



JANUARY 2024

RESEARCH PULSE

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Hello From Research Pulse

Hello everyone.

Hello everyone and a Happy 2024 to all of you !

Thank you for following our research news in the last year which was a year of tremendous development for research at Curtin Singapore.

In 2024, we will continue to bring forth more research engagements and developments. We certainly have exciting things lined up for this year and look forward to sharing these with you.

In this first issue of Research Pulse for 2024, we will like to share the presentations by our academics at two key conferences held late last year, as well as about a major conference which we hosted. I would like to thank their contributions to the Curtin Singapore research development journey and for sharing their achievements in this issue of the newsletter.

Thanks for tuning in.

Best Wishes,
Dr Adrian Tan
Research Director
Curtin Singapore



The Mystique of Luxury Branding Conference 2023

Contributed by Dr. Zahirah Zainol



I had the pleasure of attending The Mystique of Luxury Brands (MLB) Conference held in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It was a 2-day event packed with back-to-back industry sessions, research presentations and the most anticipated programs – lunches and tea breaks

MLB is a conference hosted by Curtin University and co-hosted by University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City (UEH). Previously, the MLB conferences have been held in Shanghai, Singapore, Seoul, and Tokyo. 2 of which I have attended either as a panel member or presenter. It is an event where academics and luxury industry professionals come together to share insights and developments both in academia and industry. The attendees come from a wide range of academics, students, and practitioners from all over the world.

The Mystique of Luxury Branding Conference 2023

Contributed by Dr. Zahirah

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I came to present my research topic, “Faithful and Luxurious: Mediating Halal with Luxury through Self-Congruity”. This paper was written together with Dr Nurhafihz Noor and Dr Ashley Tong. The paper presented at the conference was a conceptual paper with intentions to submit for journal publication.

My research interests fall in the realm of consumer behaviour within luxury brands and Halal markets. Along with my colleagues with similar interests, we undertook this research project with much enthusiasm. Our research objective is to study the impact of religiosity & self-congruence on purchase intentions of luxury services & consumer subjective well-being.



The Mystique of Luxury Branding Conference 2023

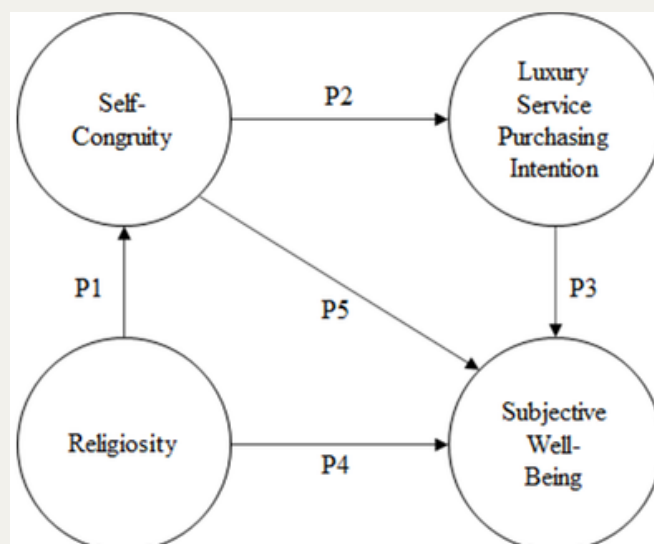
Contributed by Dr. Zahirah

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Muslim modest fashion industry is expected to reach \$361 billion in 2023, with luxury brands dedicating fashion collections for Muslims. Studies have been conducted to understand Muslim consumers' consumption of luxury products. More research is needed to understand the significant growth of luxury services in the Muslim market.

Past studies indicate no direct effect between religiosity & luxury consumption (Geiger-Oneto and Minton, 2019), with religiosity leading to negative attitudes towards luxury (Abalkhail, 2021). In Islamic tradition, the concept of wasatiyyah or moderation may further discourage luxury spending (Hanapi et al., 2019; Manshur and Husni, 2020). It is important to resolve tensions by exploring suitable mediators to link religiosity to purchasing intention.

We developed a conceptual framework model as follows:



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The propositions are:

Proposition 1: Level of religiosity positively influences a consumer's self-congruity

Proposition 2: Level of self-congruence positively influences intention to purchase luxury services

Proposition 3: Increase in purchasing intention of luxury services positively influences well-being

Proposition 4: Level of religiosity positively influences well-being

Proposition 5: Level of self-congruence positively influences well-being

Through the conceptual development, we were able to identify how religiosity affects luxury consumption through self-congruity. Our research contributes to emerging luxury services & Halal services literature and extends the research agenda on well-being for transformative luxury & transformative service literature.

Theoretically, the paper contributes to the development of a conceptual framework linking religiosity & self-congruity to purchase intention of luxury services & consumer's subjective well-being.



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The paper also provides a practical contribution for firms to encourage consumer spending of luxury services amidst the growing Halal economy. Further studies are proposed to empirically validate the model relationships and assess the strength of relationships for different service industries and levels of Muslim-friendliness.

There were positive comments and feedback for the paper presentation with regards to a need for a practical model or framework to be applied to industries such as the hospitality and F&B industries.

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Contributed by Dr. Zahirah

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Manshur, F. M., & Husni, H. (2020). Promoting religious moderation through literary-based learning: a quasi-experimental study. *International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology*, 29(6), 5849-55.



ANZAM CONFERENCE 2023

Theme: Changing Management Values and Practices for a Sustainable Future

Contributed by Dr. Carolyn Koh



The ANZAM conference 2023 was held at the Wellington Muesum in Wellington, New Zealand from 5 to 7 December 2023. Approximately 450 participants from across the world attended the event.

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Theme: Changing Management Values and Practices for a Sustainable Future

Contributed by Dr. Carolyn Koh

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Dr Nik Chong and I were privileged to present our paper at the conference. Our paper entitled "The Influence of Collectivism, Guanxi and Mianzi in the Enactment of Responsible Leadership in Confucian Asia" discusses how cultural norms such as collectivism, guanxi and mianzi can influence leaders in Confucian Asia to act responsibly, especially in how they approach sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have become a hot topic in recent years as the 2030 deadline to achieve them approaches. However, research on the role of the leader in achieving these goals is still in its infancy in most countries in Asia. We believe that to achieve the SDGs, we need responsible leaders. Not just political leaders but also business leaders since businesses have played a significant role in the current unsustainable state of the world. The theme that was common amongst most papers presented at the conference was that change is inevitable. We contributed to this dialogue with our theory that responsible leadership can help with the transition towards a more sustainable world.



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Theme: Changing Management Values and Practices for a Sustainable Future

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We were grouped with four incredibly knowledgeable academics who gave us valuable feedback which we will use in the development of our paper as we prepare to submit it to a journal for publication. Amongst them was A/Prof Sukhbir Sandu, Academy of Management Chair (subject expert) for Sustainability. The audience also generously shared their knowledge with us and offered us alternative theories to explore as we extend our research. We also received an invitation to collaborate on the topic of “Confucianism's influence on culture in Asia”. Nik and I are extremely motivated by the enthusiasm around our paper.

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Theme: Changing Management Values and Practices for a Sustainable Future

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Attending an ANZAM conference isn't just about presenting one's paper. It is about being immersed amongst fellow academics who are both inspiring and forthcoming with sharing their knowledge. We discussed our research with A/Prof Remi Ayoko, Editor-in-Chief at the Journal of Management Organisation (JMO). Lo and behold, we found that Remi shares our interest in Confucianism and cultural norms like mianzi and guanxi! She invited us to submit our paper to JMO and gave us valuable advice on what is needed to get our paper accepted by the journal.

Nik and I also attended the "Editors Panel: Insights, Lessons Learnt plus Interactive Discussions" Workshop where nine editors of A* journals shared what they each look for when selecting manuscripts. Each journal has a different selection criterion. We learnt so much from this workshop but more importantly we had the opportunity to meet these editors face-to-face and put Curtin Singapore's name out there.



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Theme: Changing Management Values and Practices for a Sustainable Future

Contributed by Dr. Carolyn Koh

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.The highlight for Nik and I on Day 3 was the workshop conducted by Jorgen Sandberg entitled “Generating impactful research through problematization: Strategies, techniques, and illustrations”. I have had the privilege of meeting and attending talks by Jorgen Sandberg’s research partner, Matt Alverson while I was doing my PhD at University of Wollongong and have applied their method of problematization which challenges assumptions underlying existing literature rather than just spotting gaps, in my research development. Hence, I was excited to introduce Nik to Sandberg and for him to learn about problematization as a way to develop research questions. Nik shared that he had gained invaluable lessons from Sandberg’s thought-provoking workshop as did I.

Nik and I proudly represented Curtin Singapore at ANZAM, and we hope to share what we have learnt with our fellow researchers at Curtin Singapore soon.



CURTIN SINGAPORE AI AND DATA FOR BUSINESS CONFERENCE 2023

Contributed by Dr. Carolyn Koh, Team leader, Curtin Singapore 2023 AI and Data for Business Conference Organising Committee



Curtin Singapore hosted their first AI and Data Conference in collaboration with the WA Data Science Innovation Hub (WADSIH) on 21 November 2023. The event was held at the Voco Hotel, Singapore.

We were privileged to have an Advisory Board of distinguished individuals who not only provided valuable insights on key trends in the AI and Data space, but also generously shared their networks with us.



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They are Emma Humann, Executive Director of AustCham Singapore; Victor Mills, Chief Executive of Singapore International Chamber of Commerce; Dr Sandy Chong, Principal Consultant at Verity Consulting; Yeo Zhi Han, Director Strategic Programmes at SG Tech; James Chen, President of the Curtin Alumni Singapore Chapter; Prof Tele Tan, Deputy Head of School – Electrical Engineering, Computing & Mathematical Sciences (EECMS), Curtin University.

We are also proud to have curated a list of prominent speakers for the event. These speakers shared their knowledge, experiences, and case studies with the participants. The audience also mingled with the speakers during the tea and coffee breaks as well as over lunch. Our keynote speakers were:

Alex Jenkins, Director of WADSIH, demonstrated how versatile AI is and how the application of AI could enhance education and business. To prove his point, he had "President Obama" welcome everyone to the conference using an AI voice app and even turned himself into a linguist by using an AI translation app!



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Prashant Ganesh, Head of Technical Consulting and Engineering for Google Southeast Asia, shared case studies on the different ways in which AI is being used today for personal, societal, and business benefit. He explained 'Large Language Models' (LLM) and how Google uses them in their products and services.

Dr David McMeekin, Curtin University academic specializing in Spatial Information, Software Engineering, Information Systems and Digital Humanities, took the audience on a journey filled with intrigue and humour. He discussed the importance of keeping the human aspect at the forefront when processing data.

Dr Tudor Groza, Data and Technical Coordinator at the Rare Care Centre, Perth Children's Hospital, Adj Prof at the School of EECMS, Curtin University and a Visiting Scientist at SingHealth Duke-NUS Institute of Precision Medicine, discussed how AI is steadily becoming the backbone in rare disease research and application. He demonstrated how AI spans across not only the patients' physical and mental health but also their education, finances, social activities, and employment.



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Shin Wee Chuang, Co-Founder & CEO at Pand.ai, a start-up that builds AI-powered chatbots which make talking to a machine a lot more fun and engaging, helped the audience understand why businesses should start their AI strategies with an AI Chatbot and how to build one.

We also had three discussion panels. The topics of discussion were taken from the list of key focus areas for AI transformation highlighted by the Singapore Government. These are Fintech, Healthtech and Sustainability. The discussions were informative and animated which stimulated strong participation from the audience.

Moderating the Fintech panel was Marc Leong, Executive Vice President of Maybank. Marc led the conversation with panelists Reuben Lim, Chief Operating Officer at Singapore FinTech Association; Eric Koh, Chief Operating Officer at Dedoco; and Prof David Lee, Chairman of the Global Fintech Institute.

The Healthtech panel was led by Prof Tele Tan. In conversation with Tele were distinguished panelists from the medical field: Dr Saumya Jamuar, Clinical Director of the SingHealth Duke-NUS Institute of Precision Medicine; Professor Luke Haseler from the Curtin School of Allied Health; and Dr Steven Ang, Senior Vice President, Business development at EyRIS.



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The Sustainability panel was moderated by Dr Sandy Chong, former President of the United Nations Association, and the Founding Chair of the UN SDGs Business Forum series in Western Australia. The panelists were Naomi Vowels, Co-founder of Givvable; Vincent Desclaux, Managing Director at Palo IT; and Veerappan Swaminathan, Founder and Director of Sustainable Living Labs.

The conference ended with dinner at Halia Restaurant located within the beautiful Singapore Botanic Gardens, a UNESCO site. The rain didn't dampen the spirits of our guests who enjoyed the delicious food and good company.

The conference has been beneficial to Curtin Singapore on several fronts. Firstly, we have increased the profile of Curtin University in Singapore, signaling that we are ready to claim a prominent space in education and research. Second, we have established a strong network of business and industry leaders that are keen to support Curtin Singapore. The relationships formed will enable us to extend our research capacity.



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Finally, although it was not a large-scale conference, the audience found the content enlightening and appreciated the intimate setting that enabled meaningful conversations and network building. It showcased Curtin Singapore's ability to successfully organize an event for an important topic and provided the organising team with many useful lessons for future endeavours.

