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Conclusions – A Culturally-Sensitive Analysis of Middle Eastern Family Businesses

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Family involvement is a critical defining characteristic of all family businesses. Though family businesses are unique repositories of their community endowments, the role of cultural factors in family involvement is not well understood. In this article, we underscore the faith-based nature of family involvement in the Middle Eastern culture, where participation in the family business is regulated by the Islamic principles of Sharia. While the entire extended family participates in ownership, only selected representatives of each sibling line participate in governance, and maintain an open door policy to take care of the needs of both the family members as well as non-family employees. Women and junior family members in management mediate between the senior leadership and the foreign partners, with the help of loyal employees and the support of expatriates, and offer the social glue connecting the family business with the broader community. A framework comprising of etic parameters and emic insights is formulated, using findings from a sample of ten family business articles from the cluster.