourism and private investment, to the economy of Saudi Arabia?
3. What are the main determinants of economic growth in the last 40 years with a focus on comparing the oil and the non-oil sectors?

Previous studies on economic growth have focused on the economy as a whole; they have not examined the relative importance of the two sectors, in particular for countries rich in oil. Therefore, there are no specific models for oil-rich countries; hence the need to develop new models to help identify the key factors for economic growth in these countries by carefully assessing oil and non-oil sector variables. Studies in these countries have also neglected non-oil sectors variables, with studies confined solely to oil-related precincts. This in effect has left some gaps in the economic growth-determinants literature. In light of this, the current study attempts to address and fill some of these research gaps, not only by incorporating some of the important variables but also by using the latest available time-series data of Saudi's economy for the period between 1970-2011. In addition, it examines the importance of non-oil sectors for the future of the Saudi economy.

## 2. Research design and methods of data collection and analysis or method inquiry:

**Model specification:** In general, investigating the effect of selected variables for economic growth in the Saudi economy can be illustrated as follow:

## 3. Main findings:

Empirical results show that the most important factors that have an effect on economic growth in the Saudi economy, are in the following order: (1) total exports, (2) government spending and then (3) tourism.

With regard to the oil-sector: oil exports came first, followed by government spending, whereas in the non-oil sector, private investment was the primary factor affecting economic growth. International tourist arrivals and investment in the public sector came in second and third, respectively. Exports in the non-oil sector did not have any strong effect on economic growth.

## 4. Discussion of implications:

These results show the key importance of the oil-sector in the growth of the Saudi economy. Tourism has overall performed below expectations in the main model, thereby throwing into question its efficiency and effectiveness in supporting the economic growth of the Kingdom. This does not mean it should be ignored; rather, it should be supported if it is to achieve the desired result, especially with evidence on its importance in the case of relying on the non-oil sectors.

It can also be concluded that the Saudi economy should focus on the non-oil sectors for many reasons, not least of which is a significant fact that these sectors are far easier to control, given that price rises in oil exports have far less bearing on them. .

## 5. List of key references/resources:

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<b>Stream and Title No:</b>	
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	The added value for the holistic framework of Islamic accounting for stakeholders
<b>Keywords:</b>	Islam, Islamic Sharia, Islamic accounting, Accounting history, Islamic banking, AAOIFI, Holistic Islamic Theory, CSR, SSB, Islamic Accountant, Added value, Stakeholders and Benchmark

## Abstract:

### 1. Problem statement/rationale, including reference to key literature:

Purpose – The project seeks to explore and build the Islamic Holistic Model for Islamic Accounting which includes Islamic banking system; Sharia Board report; Islamic accountant; CSR; Reporting Framework for IFI and AAOIFI standards through investigate history and rooting of Islamic sharia and critic the actual practices for Islamic banking; disclosure and AAOIFI. The project aims to examine the added value for the recommended model towards all stakeholders

#### Main objectives

1. Developing the model for Islamic accounting by focusing on Islamic accountant; SSB; CSR; AAOIFI and Islamic banking system
2. Exploring the gap between this model and the actual practices the determined the variances
3. Analysis the added value through applying this ideal model

#### Main Contributions for the Research

- C1. It roots the Holistic model related to Islamic banking, Islamic accounting, Islamic accountant, bookkeeping and approves the vital contributions for Muslim's scholars in this research area
- C2. It makes a comprehensive and positive critic for the actual practices to Islamic banking, Islamic accounting, Islamic CSR and AAOIFI
- C3. It rebuilds and introduces the benchmark for Islamic accounting model by build model for each dimension concerned with this model as Islamic banking, Islamic accountant, Islamic CSR, sharia board report and AAOIFI
- C4. It investigates the added value for the benchmark of Islamic accounting on the stakeholders
- C5. It provides a detailed examination of the disclosures related to CSR, Sharia board report,

compliance with AAOIFI standards and compliance with the true image for Islam by focusing on all Islamic banks in across 53 countries.

The main novel contribution for this project is introducing the ideal model or benchmark for Islamic accounting. The project tests all Islamic banking around the world 220 for testing CSR; SSB and other dimensions for the model. The project roots the Islamic banking and accounting. The project is the first one that explores the added value through applying the benchmark for Islamic accounting.

## 2. Research design and methods of data collection and analysis or method inquiry:

Design/methodology/approach – The project reviews the literature related to critic and rooting of the Islamic accounting's dimensions. The project use content analysis for test the level of compline for Islamic banking with the recommended Islamic model reporting as CSR and SSB report. The project investigates 220 Islamic banks and using AAOIFI standards as a model. The project use questionnaire and interview with 1000 interested parties for explore the perceptions and added value for stakeholders in the 10 cross different countries as Egypt, UK, KSA, France, USA, UAE, and Kuwait ....etc.

## 3. Main findings:

Findings – There is a great contribution for Muslim's schoolers related to the Islamic accounting and bookkeeping. The Islamic sharia covers all aspects concerned with accounting and banking. There is a main critic for practices of Islamic banking and AAOIFI and unexpected practices for Islamic banking's mechanism which approves gap and variances towards the benchmark of Holistic model. The disclosure level for Islamic banks related to CSR and SSB is relatively low. The other results related to the whole model and the gap between this model and actual practices with findings related to the added value through applying this model is still in progress

## 4. Discussion of implications:

Gap of the research

The literature ignores the holistic aspects of Islamic accounting and banking with merely concentrates on instrumental and limited financial dimensions. It also fails to live up to its own proclaimed normative ethical dimensions. Consequently, there is no depth research present holistic model or benchmark for Islamic accounting. There is no depth studies explore all dimensions of the Holistic Islamic Accounting Model which contain Islamic banking system, Islamic accountant, Islamic CSR, SSB and Islamic standards (AAOIF) in additional to investigate the added value for this model on all stakeholders. According to Kuran (2004), critical writings in Islamic economics literature are rare and Kamla (2009) suggested more investigation about holistic model for Islamic accounting.

## 5. List of key references/resources:

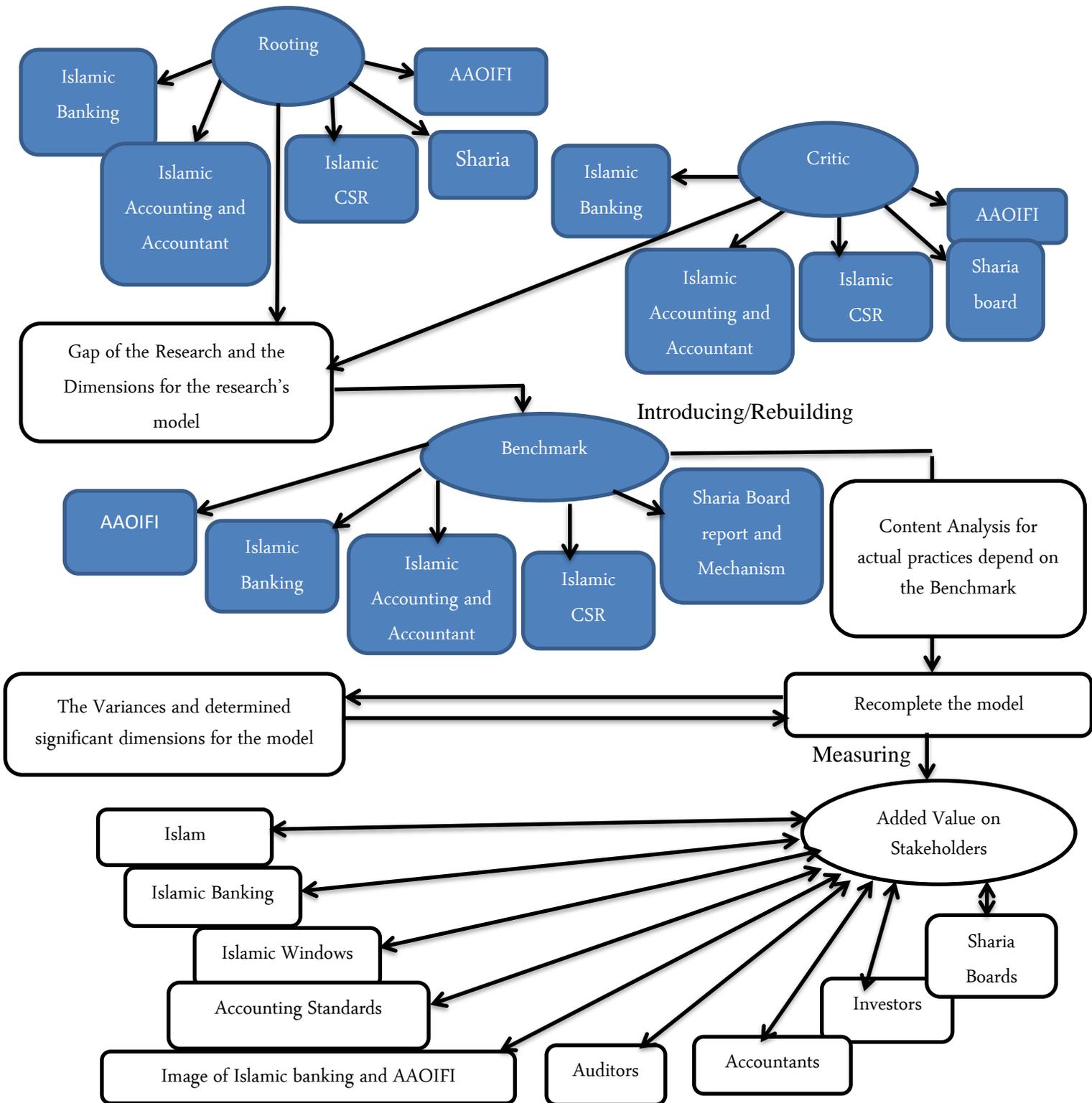
List of Figures



The Methods of research

<b>Method used for analysis data</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Nature of Data</b>	<b>Sources of Data</b>	<b>Year of Data</b>	<b>Aims/Focus on</b>
Content Analysis & Disclosure Index	220 Islamic banks	50 countries	Secondary Data	Annual Reports and Websites for Islamic banks	2010:2014	Investigate the Disclosure Level in the annual reports and Websites related to CSR, sharia board, compliance level with AAOIFI and Islam from Islamic View
Content Analysis, Interviews and Questionnaire	220 Islamic banks	10 countries	Secondary And Primary Data	Annual Reports and Websites for Islamic banks and the opinions and impressions of all stakeholders with Islamic banking	2014	Investigate and test for what extent the Islamic banks comply with the recommended benchmark for Islamic banking, Islamic Accountant, Islamic CSR, Sharia board and AAOIFI
Questionnaire	Stakeholders with Islamic banks as accountants, auditors, Bankers, sharia boards & investors	10 countries	Primary Data	The opinions and impressions of all stakeholders with Islamic banking	2014	Explore the impressions of stakeholders about the Islamic banking, Islamic Accounting and AAOIFI. It explores the added value for the suggested model for them
Interviews				The opinions, impressions and recommendations of experts in Islamic banking and AAOIFI		

### Framework for the research



## Closing remarks

Decision making in business is a constant challenge for all types of organisation, as emphasised by the research presented at 2014 Plymouth Business School Symposium. The decisions linking supply with demand on resources have been discussed at this event between researchers and practitioners.

Again, the event was a success with the introduction of webinar technologies that can enhance the user experience and as Postgraduate research Director for Plymouth's Faculty of Business I would like to express my thanks to all those who took part, particularly David Carter, (Organising Committee) and Cher Cressey (Budget) and Ian Ridley plus Sion Cave (Keynote Speakers), alongside Technical Support and all the postgraduate students who presented their research as papers and posters.

Finally, congratulations to Ali Elwerfelli for the award of Best Poster on theme of comparing the implications of oil across three producing countries.

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