

EVENTS AND SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

‘Global Islamic Marketing Conference (GIMC): Challenge, Investment’ (20-22 March 2011 Dubai, United Arab Emirates)

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The first ‘Global Islamic Marketing Conference (GIMC): Challenge, Investment’, held at Park Hyatt Dubai Resort Hotel from 20-22 March 2011, was a great opportunity for the 170 local and international researchers and scholars from around the world to interact and exchange ideas. The 85 presented working papers made this one of the region’s most successful academic and international events. Local and international media outlets and government representatives, as well as HH Sheikh Nahayan Al Nahayan (chancellor, United Arab Emirates University, UAEU) and HE Fatima Alshamsi (secretary-general, UAEU) also attended the function. This inaugural conference, organised by UAEU’s Faculty of Business and Economics, in collaboration with Emerald Group Publishing (United Arab Emirates), focused on new key areas of exploration in Islamic marketing and how to build upon existing research related to Islamic business in general. As of 2010, the Islamic market was estimated to have a potential value of US\$ 2 trillion for both entrepreneurs and consumers. Therefore the world, especially the banking and finance experts, forecasts a challenge to Islamic marketing models.

After an evening of registration and official opening speeches, the conference opened on 21 March with remarks by Bakr Ahmad Alserhan (conference co-chair and editor-in-chief, *Journal of Islamic Marketing*) and David Weir (Liverpool Hope University, United Kingdom, UK). HE Fatima Alshamsi addressed the audience on behalf of HH Shaikh Nahyan Al Nahyan. Several parallel sessions were also held. Özlem Sandıkcı (Faculty of Business Administration, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey) elaborated upon “Researching Islamic Marketing: Past and Future Perspectives.” She argued that the relationship between Islam and marketing has emerged only recently, despite the community’s centuries-long existence. Hayat Muhammad Awan (Institute of Management Sciences, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Pakistan) presented a paper entitled “Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in the Banking Sector: A Comparative Study of Conventional and Islamic Banks in Pakistan”.

The afternoon plenary session, “Islam and Ethics”, moderated by John J. Ireland (College of Business Administration, Ajman University of Science and Technology,

United Arab Emirates) began with Abbas J. Ali (Indiana University of Pennsylvania, United States) who highlighted marketing and ethics, while Mohammad Adnan Alghorani (United Arab Emirates) talked about Islamic business ethics. The day concluded with a gala dinner hosted by GIMC's organising committee and held in the Palm Garden of the Park Hyatt Dubai Resort Hotel.

The second day of the seminar was launched by several plenary sessions, among them, "The Islamic Organisation," which was moderated by David Graf (UAEU). The first parallel session began with Shahrzad Chitsaz (Department of Business Management, Islamic Azad University, Iran), and continued with this writer, who discussed "The Employability and Marketability of the Graduates of Islamic Studies in Islamic Banking and Finance: The Malaysian Experience."

During the closing session, the conference co-chair, Bakr Ahmad Alserhan, announced that next year's conference will be held in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) on 22-24 January 2012. At that event, the 'International Award for Excellence in Islamic Marketing' will be presented for the first time. Following the 'Best Paper Awards' session, chaired by Martin Fojt (chairman, Emerald), David Graf concluded the conference with several remarks.

International Conference 'Penang and the Indian Ocean' (16-18 September 2011, George Town, Penang, Malaysia)

Christoph Marcinkowski, IAIS Malaysia

On 7 July 2008, George Town, the historic capital of the Malaysian state of Penang, was formally inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, alongside Malacca. It was officially recognised as having "a unique architectural and cultural townscape without parallel anywhere in East and Southeast Asia."¹

The three-day event – organised by ThinkCity, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), academics from the Universities of Cambridge and London, and the Penang Heritage Trust, and attended by this writer and several other leading scholars in the Asian Studies industry, among them, Leonard and Barbara Watson Andaya from the United States – was launched by Tan Sri Dato' Nor Mohamed Yakcop, Minister in the Department of the Prime Minister of Malaysia. It featured the multicultural history, the wider Indian Ocean context, and the present of Penang Island, which is often known as 'The Pearl of the Orient'. Penang –long at the centre of inter-regional networks of exchange – is located on the northwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia by the Straits of Malacca. Highly urbanised and industrialised, Penang is one of the most developed and economically important states in Malaysia, as well as a thriving tourist destination. Its heterogeneous population is highly diverse in ethnicity, culture, language, and confessions.