

# Research Matters

- Middlesex University Dubai Celebrates the 200<sup>th</sup> Wednesday Research Seminar
- Adding value to your dissertation: Publishing your research findings
- Our Experiences at the Al Futtaim Global Management Challenge
- CFP: Fourth International Conference on Emerging Research Paradigms in Business and Social Sciences

## **Middlesex University Dubai Research Committee Members**



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Dr. Cody Paris

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# Editorial note

Welcome to the 6th issue of Research Matters. Hopefully you all found time to relax over the summer break. We are about to commence the 2017-2018 academic year, and have lots of good things upon which to reflect in the current issue. The past few months have been incredibly busy in terms of research activities for staff and students, both on- and off-campus. What can we say? Our students are simply amazing! Yet again, they have had 'swept the boards' at a number of prestigious research events and competitions, and have done us all proud. Along with lots of other great research news, we endeavor to share just a sample of some of our students' research achievements since late 2016.

In this issue a final-year tourism student, Rachel Bianca Simmons, discusses her experiences of working on her undergraduate dissertation, from designing of the project right through to presentation of her research findings at the UGSRG competition in Abu Dhabi. Sheeba Saghir, a graduate of the MDX Dubai M.Sc. Applied Psychology programme, shares the process of



converting her Master's dissertation into a journal article.

From a practitioner's perspective, we have an insightful article titled 'Why research matters to me', written by Laoise Ryder, on the role of research in the working life of a professional in Counselling and Psychotherapy. We also report on some of the conferences and events held by Middlesex University Dubai over the last few months.

One highlight of the last few months was an important research milestone at Middlesex University Dubai. We held our 200th Wednesday Research Seminar in April with a celebration event involving a panel discussion by student researchers. This seminar has

become a weekly institution over the past few years, and provides an excellent forum for researchers to share their findings and engage in academic discourse. Since its inception, presenters at this series have included faculty and alumni from Middlesex University Dubai and other universities in the United Arab Emirates, as well as researchers from other global institutions. This series has attracted some fantastic presentation over the years, and we look forward its continued development!

This is just a small flavour of this issue of Research Matters. We hope you enjoy reading these articles and we wish you a successful year ahead! ♥



**Dr. Rajesh Mohnot & Dr. Lynda Hyland**

## Middlesex University Dubai Celebrates The 200th Wednesday Research Seminar

The Wednesday Research Seminar Series at Middlesex University Dubai started in 2008, and recently reached a significant milestone - the 200th seminar. The weekly seminar series provides an opportunity for faculty, staff, students, and external colleagues to gather together and share and discuss cutting-edge research. This event has been central to Middlesex University Dubai's success in developing a mature research culture among its faculty and students. It has also seen the genesis of many new research projects, and has informed the course of national and international research collaborations. The seminar series also provides a forum for Middlesex Faculty to share findings published in top-tier international journals and books. The research seminar has been organized on a weekly basis during the academic term by the Research Committee Chair, Dr. Lynda Hyland, and her predecessors (Dr. Cody Morris Paris, Dr. Alun Epps, and Dr. Marcus Stephenson). Throughout the 200 seminars there have been many notable presentations by leading and emerging researchers from around the world, region, and UAE.



Below is just a glimpse back at some of the seminars presented by MDX faculty throughout the tenure of the MDX Research Seminar Series:

**Seminar #6** Dr. Cedwyn Fernandes on 'Factors determining elasticity of demand for tourism in Dubai' later published with Prof. Ajit Karnik in the journal *Tourism Analysis*.

**Seminar #61** Dr. Lynda Hyland on 'Teachers' experiences of participation in the Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Programme: A longitudinal qualitative analysis' later published with colleagues in *School Psychology International*.

**Seminar#67** Dr. Cody Morris Paris on 'Developing a quantified triple bottom line for tourism' later published with Prof Timothy Tyrrell and Dr. Vern Biaet in the *Journal of Travel Research* (selected as the best article published in the journal that year).

**Seminar #128** Dr. Marcus Stephenson launched his book (co-authored with Dr. Raoul Bianchi) 'Tourism and citizenship: Rights, freedoms and responsibilities' published by Routledge.

**Seminar#134** Dr. Tenia Kyriazi presented 'Trafficking in human beings: Is it a form of slavery?' later published in the International Human Rights Law Review.

**Seminar #142** Dr. Jakob Pietschnig presented 'Generational IQ gains: The flight of fancy of intelligence' later published in the journal Perspectives on Psychological Science.

**Seminar #181** Dr. Eliseo Ferrante presented 'Swarm robotics: a tool to study collective behaviours in biological systems' which was published with co-authors in the journal PLoS Computational Biology.

**Seminar #191** Dr. Savita Kumra presented 'Impressing for success: A gendered analysis of a key social capital accumulation strategy' previously published in Gender, Work, & Organization.

To mark the special occasion of the 200th Wednesday Research Seminar, a celebration of student research was held. A panel discussion on the student research experience was organized. The panelists were former or current Middlesex University students who excel in research and who have received recognition for their research achievements. Panel members shared their experiences of research engagement through coursework and dissertations, and expanded upon how research activities have shaped the course of their academic and professional lives. The following Middlesex Alumni and Students were invited to the panel:



#### **Deena Abdo**

Deena is a graduate of Middlesex University Dubai, with a First-Class Honours degree in International Development. Her research on social entrepreneurship in the UAE has recently been accepted for publication in the International Journal of Sustainable Society. She was awarded 3rd place in the highly competitive Business track at the 2014 UAE National Undergraduate Student Research Competition in Abu Dhabi. Since graduating, Deena has been working in the field of human capital consulting, where she has managed various projects with several prominent clients across the GCC region.

#### **Teneille Saayman**

Having completed undergraduate and postgraduate study at Middlesex University Dubai, Teneille has a keen interest both in Film and Marketing. She was the postgraduate winner of the Student Research Symposium in 2016 for her research 'The impact of celebrity scandals on brand image: The rise and fall of sports hero Lance Armstrong. A theoretical and empirical investigation'. She is currently a Visiting Faculty member at Middlesex University Dubai.

### **Yeshoda Singhania**

Yeshoda is a Psychology graduate of Middlesex University Dubai and King's College London. Her research interests lie in the area of psychological response to disasters such as floods, and how social support can assist in dealing with trauma. She plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Psychology, and to work in research.

### **Juno Srivastava**

Juno (M.Sc. Computer Network Management, PMP, ITIL, COBIT 5, Six Sigma) is a 2015 graduate of Middlesex University Dubai, and was also the recipient of the best Postgraduate Student in the Department of Computer Engineering and Informatics. Juno currently works with Al-Futtaim group IT as Assistant General Manager. His areas of research and specialization are Cloud Computing, Internet of Things, and other transformational technologies.

### **Ruby Shaniah Oayda**

Ruby is currently in her final year of Law at Middlesex University Dubai. She is passionate about Human Rights and was an undergraduate winner at the Middlesex University Student Research Symposium in 2016 for her poster presentation on 'The European Court of Human Rights: Bans on the wearing of religious attire in schools, the workplace and the public sphere'.

### **Tina Jose**

Having successfully completed B.Sc. in Psychology with HRM and MA HRM degrees at Middlesex University Dubai, Tina has developed critical research skills. She values the role of research in organizational practice. Her dissertation topic, 'Does national culture have an impact on organizational commitment? The case of the private sector in Dubai', is highly relevant and timely and feeds back to many similar work-related issues in organizations in the UAE.

### **Nada Hamayun Al Hammadi**

Nada graduated from MDX Dubai in 2016, with a Masters in Human Resource Management. She has wide-reaching research interests including leadership development, talent management, and strategic performance. Her dissertation, 'Talent performance as a competitive differentiator.

A comparative study', addressed the critical question of how to drive the performance of talented employees in two well-known international organizations.

### **Ammna Nasser**

Ammna graduated from Middlesex University with a First-class Honours degree in International Development. She has also recently completed her MA in International Relations at Kings College London. She won the Undergraduate Best Paper at the Middlesex University Student Research Symposium in 2014, for her UG Dissertation research on identity politics and education in Pakistan. A paper developed from this work is currently under review in a leading peer reviewed journal.

The celebration seminar was well-attended by colleagues and students. Dr. Lynda Hyland (Research Committee Chair) noted "The panel discussion was a testament to the growth of the student research culture at Middlesex University Dubai. It was impressive to see the passion with which our current and former students discussed their research experiences. The panel expertly illustrated how research skills can develop over time, and how these can be implemented in both academic and occupational domains. The tips for research success shared by the panelists will certainly help our current students as they progress with their dissertations and projects."

Reflecting upon the success of the seminar series, Dr. Cody Morris Paris, Deputy Director of Middlesex University, said "We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who were involved in the panel discussion, and all our colleagues and external guests who have presented at this series over the years. Additional thanks goes to colleagues who support the seminar series through their attendance. We look forward to the next 200 seminars, and hope to see you there!" 🍷

If you would like to present or attend the Wednesday Seminar Series, please contact Dr. Lynda Hyland [l.hyland@mdx.ac.ae](mailto:l.hyland@mdx.ac.ae).



## 4<sup>th</sup> annual TTRA (Asia Pacific Chapter) conference: Hosted by Middlesex University Dubai

Middlesex University Dubai successfully hosted the 4th Annual Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA) Asia Pacific Conference (APAC) on 3rd and 4th December 2016. The conference theme was 'Pushing the Boundaries: Driving Tourism Innovation & Creativity Through Research'. Dr. Cody Morris Paris (Deputy Director of Middlesex University Dubai and Conference Co-Chair) said this theme "resonates with the spirit of Dubai and the UAE, where there have been significant investments to fulfill a vision of an innovation-driven economy with tourism playing a central role. Already one of the most visited cities in the world, home of the busiest international airport, and the birthplace of some of the world's leading hospitality and tourism brands, Dubai is well on its way to reach 20 million international visitors by 2020, the year of EXPO 2020".

The 4th TTRA APAC conference follows successful previous conferences in Kuala Lumpur, Melbourne, and Tokyo. "Dubai has been a leader in tourism leveraging its geographic advantages as a natural hub with long term investment and vision for our industry," stated Carolyn Childs, TTRA APAC President and Conference Co-Chair. TTRA International was founded in 1970 to support the travel and tourism industry's growth and success through a focus on the quality, value, effectiveness and use of research in travel marketing, planning and development. Today TTRA continues to provide leadership for the global community of practitioners, educators, and users of travel research.

The Conference featured nearly 50 leading researchers from industry, government, and academia from more than 15 countries including Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, Seychelles, UK, USA, Italy, France, Jamaica, Finland, and the United Arab Emirates. The conference had world renowned keynote speakers and panelists

presenting on research and practice at the nexus of creativity, innovation, and tourism. Mr. Gerald Lawless (Head of Tourism and Hospitality at Dubai Holding and Chairman of the World Travel and Tourism Council) gave a keynote talk on the rewarding union of travel & tourism and cinematography. Prof. Sue Beaton, the founding president of the TTRA APAC Chapter, launched the 2nd edition of her seminal book, 'Film-Induced Tourism', and organized a special panel and paper track on 'Creating Tourism via Film, TV, and Pop Culture' featuring filmmakers, destination marketers, and academics. Mr. Nasif Kayed (Founder and CEO of The Arab Culturalist) and Dr. Jeff Dalley (New Zealand Department of Conservation and VP of TTRA APAC), gave opening keynote talks. In addition to the panelists and keynote speakers, more than forty academic papers were presented by some of the world's leading tourism researchers.

Dr. Morris Paris said "I've been a long time member of TTRA; it's always been a fantastic community of researchers from the travel and tourism industry, academia, and destinations. Tourism research has always been central to the vibrant research culture at Middlesex University Dubai, and we have offered a strong undergraduate programme in Tourism since the Dubai campus opened in 2005. Next September 2017, Middlesex University Dubai will launch the first M.Sc. in International Tourism Management in the UAE." 🍷

# Biz Buzz: Middlesex Undergraduate Accounting & Finance Fest

Middlesex University Dubai's Accounting & Finance Department held its maiden festival 'Biz Buzz: Middlesex Undergraduate Accounting & Finance Fest' during February and March 2017. Biz Buzz focused on enhancing the skill sets and employability of accounting & finance students by focusing on research, team building, leadership, and other soft skills. Biz Buzz involved a series of events designed to bring a new, fun dimension to the learning experience. Students tested their mettle with 'Who wants to be a CFO? The Middlesex Multiple Intelligence Test' and specific competitions and events were held for second and third year students. There was also 'The Road Ahead', a Careers & Employability endeavor and a slew of 'A Feel of the Real' field trips to improve knowledge, understanding and career skills. Some of the events are outlined, in brief, below:

## 1. "Who wants to be a CFO?"

### The Middlesex Multiple Intelligence Test

4 teams along with the audience participated ardently to make the competition a huge success! The teams faced questions across six categories including Accounting, Finance, Business, General Knowledge, Audio, and Visual. Organised by Ms. Pallavi Kishore, Ms. Subhadra Satapathy, and Dr. Vijaya Kumar, this quiz ensured that students learnt new things while having a lot of fun. All teams won cash prizes, sponsored by Al Futtaim Logistics:

**Prize 1** – AED 2000 Shaista Mohammed Basheer and Jay Ashvin Zaghada, Year 2

**Prize 2** – AED 1000, Cherita Viannie Noronha and Fathima Farzana, Year 3

**Prize 3** – AED 750, Mariyam Yogimadathil and Samina Burhani, Year 1

**Prize 4** – AED 500, Rabia Naeem and Simran Sharma, Year 3



## 2. "The Best Cash Flow Analyst" A Case Study Analysis

The 2nd year students participated enthusiastically in the competition (organized by Rashita Puthiya), showcasing their professional side along with a lot of knowledge and talent! The students were given the task of analyzing financial and non-financial factors of the selected companies and presenting their investment decision. The teams competed fiercely and won some great prizes:

**Prize 1:** AED 1000 was won by Team Unikai - Jincy Mathews, Nishitha Anand, Rea D'Souza and Ketki Shendre

**Prize 2:** AED 750 was won by Team Aramex – Orpha Soares, Srivaran Gattu, Edwin Cardoza and Vishnu Gopinath



The external judges included Chartered Accountants and Seasoned finance professionals Mr. T.P. Anand and Ms. Sumedha Kapoor Gupta, along with internal judges Ms. Muneeza Shoaib, Dr. Sudipa Majumdar, Dr. Rajesh Mohnot, and Ms. Pallavi Kishore. The judges were impressed by the work presented by our students and complimented them on their successes and hard work.

### 3. ACCA University Challenge

105 students participated in an accounting challenge conducted by ACCA at Middlesex, and organized by Dr. Rajesh Mohnot. The ACCA team comprising of 8 members came on campus to conduct the competition. The students worked in teams to answer questions in three unique rounds which included



MCQs, accounting crosswords, and rapid fire rounds. The ACCA Head of Education, Ms. Fazeela Gopalani, was impressed with the response and performance. Students from all years were invited to attend and were also represented in the winning teams:

**1st Prize:** Year 2 – Orpha, Edwin, Vishnu, Srivaran, & Samantha

**2nd Prize:** Year 3 – Nida, Vedant, Puneet, Alan, & Vishal

**3rd Prize:** Year 1 – Samina, Shreyas, Reem, Azeem, & Shaaz



### 4. “Financial Consultants of the Year” – A Case Study Analysis

Organised by Ms. Subhadra Satapathy and Dr. Vijaya Kumar, this competition was open to the third year Accounting & Finance students who impressed the judges with their knowledge of the subject and professional soft skills. The students contested 2 rounds earlier this year to make it to the finale. The students were given the task of researching and analyzing financial and non-financial factors of a telecommunication company and presenting their investment decision.

**Prize 1:** AED 2500 was won by Mohammed Muhzin, Vishal Chandnani, Vedant Desai, Mohamed Atef, and Alan Peter Rajan

**Prize 2:** AED 1000 was won by Cherita Viannie Noronha, Karthika, Vanessa Annette Dsouza, Tanya Koshy, and Nida Fatima Zabath.



The competition was judged by Professor Ajit Karnik alongside external judges including Ms Emma Lomas (Deloitte), Mr Owais Wahab (Grant Thornton LLC), and Ms Siwen Zhu (Al Futtaim Logistics). 🏆

# Dr. Anita Shrivastava Kashi and Ms. Seada Kassie present their research at the Middle East Psychological Association conference

The 1st Middle East Psychological Association Conference & Expo 2017 was held in Dubai, from 27th to 29th April. The first initiative of its kind in the region, this conference comprised Poster Presentations, along with a Professional Track, General Community Track, and a Student Track.

Dr. Anita Shrivastava Kashi, Head of Psychology Programmes at Middlesex University Dubai presented her research on "Demographic correlates of help seeking behaviour" on 29th April. Her co-presenter was Ms. Seada Kassie, Adjunct Faculty in Psychology at Middlesex University Dubai and Clinical Research Associate at the American Center for Psychiatry and Neurology, Dubai. Their presentation topic was highly relevant to the region. The hour-long presentation included some practical exercises which contributed to the interactive nature of the presentation. This research presentation was well-received by an active audience of professionals and students from across the region. This conference was very well organized, and provided an excellent opportunity to network with individuals and institutions. ♥



**Ms. Seada Kassie (M.Sc.), Dr. Joanne Hands, Dr. Anita Shrivastava Kashi**

# Our Experiences at the Al Futtaim Global Management Challenge

Muhzin Mohammed, Thelma Isandu, Sweta Ann Philip, Alisha Pereira, Ateef Mohammed

The Al Futtaim Global Management Challenge (GMC) is considered to be the UAE's largest strategy and management-based competition with participants including professionals and student teams from various institutions and universities. The competition was held over a three-month period consisting of three rounds followed by the final round which was a one-day event. We were one of two MDX Dubai teams that made it through to the final round. The decision-making process for every quarter in each round involved applying various strategies and finding the optimum prices and units for the products which we believed would increase our share price and earnings. Being new to the game, and admittedly lacking a thorough understanding of the game manual, did not prevent our team from leading as we were able to learn quickly through each stage, solve new problems, and gain more knowledge which improved our competitiveness.



Our team had five members. Here, we share our experiences of this competition. As said by Muhzin Mohammed, the team leader (CEO), "GMC gave us the opportunity to discover each team member strengths and weaknesses teaching us how to channel our

strengths in a manner that could achieve the potential of the whole group". Thelma Isandu (Finance Manager) mentioned that "The competition truly presented us with a hands-on experience in the strategic and management aspects of a company showing how the decision making of every department is key to the liquidity, profitability and shareholder wealth of a company". According to Sweta Ann Philip (Production Manager) "Since the Game principles were largely based on academic concepts coupled with practical issues, it taught us to think out of the box, apply principles we had grasped from our accounting and finance modules and implement important management decisions within a specific deadline".

Alisha Pereira (HR Manager) asserted that "GMC helped us gain a true insight into the real finance and accounting world, providing a unique opportunity for us to understand how the different departments and functions of a company are interrelated and inter linked". Ateef Mohammed (Operation Manager) concluded by affirming that "The experience and knowledge gained through GMC is invaluable and would benefit us greatly in our future workplace and this is something that could not have been achieved solely through academics."

We were thrilled when our team was placed as 2nd runners up. Dr. Vijaya Kumar and Ms. Subhadra Satapathy did a fantastic job in preparing and mentoring us. We thank our mentors for their support throughout the competition. 🍀

# Dr. Cody Paris: Appointment to the Editorial Board of Information Technology & Tourism



Information Technology & Tourism (ITT) has been published by Springer since 1998 and is the first scientific interdisciplinary journal focusing on the nature and role of Information Technology within the context of tourism, travel and hospitality. Information and communication systems embedded in a global net have had a profound influence on these industries. Additionally, these industries with their presence in the electronic market show an impact on the developments of IT. Advances in the use and development of tools, technologies, and methodologies that have facilitated the efficient netting of information and communication systems in tourism, travel and hospitality are to be presented and discussed within this journal. ♥

For further information on this publication, please see: <http://www.springer.com/business+%26+management/business+information+systems/journal/40558>

## Adding value to your dissertation: Publishing your research findings

How many dissertations are read by anyone other than the student, their supervisors, and those grading this piece of work? The short answer - too few! After engaging in this lengthy research process, it is a shame to let your research findings gather dust on a shelf, albeit a virtual one. Making the most of your dissertation can involve presenting the findings at conferences or publishing your work as a journal article. In this piece, Ms. Sheeba Saghir (M.Sc. Applied Psychology) shares her experiences of turning her Master's dissertation into a publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

### **Sheeba, what made you decide upon this research topic for your dissertation?**

I decided to choose this research topic for my dissertation because Health Psychology had always intrigued me during my studies at Middlesex University Dubai. My research interests lie in body image and eating disorders. When I was given a choice to select my research topic, I read many articles that were close to my interest, and identified that there was a need for more studies on the effects of media-influence and immigration on body image because the findings of past studies on body image dissatisfaction had been inconclusive. Moreover, most of the studies on body image disturbances had been conducted on women. This is despite past research showing that men can also experience as much negative body image as women at different stages of their lifespan, and body image disturbances in men are similarly associated with eating disorders and other health related problems. Furthermore, there were very few studies investigating body

image dissatisfaction among non-Western men. Therefore, I decided to study body image dissatisfaction among Pakistani men living in Dubai and Pakistan.

### **What were your main findings?**

The results demonstrated that immigrant status had a significant main effect on body image - men living in the UAE displayed significantly poorer body image than found in the Pakistan sample. Results also indicated a second main effect of media-influence - those highly influenced by the media displayed poorer body image. No interaction effect was observed between immigrant status and media influence on body image indicating that both media influence and immigrant status independently played a role on the development of negative body image. These findings suggest that media influence and immigration are among important risk factors for the development of negative body image among non-Western men, and point towards the need to support this population, as negative body image can (in some cases) lead to harmful outcomes such as eating disorders.

### **Why did you choose to write this into a paper?**

I believe that this study is important and that it adds to the literature on body image among non-Western men. This primary research study - empirical data were collected from men in Pakistan and in the UAE - required hard work and time. I put a lot of effort into this study and I wanted my research findings to reach a wide audience of researchers, clinicians, and health practitioners. This would help others to better understand the role

of immigration and media influence on the development of negative body image. It could also be useful for designing interventions aimed at reducing the negative effects of the media and immigration. It is my hope this might be effective at reducing body image disorders and other related problems in this population.

### **How does a journal article differ from your dissertation?**

The journal article differs from my dissertation in many ways. Firstly, my dissertation work had a much larger word count than the journal article. Most of the sections in my dissertation (abstract, introduction, method, results and discussion) were long and were written in much more detail than in the journal article. In the journal article, the introduction (i.e., literature review) section is more succinct. The journal article's method section does not include extensive discussion of the research approach and philosophy as found in the dissertation. Also, the results section reports only the main findings; it does not include all the results as in my dissertation. The discussion section is also shorter and focused than in the dissertation. Moreover, the appendices, which were important in the dissertation, are not included in my journal manuscript. However, the reference list in my journal manuscript submission was largely unchanged from the dissertation.

### **What do you have to do to publish your dissertation research?**

To turn my dissertation into a journal article I had to shortlist a few peer-reviewed international journals that published papers similar to my research. Then I chose one journal and followed the instructions provided on their website. From the instructions, I knew I had to reduce the word count of my

study from 10,000 to less than 5,000 words, and change the format of my manuscript. Once I had done this, I created a separate document for each of the following - the first page, abstract, main body, figures and tables - so that they could be uploaded the article submission link separately. Importantly, I had to remove my name, and that of my co-author. This was done to make sure that the identity of the authors remained hidden from the reviewers, so that they could make an unbiased decision.

### **How did you choose a specific journal?**

I jointly picked a few high-ranked journals with the co-author of this study. Although the process took a long time, it was worth persevering. We were aware that when a manuscript is submitted to a journal there is a chance that it would be returned by an editor, without sending it to the reviewers. Since there was no guarantee that a submission will be forwarded to reviewers, we kept a shortlist of alternative journals, which helped to reduce the time taken to publish a paper. We submitted to two Journals, one after the other, before it was finally accepted by American Journal of Men's Health. The selection of the journals was based on two factors - their suitability and publication quality. To determine suitability of journals we considered the contents of the articles that were published in them. We checked the Impact Factor, an important indicator of how frequently work published in a particular journal is cited. It was also vital to check if the manuscript would fit into specific journals by looking online at their aims and scope. There was a need to match the topic of our manuscript and the topics that were of interest to the journals. To check the publication quality, we considered whether the journals had a rigorous peer-review process and whether they had a solid track record of publishing quality articles.

**Were there any challenges/setbacks along the way? If so, how did you deal with these?**

The challenge that we faced along the way was the uncertainty that the editor of a journal might return the manuscript without even sending it to the reviewers for peer-review and we would have to start from scratch. In the beginning, we submitted our manuscript to two journals. The first journal's editor returned the manuscript with some helpful suggestions. We moved on to the second journal, where the editor suggested that it should be published as a short note and not as a journal article. We were prepared for rejection, so we were able to manage our disappointment quite well. We were confident in the quality of the work and decided to persevere with this research as a full paper.

We then submitted the manuscript to American Journal of Men's Health. After a few months we received an email from the editor. They were quite complimentary about the quality of the paper overall, but they shared some concerns of the reviewers. The verdict was to 'revise and resubmit'. At all stages, we knew that even after our re-write, approval was not guaranteed. It was a challenging and lengthy task, and necessitated a lot of patience. There were many changes to be made which seemed impossible to me because I did not have enough time to work on this task. I overcame this by dividing the work with the manuscript's co-author, Lynda Hyland, which reduced a huge amount of workload and helped me stay on-track. We worked well together and communicated

via email whenever we had some questions or needed to verify certain things. Then I divided my work into small pieces (individual comments by the reviewers) and I worked on one comment at a time. We were able to re-submit the manuscript within the given deadline and finally got approval from American Journal of Men's Health after a few weeks.

**What advice would you give to students who would like to publish their research findings?**

Patience and perseverance are very important! It is a time-consuming process; sometimes it takes more than a year to get your article published in a journal. There are high chances that the manuscript will be returned by the journal editor, which causes understandable disappointment to the authors. This setback should not demotivate an author from resending it to another journal. Even if the article gets approval from the editor to proceed for peer-review, it may require two to three reviews, which may take four to six months. There are no short-cuts, and if you want your study to reach to the publication stage you have to keep yourself motivated at all times. You have to be very patient and persistent because it will definitely take time. In the end, I would also advise students to seek help from your dissertation supervisors. I am glad that my supervisor and I took the plunge and decided to go for publication. It is incredibly rewarding to see our work reach a platform where it can hopefully have real-world implications.

### Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I am a Business Psychologist and British Psychological Society (BPS) accredited Test User of Occupational (Ability and Personality) Training Course. I am currently working as Business Analyst for OneCloud Networks Ltd in London. I completed my MBA in Human Resource Management followed by my M.Sc. in Applied Psychology from Middlesex University Dubai, UAE and recently, a M.Sc. in Occupational/Business Psychology from Kingston University London, UK. I am deeply interested in learning about research methods because it plays a very crucial role in Psychology. My research interest lies in cognitive behavioral therapy, coping with stress, body image and eating disorders. In addition, I am also interested in the development and use of psychometric measures for selection and assessment, development and coaching, career guidance, team building and retention. Following my

dissertation, for which I was awarded a distinction, I presented my study at “The Third National Conference of Applied Psychological Research in the UAE” on March 19th, 2015. ♥



## Law Student Field Trip to Strasbourg

Following the great success of the law students' visit to the European institutions last year, the Law and Politics Department of Middlesex University (London and Dubai Campuses) organized the second annual study trip to Strasbourg, France, for undergraduate and postgraduate law, politics, and criminology students of the two Campuses. The purpose of the trip from 22nd to 25th May was to visit various European institutions and meet with Judges of the European Court of Human Rights and other senior officials of the Council of Europe. The trip was coordinated by Dr. Tenia Kyriazi (Head of Law and Politics Programmes), and Dr. Daphne Demetriou (Lecturer in Law, MDX Dubai), as well as Dr. Alice Donald (Senior Lecturer in Law, MDX London).

Students and faculty visited the European Court of Human Rights and attended a Chamber hearing of *Sharxhi and Other v. Albania*, a case concerning a complaint in relation to alleged human rights violations in the course of expropriations undertaken by Albanian authorities. Students had the opportunity to see in practice the procedures followed by the Court and hear the parties' oral submissions. Students also had the honour to meet three of the European Court of Human Rights' Judges, namely Judge Linos-

Alexandre Sicilianos (Vice-President of the Court, Judge elected in respect of Greece), Judge Paulo Pinto De Albuquerque (Judge elected in respect of Portugal) and Judge Tim Eicke (Judge elected in respect of the United Kingdom). The Judges shared their views and experiences, discussed the everyday workings of the Court, as well as the main challenges currently faced by the Court. The meetings sparked great interest amongst the students, who posed many questions to the Judges and engaged in a thought-provoking debate



relating to the various rights arising from the European Convention on Human Rights.

Students also attended a meeting at the Palais de l'Europe with Mr. Christian Mommers, adviser to the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, who spoke to them about the mandate of the Commissioner and his priorities for the coming years. Additionally, students had the opportunity to visit the Chamber of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly. Moreover, a tour of the European Parliament was organized, during which students had the opportunity to visit the institution, and sit in the hemicycle, where the plenary sessions of the European Parliament are held, and hear about the workings of this vital EU institution. Students thoroughly enjoyed this unique study visit. Banazir Kassam (Y2 LLB) said "As a co-founder of an NGO and a student of the Human Rights Law module, the visit

to the European Court of Human Rights was nothing short of a dream to me. Being able to experience a case hearing and visiting Parliament provided greater clarity and insight to all the knowledge gained over the year from the EU Law and Human Rights modules - an engaging and thought-provoking experience. My biggest concern has always been that of what my future career would entail in this field, and having the opportunity to speak with the judges at the Court not only encouraged tenacity and determination but also the open-mindedness required to achieve this, of which I am so grateful. I am honoured to have been part of such a stimulating experience with Middlesex University." ♥

For more information on our Programmes, please visit: <http://www.mdx.ac.ae/courses/school-of-law/law>

# MDX Dubai hosted The UAE's First National Journalism and Media Conference

Middlesex University Dubai was proud to host the First National Conference of Journalism and Media on April 20th, 2017. This event, organized by Evelyn Stubbs (Campus Programme Coordinator, Media), along with faculty members Lucyann Kerry and Hani Soubra, centred on the theme 'Global Journalism: Emerging Trends and Practices'. This conference looked at a wide range of topics, including Journalism in the Post Truth Era, Influence of Media on Ideas and Perceptions and The White Helmets: War Journalism and the Representation of Heroism.



The first conference of its kind to be held in the GCC region, the First National Conference of Journalism and Media featured discussions and presentations from some of the world's leading journalism and media minds. Seasoned journalists sat on the introductory panel and discussed 'Journalism in the Post Truth Era'. This focused on the current issue in journalism of an evolving concept of truth in practice, where journalism no longer presents

a façade of certainty but has a new multi-faceted subjectivity. It was a truly international event with attendees coming from the greater region as well as the United States, China. The one day event allowed professionals to get a better sense of trends and emerging issues in the region and globally.



According to Dr. Cedwyn Fernandes (Director, Middlesex University Dubai), "the media sector is changing at a rapid pace. Digitization and the 24-hour news cycle have resulted in the public consuming media faster than ever before. The first conference of its kind in the GCC region, the Journalism and Media Conference discussed emerging trends in global journalism and how these trends are dramatically changing not only how journalists are reporting stories, but also the region's dynamic media landscape." 🟡

# Celebrating Student Research at Middlesex University Dubai: Fifth Annual Student Research Symposium

The 5th Annual Student Research Symposium was held on Sunday November 13th 2016, in the LGS, Block 4. This annual event provides undergraduate and postgraduate students a forum to share their research with an audience of their peers, university staff, and family members. Each presenter discussed their work

with the audience, expertly answering questions, and the displayed posters were of high quality. All presenters were given participation certificates in recognition of the quality of their research, and 'Best Poster' awards were given to the top undergraduate and postgraduate presentations, based on feedback from the judging panels.

The two undergraduate winners were

- Ruby Shaniah Oayda, supervised by Tenia Kyriazi

"The European Court of Human Rights: Bans on the wearing of religious attire in schools, the workplace and the public sphere"

- Isabel Giannina Feldbauer, supervised by Cody Paris

"Investigating tourist's perceptions, attitudes and behaviour towards sustainable development and preservation of the World Heritage Site: The historic centre of Rome"

The postgraduate award went to:

- Teneille Saayman, supervised by Muneeza Shoaib

"The impact of celebrity scandals on brand image. The rise and fall of sports hero Lance Armstrong: A theoretical and empirical investigation"



Student	Programme	Supervisor	Title
Lakshmi Nair	MBA (Business Excellence)	Mohammad Meraj	Work-life Integration and 'Leaveism' - a study of workplace practices in business excellence award winning organizations in the UAE
Khizar Jave Khattak	MA Marketing Communications	Cody Paris	Effects of Political Campaign advertisements on the destination brand of the USA: A look at Obama and Trump
Teneille Saayman	MA Marketing Communications	Muneeza Shoaib	The impact of celebrity scandals on brand image. The rise and fall of sports hero Lance Armstrong: A theoretical and empirical investigation
Anna Soboleva	Journalism and Communication Studies	Eve Stubbs	The Differences in Representing Gender and Sexuality in Cosmopolitan Magazine in Various Cultures
Aysha Siddiqua and Ruth Jacob	Psychology	Anita Kashi	"Alhamdulillah, we are still having our culture": A qualitative study among Emiratis in Dubai
Anna Maria Wojcieszek	Psychology	Lynda Hyland	Social media overuse: From gratifications to "addiction". An exploration using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
Alia Mohamed Wasfi El-Abiary	LLB	Tenia Kyriazi	Assisted suicide and Voluntary Euthanasia in the UK courts and the European Court of Human Rights
Ruby Shaniah Oayda	LLB	Tenia Kyriazi	The European Court of Human Rights: Bans on the wearing of religious attire in schools, the workplace and the public sphere
Rachel Bianca Simmons	International Tourism Management	Cody Paris	Generation Y's tourist gaze on Rome's cultural destination image
Ujala Tariq	International Tourism Management	Cody Paris	Destination image differences between first-time and return-visitors to Rome
Hamna Ashraf	International Tourism Management	Cody Paris	An analysis of the 'pull factors', used by restaurants, as a motivational factor amongst the urban tourists to try Italian Cuisine
Isabel Giannina Feldbauer	International Tourism Management	Cody Paris	Investigating tourist's perceptions, attitudes and behaviour towards sustainable development and preservation of the World Heritage Site: The Historic Centre of Rome
Cezalyn Gomba	International Tourism Management	Cody Paris	Brand Management of Dubai with relation to Dubai Expo 2020, and the Perception of Tourists towards both
Aysha Haniya Hashim	International Tourism Management	Cody Paris	The Popularity For Authentic Local Culinary in building Rome's Destination Image

Professor Anna Kyprianou (Pro Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean, Middlesex University) presented each student with participation certificates, awarded the best paper certificates, and made the closing remarks. Feedback from attendees and from participants was very positive. One of the presenters, Anna Maria Wojcieszek (B.Sc. Psychology with Human Resource Management), shared her experience: "The symposium was an opportunity for us to

display and present what was for most of the students there the first independently carried out research. You could meet many educational entities from various fields including psychology, IT, education and so on. A lot of the staff advised me to further this research and try publishing it, which was very encouraging. Overall the atmosphere of the event was very casual and relaxed and I really enjoyed it!" 🍀

# Why Research Matters to Me

Laoise Ryder

When providing a service such as Counselling and Psychotherapy, one can never really predict the issues with which a new client might be struggling. Invariably what clients initially present with, or profess to be struggling with, often transpire to be a surface veil for some deeper underlying trauma or negative experience. These experiences may manifest in a variety of forms such as relationship struggles, various addictions, or general irrational modes of cognition that create maladaptive behaviors. As therapists, we need to be very cognizant of the fact that how our clients present initially merely represents a fraction of their true self and under the surface there may be a deep well that is filled with anguish, hurt, fear, and self-loathing. Treating our client's potentially fragile self requires caution and patience in our approach.

Whether it's qualitative or quantitative, the ultimate goal of research is to be able to support certain facts and draw new conclusions. Whilst many research projects require a varying level of academic application, there are simpler methods that assist in providing crucial information. In Counselling and Psychotherapy, we tend to rely on both methods. One of the simpler qualitative approaches is the initial intake with clients. We begin the fact-finding mission of data gathering about our client, which consists of a carefully chosen set of questions. These questions aim to paint a picture of our client's frame of reference and their history to date. These answers are purely subjective from the client's viewpoint and they help us determine the best approach going forward in how to work with the client, if indeed at all.

By conducting this early stage research, we become equipped with the tools so that we can, as accurately as possible, assess the client's suitability for the uncovering process of psychotherapy. This basic research approach enlightens us about our client's own personal view of the world, his or her set of schemas, their locus of evaluation, as well as their levels of resilience. Based on the information collated, we can develop a rough practice guide on what therapeutic approach may be a better fit for their presenting issue, or indeed whether they would benefit from seeing a different specialist, such as a psychiatrist. Robust and sophisticated research approaches continue to play

such an important part in the practice of counselling and psychotherapy.

Research carried out on the many different theoretical approaches to Counselling and Psychotherapy have provided a solid platform for therapists to refer to, when exploring the best intervention based on the presenting issue or set of challenges a client is suffering with. There have been many different research projects carried out across the world, which have yielded powerful results. Research published in the journal 'World Psychiatry' concluded that talk therapies have been shown to be a more effective alternative to the pharmacology therapy in treating OCD (Cuijpers et al., 2013). However with some specific conditions research has also informed us that certain presenting issues are better maintained with a mixture of psychotherapy and medicinal treatments (Cuijpers et al., 2014).

Research is hugely important in my profession because of the ethical connotations it has. The Counselling and Psychotherapy industry has, and still continues to, come under a lot of scrutiny around its efficacy and the benefits of its process. Evidence-based practice is considered a standard approach amongst health care professionals and by using the findings based on this type of research it allows therapists to substantiate their rationale behind adopting certain interventions as they are equipped with ethical and educational support for its validity. Counselling and Psychotherapy research also facilitates positive funding campaigns for government assistance with mental health facilities. The effective execution of a well-designed research project and the deliverance of carefully collated and analyzed data instills confidence in clients, government bodies, and insurance companies.

I have shared just a few examples of how essential research is to Counselling and Psychotherapy. I've attempted to highlight how research in both its simple and more complex forms, provides me with key facts to enable me to improve my skills and continue to enhance current interventions. Research provides me with a constant source of reference material to new and improved clinical approaches and interventions that aid my continuing professional development and assist me in providing the best care I can for my clients.

## References:

Cuijpers, P., Sijbrandij, M., Koole, S. L., Andersson, G., Beekman, A. T., & Reynolds, C. F. (2014). Adding psychotherapy to antidepressant medication in depression and anxiety disorders: A meta-analysis. *World Psychiatry*, 13, 56-67. Doi: 10.1002/wps.20089.

Cuijpers, P., Sijbrandij, M., Koole, S. L., Andersson, G., Beekman, A. T., & Reynolds, C. F. (2013). The efficacy of psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy in treating depressive and anxiety disorders: A meta-analysis of direct comparisons. *World Psychiatry*, 12, 137–148. doi:10.1002/wps.20038.



Laoise Ryder is a graduate of Dublin Business School with a BA (Hons) in Counselling and Psychotherapy. Laoise graduated in 2013, and after taking time off to concentrate on her young son, is currently working towards accreditation with the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP). Laoise is also a Reiki Master and is a member of the Reiki Federation of Ireland. She enjoys Zumba classes to keep fit and loves to relax and unwind with good food and good company. ♥

## Middlesex MBA student wins Excellence award at the Innovation Arabia conference

The Parasuraman Service Excellence award, was awarded during the ‘Innovation Arabia’ conference to Ms Lakshmi Nair, who did her MBA at Middlesex University in Dubai. This award recognizes and rewards original theoretical and empirical research focusing on dimensions of service excellence. The award is named after Professor A. Parasuraman, voted in 1988 as one of the ten most influential figures in quality by the editorial board of ‘The Quality Review’ and recipient of Outstanding Marketing Educator Award [2001], Elsevier Distinguished Scholar Award [2009] and Paul D. Converse Award [2012] to name a few.

Ms Nair’s research looked at “Work-life integration” and a new concept called “Leaveism” which is about employees taking annual leave or flexi time-off while being sick; or staff utilising their personal time to do office work mainly due to workload. This personal time can vary from working at home after office hours

on a weekday or weekends; to working during annual leave or vacation. Prior studies in UK on Leaveism have established that such behaviours can impact employee well-being, health and ultimately organisational performance. According to CIPD and SHRM, there are evidences in UK and US of excessive work pressure and many are seen to work via phones and laptops even when they go on leave.

“When I worked as a consultant, I noticed this practice consistently in organisations, even in those firms that employed good working practices and where management was genuinely concerned for employee well-being” says Lakshmi when asked about why she chose to study this phenomenon. Employees seemed to be indulging almost voluntarily in Leaveism behaviours very often due to work overload. And to add to it, some industries are going through an economic slow-down over the last couple of years. “The team I used to work with

in my last operational role as HR Manager for Compensation was cut down to almost half in a matter of 6-8 months. So on one hand, some organisations were taking drastic steps like freezing increments and promotions; and on the other, employees have been going beyond their job boundaries to produce results.”, she explains. Finally as technology keeps us tied to our devices and forever ‘online’, employees are never too far, even outside business hours, from an urgent email and last-minute work requests. Those who are unable to – or are unwilling to – feel that they may be seen as not committed enough or may get penalized somehow. Lakshmi observes that “this mismatch is certainly not healthy and being an HR professional, I felt the topic is very relevant in UAE and needs to be investigated further.”



Lakshmi’s research objectives included trying to establish whether Leaveism is prevalent in UAE and to understand whether having flexible work arrangements in organizations would have any influence over such behaviours. For the empirical part of the study, Lakshmi, through an introduction from her mentor at Middlesex University, Mr Mohammad Meraj, collaborated with the Department of Economic Development’s (DED) Business Excellence Centre in Dubai, which promote and encourage best practices in organizations in UAE. As a result of this collaboration, she collected data through management interviews and employee surveys from organizations which won DED’s prestigious business excellence awards during the past three years. Lakshmi also thanked Dr Rajesh Mohnot,

Senior Lecturer at Middlesex University Dubai and Professor Syed Anwar, Dean of Research and Doctoral Studies College at Hamdan bin Mohammed Smart University who supported her through the awards process.

The findings from this research indicate that all three aspects of Leaveism are prevalent in the UAE. From the survey, which had 506 participants, it was evident that majority work at least 1-3 times during their vacation and above 20% take their work home apart from staying back late at office. The surprising factor however was the response related to the first aspect of Leaveism; i.e. employees availing their annual leave (instead of sick leave) when they fall sick. Though 90% of managers during the interviews seemed to believe that such a practice does not exist in the UAE, the survey results indicated that this has been practiced during the past year by at least 26% of the respondents.

The study also indicated that 67% of survey respondents had the freedom to schedule their work flexibly by way of manager discretion. The interviews on the other hand, helped in identifying a lack of enthusiasm for such arrangements among managers mostly because they felt it does not suit the organization’s work flow. Results from the study however indicate that flexible work arrangements can increase employee’s commitment towards their organization and can decrease work overload, thereby indirectly influencing Leaveism behaviours. Lakshmi feels that benefits of such work arrangements can be properly measured only by formalising it in organizations and establishing methods to monitor its influence.

This research was done as part of fulfilment of Middlesex University’s MBA in Business Excellence programme, which is an internationally recognized degree from London. The University in Dubai also offers other pathways in MBA such as Finance, Marketing, Operations and Logistics and are designed to develop critical thinking, business acumen, functional expertise and ability to apply these learning in various business contexts in students. ♥

## MDX Psychology Department's Fifth National Conference of Applied Psychological Research in the Middle East



Middlesex University Dubai successfully held the Fifth National Conference of Applied Psychological Research in the Middle East, organised by Dr. Anita Shrivastava Kashi (Head of Psychology Programmes), Ms. Bianca Bertl (Lecturer in Psychology), and members of the Psychology team. The conference which was held on March 23rd in the Oasis Theatre attracted an audience of approximately 75 attendees representing different universities, clinics, and organizations in the region.

In total there were 10 oral presentations by faculty and professionals from external institutions on topics ranging from clinical to organisational psychology from qualitative insights to quantitative studies. In the afternoon, five student groups presented their research findings in a poster session. The Keynote speaker, Dr. Nicholas le Boutillier (Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Hendon campus), discussed the assessment of creativity and its distinction

from intelligence. This presentation was very well-received by attendees and generated an instant interest. Dr. Ilhan Raman, our guest



speaker from Hendon Campus, UK gave an excellent presentation on bilingualism. Another highlight of this conference was an impromptu presentation by Ms. Disha Shrivastava, who discussed her initiative, challenges and success of the 'girl literacy movement' in Central India. Though unplanned, this presentation generated immense interest.

This year's conference involved the addition of a panel discussion. The topic under consideration by our panel of experts was 'Behavioral health issues among expatriates'. Panel speakers came from diverse fields

including sport, nutrition, and psychology. The beneficial, thought-provoking discussions following the scientific oral presentations and panel discussion resulted in new insights from scientist practitioners, and future collaborative research projects.

Sincere thanks go to a number of important people including our speakers, conference attendees, university management and administration for their support, and to our fantastic psychology student volunteers, all of whom made this event a great success. 🍀



# The Fifth United Arab Emirates Undergraduate Research Competition

On May 8th, 2017, eleven of our undergraduate students competed at the 5th Annual Undergraduate Student Research Competition in Abu Dhabi. This event has grown substantially since its inception and this year it attracted 454 submissions from 1,036 students from universities across the UAE. Following the early submission stage, a select number of students were chosen to present their research findings to a panel of judges. The competition was fierce this year, with approximately 250 student research projects presented to judging panels throughout the day. All our students presented their research expertly, and were commended for their skills. Our 3rd year Tourism student, Rachel Simmons (pictured below; supervised by Dr. Cody Paris) was awarded first place in the Management category, and was presented with a cheque for 5,000AED.



Please see below for details regarding the work of our MDX student researchers:

Students	Mentor	Presentation
Leanne Dsouza, John Lozano, Carol Arbo, and Carhl Ulep	Engie Bashir	User centered design approach – Colab: Student collaboration coursework tool
Alina Vakil, Leanne Menezes, and Rumana Vakil (aided by Rea D'Souza)	Vijaya Kumar and Subhadra Satapathy	Small and medium enterprises in UAE: Challenges and potential solutions
Rachel Simmons	Cody Paris	Understanding the 'Push and Pull' factors for domestic tourism: A case study on Fujairah, United Arab Emirates.
Giannina Feldbauer	Cody Paris	Investigating Generation Y attitudes and risk perception towards terror attacks and its effects on tourist behaviour: A qualitative case study on France
Nesa Hajirasouli	Evelyn Stubbs	Does Instagram act as a platform for fitness professionals to advance within the fitness industry?
Aqsa Butt	Evelyn Stubbs	Does "the West" enrich a student's degree due to democracy and freedom? A comparative study of students at an offshore campus and the home campus of a British University.

Massive congratulations to all participating students and to their supervisors- Cody, Engie, Eve, Subhadra, and Vijaya! Since this competition began in 2013, our MDX Dubai students have been consistently numbered among the winning researchers across a range of categories. This illustrates the healthy student research culture in our university and the talent of our undergraduate students. We look forward to continued success in future research events!

### Students' experiences:

The competition was a 3-round process, from selection of abstracts, shortlisting research papers, to finally the presentation of the accepted reports, which was open to any innovative idea related to 17 outlined disciplines such as entrepreneurship, psychology, law, mathematics, etc. We were amongst the 250 students that were invited to present our research for the final round. An external committee which included scientists, engineers and professionals from higher education were convened to judge the presentations. We conducted an extensive research on the topic - 'Challenges and potential solutions of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in UAE.' We chose this as our topic of research due to the significant role of SMEs in the growth of UAE. Our research paper contributed to a gap in the UAE literature. Our research process was a threefold measure. We first studied the global academic literature to identify some of the challenges faced by the SMEs globally. We then conducted semi-structured interviews with people from SMEs in the UAE. Lastly, we conducted an online survey to confirm whether the SMEs were facing the challenges identified.

Being a relatively new concept, we were very uncertain as to how to conduct a reliable and meaningful research. However, the support of our mentors, Dr. Vijaya Kumar and Ms. Subhadra Satapathy, was invaluable throughout the process. They helped us understand the different concepts, software, methodologies and terminology involved in conducting and writing a research report. They provided for us an environment which was

conducive to learning and growing. But most importantly, they instilled in us the confidence and optimism that we really needed in a competition as huge as URC. And, we are deeply grateful to them for their inspiration, encouragement, and support throughout the journey. Although we did not win, we enjoyed the experience and we learned that, sometimes victory comes in the form of improvement. (Alina Vakil, Leanne Menezes, and Rumana Vakil)

"The UGSRC was the first time I participated and competed at such a level, therefore I was nervous yet excited to submit my work for consideration by the reviewers. The competition was ongoing concurrent to the dissertation module which was challenging, but the acceptance e-mails after the first and second round were strong reassurances to my fieldwork and research, which motivated me to work harder towards creating a stronger research report overall. The UGSRC event was very pleasant and welcoming, like a step towards achieving recognition for research that had been carried out for months. Being in an environment amongst researchers, it was encouraging to discuss our topic areas to the panel and audience. The nerves building up prior to the presentation session soon evolved into feelings of excitement to showcase my research and the gaps in the literature which I highlighted. It was overall a very rewarding experience and served as an outlet to present my own findings, which allowed me to feel part of a competitive, yet friendly, environment where I was recognized as a researcher – a feeling that is definitely motivating and which I will never forget in the years to come!" (Rachel Bianca Simmons) ♥



# My dissertation experiences

Rachel Bianca Simmons

To say I had my topic and research areas all figured out right from the start would definitely be exaggeration and a bit far-fetched! I took a lot of time wondering whether my area was explorative enough, whether my ideas had validity, or even if I was capable. These thoughts are bound to enter our minds when choosing such a big step in terms of academics, yet I was able to find my path due to lots of consultation with the module supervisor – Dr. Cody Paris and programme coordinator – Ms. Lulu Baddar.

Being completely honest, I went into my third year of university thinking I would write my dissertation on domestic tourism in Dubai. I was so focused on Dubai that I forgot I could be completely unique with my research, even if it meant focusing on an Emirate that has no academic literature on its tourism at all! This led me to the topic: ‘Understanding the ‘Push’ and ‘Pull’ factors for domestic tourism: A case study on Fujairah, United Arab Emirates’. The reason I chose this topic to explore was due to my knowledge of the Northern Emirate, having resided there for most of my life. Domestic tourism was a factor I had personally observed over the years to be interesting in the region, however my research specified application to a smaller Emirate and focused on domestic tourism rather than international arrivals. For those of you who may not know a lot about Fujairah, it is a Northern Emirate which is

mountainous, coastal and is considered by some to have better weather and more scenic views than other Emirates. Websites and past visitors will tell you that Fujairah is a peaceful city, not very cosmopolitan and is viewed as a getaway destination. As previously mentioned, there was a gap in literature in relation to these topics which I aimed to fill.

Prior to the Independent Research Project module, I had conducted research on smaller levels – micro-interviews, 15-20 questionnaires. However, by opting to write a thesis paper, I was aware that my primary research samples had to grow in number and depth of information to provide strong conclusions and support theories. Therefore, I decided on 20 semi-structured in-depth interviews, divided equally amongst two sample groups: Tourists to Fujairah and Fujairah’s industry workers. As with any research paper, certain challenges did arise. Most of these were regarding the interview process and contacting potential candidates – this was time consuming due to the research time frame occurring during the peak winter period. These encounters were overcome by remaining in contact with the workers via e-mail and scheduling interview dates that were convenient for all the participants. Moreover, the techniques used to carry out the research included convenience sampling and the snowballing technique – both of which

may not be viewed as very representative and cannot be generalized, however the interviews were treated as conversational, responsive and explored the respondents' answers, which allowed for more information to be retrieved. Having identified a gap in the literature, I worked to gather multiple sources from newspaper articles, magazines, and websites, to support data from primary research findings.



Prior to conducting field research, I ensured the recurring themes in the academic literature were focused on when developing the interview guides. This allowed me to explore topics deemed as contributing factors to domestic tourism in Fujairah. I emphasized issues that



motivate travelers to choose Fujairah as a destination ('Push' factors), as well as what Fujairah's industry workers develop to attract domestic tourism ('Pull' factors) – this also aimed to understand what the industry workers considered to be motivational factors.

As a result, my research portrayed three themes as motivational drivers: 'Leisure and nature', 'Economic factors' and 'Culture'. Fujairah was considered more



authentic, cheaper in comparison to other Emirates, and offered more relaxation in terms of climate and its overall scenic nature, according to the tourists interviewed. In regard to the 'Pull' factors, the following themes stood out: 'Discounts and offers', 'Events and activities' and 'Destination attributes'. Industry workers highlighted the aforementioned as attractive selling points of the Emirate, considering Fujairah as more natural, that it hosts annual events and is part of the itinerary for tours such as the Dubai tour and the Harley Davidson Owners Group which organizes rides to Fujairah and other Emirates from Dubai! 'Pull' factors also included the range of water sport and development of adventure tourism, which

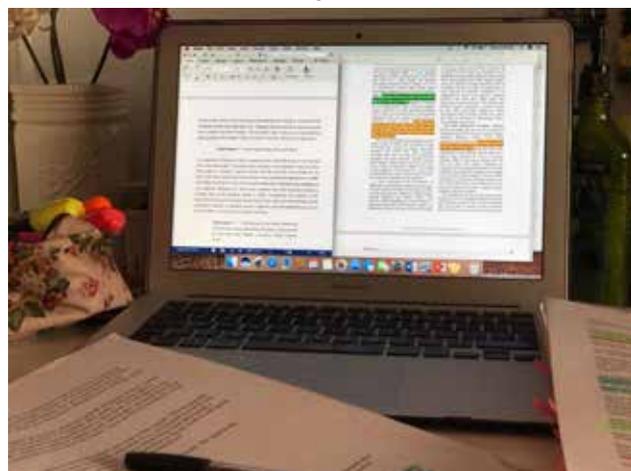
interrelated with the 'Push' motivations in the tourists who wanted to take part in more outdoor activities.

However, a vital finding was that tourists were not as aware of Fujairah and its attractions and this is something that must be developed for tourism to grow in the future. Implications towards these findings suggest for Fujairah to develop its culture, re-establish its position in the minds of potential tourists by having more destination marketing initiatives (video advertisements or images shared on

online networks), as well as capitalizing on the rise of social media influencers (such as bloggers) to visit and review attractions, landmarks and resorts in the Emirate that might not be known to their followers - who could be Fujairah's next visitors!

Running alongside the development of my dissertation was an annual Undergraduate Student Research Competition (UGSRC) held by Abu Dhabi University (ADU). It was advised and recommended by the module coordinator, Dr. Cody Paris, to submit our work and see where the competition would lead us. The competition was a motivation for me to ensure I finished on time, as its deadlines were approaching faster than our dissertation submission!

After successful completion of the first and second stages of the competition, I reassured myself to obtain the best version of a presentation, so that the session at ADU was as informative as possible. The practice presentation session held with Middlesex faculty helped me generate an idea of what the competition could be, yet I was still taken aback when I arrived at ADU and realized the size of the event! I was extremely honoured to have



won first place in my category. It was an amazing victory to mark the end of my undergraduate life, and it was certainly a reward to end the hard work put into the dissertation! It was also a victory that I was proud to bring Middlesex, the university having won 1st place twice in the past.

Overall, the entire process has been rewarding, stimulating, thought provoking, and unforgettable! My current goal is to have my dissertation published as a peer-reviewed journal article, as there is a current dearth of literature on Fujairah's tourism industry. I will look into this by working alongside my module supervisor, Dr. Cody Paris, to evaluate the most suitable journal for the research paper. I acknowledge this would signify the beginning of editing and altering the dissertation to match the journal's requirements, however it is advancement in my research that I look forward to! The

publication would increase recognition of Fujairah as a growing and developing Emirate, by highlighting its potential as a tourist destination. It would be extremely exciting to have my work published in the future and I hope this is just the beginning!

From one student to another, my advice would be to make use of consultation hours – that is where most of my ideas came to life, and where I was encouraged to set higher targets. Be as organised as possible, and plan assignment submissions ahead of time so that you can always show up to consultation appointments with updated drafts and ideas. Finally, challenges are bound to rise but that is when your supervisor can direct your work to succeed! I personally did not have all my ideas figured out at the start, but if I were given the chance I would not have it any other way! ♥



# Middlesex University Dubai hosts the EU and UAE Conference on the Rule of Law and Arbitration

On March 26th 2017, the Law and Politics Department of Middlesex University Dubai held a CLPD-accredited EU and UAE Conference on the Rule of Law and Arbitration. The event was supported by the Jean Monnet Programme of the European Union via the Jean Monnet Chair awarded to Prof. Laurent Pech (Head of Department, Law and Politics, Middlesex University London). The conference, coordinated by Dr. Tenia Kyriazi and Dr. Daphne Demetriou, was attended by academics, legal practitioners and students from the UAE and Europe.

Distinguished legal professionals and leading academics from the EU and the region participated as keynote speakers and panelists. The event began with keynote speeches from His Excellency Mr. Patrizio Fondi, Head of the EU delegation to the UAE, Mr. David Gallo (Director of the Academy of Law, DIFC), Mr. Alec Emmerson (Chief Executive of the DIFC Arbitration Institute), and Ms. Maali Khader (Principal Case Manager at the Emirates Maritime Arbitration Centre). The conference was then divided into two panel discussions. The first panel focused on the rule of law. Professor Pech along with Ms. Justine Stefanelli (Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law), and Professor Joshua Castellino (Dean of the School of Law, Middlesex University London), explored the implementation of the rule of law at European and international level.

The afternoon panel focused on international arbitration from practitioners' perspective. Mr. Lughaidh Kerin and Dr. Anthony Cullen (both from Middlesex University London) discussed the EU legal framework on Alternative Dispute Resolution in the context of consumer disputes. Ms. Jasamin Fichte (Founder and Managing Partner at Fichte & Co.) spoke about the implications of the establishment of the Emirates Maritime Arbitration Centre for legal practitioners in the region. Ms. Laila El Shentenawi (Senior Associate at Al Tamimi & Co.), presented challenges and opportunities for women in arbitration, followed by Mr. Alan Henderson (Senior Associate at Clyde & Co.), who looked at the authority to agree arbitration under UAE law. The session was concluded by Ms. Sarah Malik (Counsel at Taylor Wessing), who presented recent development in the enforcement of arbitral awards in the DIFC and Dubai Courts.

Both panels sparked extensive discussions between the speakers and the participants. At the conclusion of the conference, all attendees provided very positive feedback on the organization of the event, the high calibre of the speakers and the information they gained from it. ♥

# IMA Student Case Competition 2017

Vanessa Dsouza, Alina Dalvi, Lubna Mohammed Sidique, Nida Zabeth, and Ahmed Tariq



We were delighted to have won the first prize at the IMA Student Case Competition 2017. Our team made it to the finals out of 35 teams from the Middle East & Africa. The competition was judged by 15 professionals and our Team won the top spot with a prize of US\$3000. The case study was on 'Managing a Lean Supply Chain'. The IMA student case competition 2017 helped us to tackle problems and come up with various solutions as we would apply in work life situations. We even had the opportunity to apply our previously

acquired knowledge from the module Advanced Management Accounting to be put into practice. In addition to this, we learned new management accounting techniques relating to a law firm.

We thank our mentors Dr. Vijaya Kumar and Ms. Subhadra Satapathy for their continuous support. They kept us motivated and made sure that we were in the right track of research. We would not have made it without their guidance. ♥

# Fourth International Conference on Emerging Research Paradigms in Business and Social Sciences

Tuesday 16th – Thursday 18th January 2018  
Venue: Middlesex University Dubai,  
Knowledge Park



Middlesex University Dubai is proud to announce the upcoming Fourth International Conference on Emerging Research Paradigms in Business and Social Sciences (ERP BSS-2018). Over the last six years, our biennial conference has attracted hundreds of delegates representing institutions worldwide. The interdisciplinary ERP BSS conference series continues to provide a platform for researchers and practitioners to communicate their findings and experiences, and fosters local and international collaboration. Our Fourth International Conference, ERP BSS 2018, builds upon the success of the earlier three conferences, and is aligned with the upcoming EXPO 2020 themes of Sustainability, Mobility, and Opportunity. The world faces incredibly complex changes that shape our collective futures. We live in a time of increased mobility and connectedness, as forces of globalisation and technological change are redefining the economic, social, political, and physical systems of the world. Inevitably, ideas and knowledge are transcending traditional disciplinary and geographic boundaries. While this transformation offers increasing opportunities for innovation, it also contributes to increasingly complex global and local challenges that must be met with increasing attention to a more sustainable future.

Our University offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes spanning a range of academic disciplines, all of which are represented in this conference. This year, we welcome presentations from researchers who are shaping the direction of our disciplines, and from practitioners who are implementing best practice at the coalface of their professions. We offer a range of presentation formats and encourage submissions for Special Sessions and the 'Research Matters Visual Forum' poster session in which presenters can share their expertise in interactive manners.

## Conference Tracks

The conference will focus on the following tracks:

1. Accounting, Finance, and Economics
2. Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work
3. People Management & Development and Organizational Studies
4. Innovations in Teaching and Learning
5. International Relations and Sustainable Development
6. Management and Marketing
7. Media, Journalism, and Visual Communications
8. Tourism and Hospitality
9. Information and Communication Technology

Original research papers, practitioner paper, and proposals for special sessions focusing on the above mentioned tracks are invited.

Kindly note that the topics listed under each track are to be interpreted broadly and the list is indicative and not exhaustive.

For further information, please see <http://mdx.ac.ae/erpbss2018>, or contact [l.hyland@mdx.ac.ae](mailto:l.hyland@mdx.ac.ae).

## IMPORTANT DEADLINES

### Extended Abstract Submission:

November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017

### Early Bird Registration:

November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### Normal Registration:

January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018

### Late Registration:

January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018

### Student Registration:

December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017

### Full Paper Submission (Optional):

November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017

# CFA RESEARCH CHALLENGE 2016-17

Our university has regularly participated, and has won awards several times, in the CFA Research Challenge. This annual global competition provides university students with hands-on mentoring and intensive training in financial analysis. Students gain real-world experience as they assume the role of a research analyst. They are tested on their ability to value a stock, write an initiation-of-coverage report, and present their recommendation (Buy, Sell, or Hold). The competition has three levels – local, regional and global. This year, at the local level, the students evaluated the stock for the telecommunications giant – du.



The presentations were observed and evaluated by a panel of three judges, all CFA charter holders, working at prestigious companies in the region. Our students competed with both postgraduate and undergraduate students from SP Jain, BITS Pilani, Heriot-Watt University, and American University in Dubai to win the runners-up spot. Our teams put up an exceptional performance and answered the judges' tough questions confidently. The judges were impressed by our students' presentation style, defense skills, and their thorough knowledge of finance.

Two faculty advisors from MDX Dubai, Sudipa Majumdar and Mariam Aslam, were assigned to our students to help them throughout the preparation for the competition. The CFA institute also assigned two industry mentors who made sure the teams understood how equity analysis is done in practice. To help the students better understand equity valuation concepts and also to perform better in the Challenge, CFA Society Emirates also conducted a 2-hour Equity Analysis session. This session gave students an insight into conducting equity analysis of a real company which greatly helped them prepare for the competition.

# Student consulting enterprises. How to help academic millennials get a (better) job faster

Natalia Wiechowski's (M.A.) Ph.D. thesis at  
Leibniz University Hanover, Germany  
Major: Social Science/Sociology



Two semesters before my studies ended, I could feel the stress level increase in the majority of my fellow students: "Did you already find your dream job? What if my skills are not good enough for company XYZ? Do I have to start as an unpaid intern although I have a master's degree?" These fears for some reason were not part of my reality. Maybe because of my unconventional mindset, but maybe because I was active in a student consulting enterprise (SCE), in which I learned a lot about myself and built a massive social network.

Student consulting enterprises fall under the category extracurricular activities. They are sort of the student version of McKinsey, Roland Berger, or BCG. Students consult "real" companies and get "real" work experience, earn a bit of extra cash on the side - this is where opinions start to differ and where research needs to be done. SCEs are not only a relatively new and unknown social phenomenon amongst employers, academic staff, and students. They are also a blind spot in the German and Anglo-American research scene. There are almost no (profound) studies on extracurricular activities out there. Why? Apparently, due to outdated assumptions about the concept and doubts regarding its value in formal academia. How interesting!

## **Let's make a Ph.D. out of that!**

During the last couple of years, I studied the nature and history of European universities - as well as the change process they went through, that was initiated with the Bologna Reform in 1999. On the other side, I made sure I understood essential economic and job market theories, the latest debate around soft skills, employability and the role of practical experiences in academic studies. Furthermore, I had a look at graduate and alumnus surveys in Germany from the 1970s until today. After analyzing every web page, article, book and interview about SCEs, I also conducted qualitative expert interviews (telephone interviews) with eight experts in academia and the private economy. My research came to the following conclusions:

### Research results (excerpt)

1. In today's job market, individuals need to find ways to stand out. Extracurricular activities like in a SCE are one great way of doing so.
2. Being active as a junior consultant allows students to test different industries, fields of activities, and companies - from SMEs to international concerns - to find out who they are and what they want.
3. SCEs enable students to apply the learned theories in "real life", gain additional practical experiences next to studying, and foster the training and application of various soft and hard skills.
4. The use of social networks can help with finding the right job/ employee faster than formal communication channels. Many companies work with SCEs to find great future employees at an early stage.
5. The social network of SCEs is not used effectively at the moment. Potential opportunities that result from collaborations/ projects are not being taken.

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### And now?

Good question. I asked myself whether I wanted to continue research in this field, and came to the conclusion that I do not. Besides that, I also realized that I do not want to work for anybody. But what do I want? I am passionate about creating awareness around social behavior and shedding light on how our conditioned thinking stands in our own way towards greatness. I strive when I encourage people to reflect on their actions and find their own answers in life. I do so by speaking on international stages, offering workshops, writing articles (first book coming soon) and coaching people. Have a look at my web page [www.thinknatalia.com](http://www.thinknatalia.com) to find out more about me. Let's also connect on social media (@ThinkNatalia)! ♥

## In retrospect: My Ph.D. research

### Shilpi Banerjee

Ph.D. School of Management,  
Royal Holloway,  
University of London, UK



**Abstract:** The evolution of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the Indian petroleum and gas industry from a philanthropic/charity based model to a more 'Institutionalized' corporate giving model in recent years has marked a dynamic shift in the ways companies define their CSR and report about their CSR to their stakeholders. This shift is demonstrated by a remarkable growth in CSR spending, growth in corporate codes of conduct, CSR legislations and social reporting in recent times. Companies today attach greater importance to their social and environmental impacts, embracing various CSR initiatives, engaging more with the local communities and displaying a 'nationalistic' and 'patriotic' fervor in all their CSR activities indicating a de-globalization of CSR. In this thesis, I argue how this rapidly changing CSR landscape indicates CSR being 'enacted ceremoniously' as a response to perceived expectations arising from various institutional pressures that has led to a corporate commitment for communicating CSR reports. The findings of the study indicate how companies CSR reporting has taken new forms since the launch of the Companies Act of 2013 and how this can be understood as a new form of 'ceremonial myth' little more than a symbolic action meant to testify the company's good faith and its adherence to shared beliefs in order to gain legitimacy.

**Purpose:** Given the country specific characteristics of corporate social responsibility (CSR), there is a growing interest in studying CSR in the developing countries context. These kinds of studies play a crucial role in broadening people's knowledge of CSR under different economic, social and cultural conditions. On those lines, the purpose of my thesis was to examine the CSR reports of large domestic petrol and gas companies in one of the largest emerging market namely India.

**Methodology:** My research draws on qualitative methodology using the multiple case studies embedded design. The primary research question (RQ) was 'what role do institutional pressures play in the rhetorical strategies of CSR communication of reports adopted by the Indian petroleum and gas companies in order to gain legitimacy?' Four large Petroleum and gas domestic companies (2 public and 2 private) were selected for the purpose of this research. The CSR reports of these companies were thoroughly evaluated in my study. Along with CSR reports, interviews of 40 respondents consisting of employees of the four companies, academicians, think tanks, NGO's and government officials were analyzed to understand the issue better.

**Findings:** The main findings of the study were as follows. All the four companies published CSR reports addressing various social issues and stakeholder's concerns. In general, private companies had higher propensity to address most of the social issues, which may reflect that private companies seek legitimacy for their survival more as compared to public sector companies.

Institutional theory, particularly institutional pressures and their influence on CSR communication aimed at gaining legitimacy, led this research to conclude that a hollow form of CSR - one ceremoniously adopted in response to external environmental pressures for survival - caused the companies to move to a strategic approach of CSR creating a patriotic flavor to CSR. The findings support Christensen and Cheney's (2011) research, which concluded that companies could, on the one hand, indicate their institutional abiding nature and, on the other, use rhetoric to create the perception that they were acting legitimately in the eyes of multiple stakeholders with multiple divergent interests. The findings acknowledge both the institutional theory and the rhetorical perspectives of legitimacy, for example, O'Connor & Groneworld's (2013) perspective, in which CSR can serve as both a competitive advantage (strategic approach) and an institutional approach by showing elements of institutionalization. In this sense, legitimacy can be both a process and a state, in that organizations can simultaneously indicate institutional and strategic

legitimacy. This enables them to cater to multiple stakeholders with divergent interests (Suchman, 1995).

Research limitations/implications: The result of this study indicates that CSR reporting practices is still at an early stage of development in Indian domestic companies. I found that domestic Indian companies tend to follow the domestic guidelines in issuing CSR reports rather than adopt international guidelines. In addition Indian, domestic companies are somewhat politically sensitive in addressing social issues. A major weakness of my study was that the sample only represents the biggest and best companies in the petroleum and oil industry in assuming social responsibilities in India, thus some results cannot be generalized to all Indian companies.

Originality/Value: I aimed to contribute to the existing CSR studies in developing countries context in general and to the petroleum and gas sector more specifically. To my knowledge, this is the first of its kind to examine CSR reports of the petroleum and gas industry in India. By combining institutional theory with rhetoric and legitimacy in a novel way, the thesis also contributes to the recently growing number of studies trying to understand how, through their CSR reports, companies navigate between and respond to rhetorical usage in order to gain legitimacy. ♥

## Middlesex University Dubai faculty participate in the Education Experts Conference-2017: Shaping the Future of Education

Dr. Fehimda Hussain (Head of Computer Engineering & Informatics), Dr. Tenia Kyriazi (Head of Law and Politics Programmes) and Ms. Johanna Horlings-Plender (Lecturer in Education) represented Middlesex University Dubai at the Education Experts Conference -2017: Shaping the Future of Education, held at Zayed University on 18-19 April. Through presentations and roundtable discussions the conference explored how leadership strategy, financial management, academic excellence and technology integration can help build regional and global reputation. It brought together senior industry figures within the UAE to generate discussions of how regional institutions can harness innovative technologies, management models and various strategies to ensure world-class excellence in teaching, research and development. Dr. Hussain, Dr. Kyriazi and Ms. Horlings-

Plender moderated a roundtable discussion focusing on the "Requirements to enter and succeed within University and gain employment upon graduation". Employability upon graduation is becoming increasingly competitive, so for students to be successful in securing employment they are required to enter university with a different mindset and skills base. The discussion focused on the skill-sets students currently need in order to be admitted and successfully undertake their studies in a variety of disciplines at higher education institutions.

Roundtable participants shared valuable insights on opportunities and challenges for students transitioning from school to University and explored potential synergies between schools and higher education institutions, aiming at better preparing students for taking advantage of opportunities and coping with challenges during their university studies. ♥

# THE UAE BANKS FEDERATION FINANCIAL LITERACY COMPETITION: "ALL'S FINANCE IN FUN AND GAMES"

Rumana Vakil, Leanne Menezes, Alina Vakil, Rea D'Souza



We participated in the UAE Banks Federation (UBF) 'Financial Literacy Competition' on December 8th, 2016 in Abu Dhabi. The UBF is a professional representative body of 48 member banks operating in the UAE. This Federation promotes the interests of banks, improving collaboration and cooperation among them so that the UAE's banking industry is built up to boost the banking sector, its customers, and the national economy. In keeping with its goal of advocating financial literacy among youth, the UBF held a 'Financial Literacy Competition' for the first time in December 2016, which was open to university students in the UAE. The competition was designed, developed, and managed by the UBF to encourage ideas and techniques to improve the financial literacy of young adults while instilling an awareness of financial concepts like budgeting, debt management, savings, and financial responsibility.

Every team presented their project ideas before a panel of judges which was composed of senior-level executives from UBF executive management and top banks in the UAE represented on the marketing committee. We presented a suitable scheme called the 'UBF Finance Fair' wherein ten stations based on financial themes like savings, budgeting, wealth management would be set up. The idea was proposed to educate those between the ages of 9-14, and would be a fun learning experience where participants could walk through

different stations, participate in quizzes, games and interactive sessions, and win lots of prizes. This competition was a great opportunity for us, and we were proud to showcase our skills and ideas. Individually, and as a team, we learnt a lot and gained immense knowledge throughout the course of this competition. After months of sincere efforts and commitment, we were awarded first place at the prize giving ceremony on January 24th, 2017.

It was an honour to represent Middlesex University Dubai on such a huge platform. We had an enjoyable learning experience which would not have been successful without the support of our mentors Dr. Vijaya Kumar and Ms. Subhadra Satapathy. Being our first business competition, they helped us all along the journey, going out of the way many times. They trained us expertly, inculcating in us a sense of commitment and passion for the art of learning. Through this project, they taught us how to work together as a team, come up with strategies, communicate effectively, and ultimately build a skill set that will be useful in our future endeavours. We truly appreciate their hard work, time, and efforts. A significant lesson which we learnt and will continue to take with us is that enjoying the journey is as important as reaching the goal itself. We have indeed had the best time working on this project under them and would love to be involved in more opportunities like these in the future. 🍀



# MORE THAN JUST A **QUALITY** **UK DEGREE**



## 'Hi-5' shares Wisdom at 2nd Edition of 'Intellectual Discourse Session'



Business students of Middlesex University had an opportunity to interact with top class business professionals. Five high profile experts included Mr. Abbas Ali Mirza (former president of IBPC and ex-chairman of ICAI, Dubai Chapter), Mr. Amrithraj (Director of finance at Shapoorji Pallonji), Mr. Anish Mehta (Director of Auditing at Deloitte), Mr. Nisarg Duggad (Managing partner of Nimai Consulting), and Mr. Jacob Joby (Director of development at SP International).

Dr. Cedwyn Fernandes (Director of Middlesex University Dubai) welcomed guests and shared his thoughts on the significance of such intellectually stimulating activities. He mentioned that talented, high-achievers choose Middlesex University, and that we strive to facilitate them with such activities.

It was amazing to see students raising questions across varied fields of business. Dr. Rajesh Mohnot (Senior Lecturer at Middlesex University Dubai) provided a brief contextual reference to each theme and asked students to pose their questions. They were curious

to know about the VAT implementation and its potential effects on the UAE economy. Mr. Nisarg and Mr. Anish provided the background of VAT and discussed at length that it may trigger inflation in the initial stage but will settle gradually. Mr. Abbas, an author of more than fifteen IFRS-related books received queries on the adoption of IFRS in the region. He authoritatively described the role of IFRS and its smooth transition all over the world. He emphasised that the adoption of IFRS will help unify the accounting process.

Mr. Amrithraj, a chartered accountant by profession, was surprised when a student mentioned that manipulation in accounting is being termed as creative accounting. He explained that there is a fine line between accounting rules and practical terms and conditions. The technological mechanism (e.g., accounting software) may not accommodate a particular transaction so that is treated on discretion basis, and thus may sometime be construed to be a creative accounting. Mr. Jacob, who is known for his business strategy in the real estate

industry, responded to a student's query on the role of outsourcing companies. He stated that companies would like to optimize on cost allocation by outsourcing the workforce. There are challenges and risks associated with this process but the cost optimization outweighs them. Dealing with another query on entrepreneurial skills, he advised students to keep exploring options and go after them whole-heartedly. Guests received questions on financial risk management strategy, renewable energy, the most sought qualifications in accounting and finance, and each one was discussed at length by the experts with much enthusiasm, citing examples from industry at times or quoting from their own experiences at others.

Guests were impressed by the level of questions raised. Mr. Abbas was impressed with one student, Ms. Anam Khwaja who explained about the Treatment of Goodwill in the books of account.

The whole session was expertly anchored by some of our star students – Alan, Vishal, Cherita, Christy, and Simran. At the end of the session, Alan thanked all the guests for their insightful answers to the questions posed. The expert advice received will help our students to make informed choices with regards to their future work and education options. ♥



# Middlesex University Dubai Research Seminar Series

SEPTEMBER 2016-MAY 2017

## Research Seminar Series 180

### Swarm robotics: A tool to study collective behaviours in biological systems

**Dr. Eliseo Ferrante**  
Middlesex University Dubai

Swarm robotics studies the design of collective behaviours for swarms of robots, that is, it tries to understand how individual robots should behave and interact with each other in such a way as to achieve a collective-level, emergent behaviour. Swarm robotics has both a scientific as well as an engineering soul. From a scientific perspective, it aims at using robots as a model of real living organisms that live in groups, such as ants, bees, birds, fish, in order to understand key behavioural properties that lead to their self-organization, and how and why such behaviours evolved. From an engineering perspective, the goal is to use this understanding to design robots with minimal hardware and communication requirements, in order to use their emergent self-organizing collective behaviour to solve problems in large

unstructured and unpredictable environments. In this talk, after giving a short overview on the research projects I worked on, I will specifically focus on one that has been carried out at the interface between robotics and evolutionary biology. I will present a study on the evolution of task specialization and task partitioning in robot and ants societies. In this study, using computer simulations, we evolved for the first time the task allocation mechanism as well as the individual behaviour needed to carry out the individual sub-tasks in a foraging scenario inspired by leaf-cutter ants. I will show the implications of my studies on both engineering and biology.

## Research Seminar Series 181

### **Do you need some TLC?**

Kay Sanderson, Douglas Russell, Glenys Henry, Samantha Roberts, Alveena Javed, Sudipa Majumdar, Lucyann Kerry, Damien Riviez, Faiza Umar, Jaspreet Singh Sethi, Abigail Cruz

**Middlesex University Dubai**

Teaching and learning is at the heart of what we do and through our daily practice in the classroom and our research activities and events and competitions, we strive to achieve the objectives of the Academic Strategy set out by Middlesex London, 2015-17. The Teaching and Learning Committee has been established to help us support these

objectives and to assist in the development of our own Teaching and Learning strategy. Our aim is to foster a more nurturing, creative and smart learning and working environment for both students and staff alike. Our focus is on successful change initiatives, by incorporating both vision and reflection in our daily practice. Therefore, fostering a move towards effective practitioners, who are supported by smart systems, which will enable them to enhance students learning and employability, whilst developing their own PD and movement on the career ladder. During this seminar, we will provide a brief overview of the initial four projects being developed by the TLC and each team will expand on the reasoning behind them and the benefits attached. There will be an opportunity at the end of the seminar for a short discussion and for you to submit your ideas for future projects.

## Research Seminar Series 182

### **Being Fit and feeling pleased: The mediational role of physical self-efficacy in women of the United Arab Emirates**

Magdalena Mosanya

**Middlesex University Dubai**

Objective: High prevalence of mood disorders among women in the United Arab Emirates might be derived from low levels of physical activity. The present study aimed to explore the underlying mechanism through which physical activity affects mood by examining the possible mediating role of physical

self-efficacy. Design: A cross-sectional investigation was performed on a population opportunistically sampled among women in the UAE (n = 160). Main Outcome Measures: The analysis was based on the Baron and Kenny (1986) four steps mediation model which allowed the identification of the mediation effect through a series of simple and multiple linear regression analyses. Results: The results confirmed that physical self-efficacy mediates the relationship between physical activity and mood but only partially. Conclusions: In consequence, exercise-based interventions designed to improve mood should also include physical self-efficacy enhancement, as this may constitute a complementary mechanism of mood regulation. Implications for women in the UAE are discussed in light of such results.

# Research Seminar Series 183

## **Developing a system for and applications with full body ownership of a humanoid robot**

Sameer Kishore  
University of Barcelona

It has been shown that with appropriate multisensory stimulation an illusion of owning an artificial object as part of their own body can be induced in people. Such body ownership illusions have been shown to occur with artificial limbs, such as rubber hands, and even entire artificial or virtual bodies. In our research, we aim to apply this phenomenon of full body ownership illusions in the context of humanoid robots, and develop real-world applications where this technology could be beneficial. In this talk, after giving

a brief introduction about the concept of body ownership illusions, I will describe the system that we have developed, where a user is embodied in a humanoid robot that is present in a different physical location, and can use this robotic body to interact with the remote environment as if they were physically present in that location. This is carried out by fusing the multisensory data of the visitor with the robot, thereby transforming the visitor's 'consciousness' to the robot's body. In particular, the focus of the talk will be on one specific application that was developed for the purposes of 'Tele-Immersive Journalism' where a combination of virtual reality and robotics was used to beam a physical representation of a journalist from Los Angeles to Barcelona, where they could conduct interviews and moderate a debate among students while embodied in a robot.

## Research Seminar Series 184

### **Commercial surrogacy in India: Ban or regulate?**

Ajit Karnik  
Middlesex University Dubai

Surrogacy is understood as a situation when a woman carries and gives birth to a baby for the couple which wants to have a child. There are two kinds of surrogacy: Altruistic (where the surrogate mother receives no monetary compensation) and Commercial (where the surrogate mother receives monetary compensation beyond the medical expenses involved). Most countries have banned surrogacy (e.g. France and Germany) while others permit only altruistic surrogacy (e.g. Australia

and the UK). Commercial surrogacy is still legal in some countries such as India and Thailand. However, the Government of India proposes to introduce legislation that will ban commercial surrogacy in India. This, it is expected, will eliminate the surrogacy market and protect the welfare of potential surrogate mothers. This note discusses the fears that are associated with the welfare of surrogate mothers such as exploitation, inability to give informed consent and threats to their mental and physical health. However, I question the efficacy of a ban as a means of protecting surrogate mothers since an illegal market for such transactions will, inevitably, emerge and compromise their welfare even further. I argue that government intervention in the form of better regulation will likely serve the purpose far better.

## Research Seminar Series 185

### **Dubai, City of Life: Striding two worlds**

Evelyn Stubbs  
Middlesex University Dubai

This presentation examines the techniques employed by Arab film directors in speaking back to negative stereotyping of Arabs in Hollywood film. It discusses the film *City of Life* (dir. Mostafa, 2009: UAE: Filmworks) within the milieu of postmodernism. The “city of life” Dubai strides across two

worlds: the postmodern, fast paced world of hyperreal artefacts and the traditional world of conservative family values and religion. These domains are both evident in the film and are analyzed within the framework of Baudrillard’s *simulacra* (2010) and Lyotard’s *grand narratives* (1986). Viewed from a postmodern perspective, Dubai as reflected in *City of Life* is therefore a city of contradictions and juxtapositions, which is symptomatic of the playful signification so evident in postmodernism. The film opens up the opportunity of viewing lifestyles of Arabs and expats in a manner that is often at odds with the more stereotypical representations offered by Hollywood.

## Research Seminar Series 186

### **'Engendered' well-being. The importance of being content with one's gender identity.**

Douglas Russell

Middlesex University Dubai

This presentation will focus on presenting historic and contemporary measures of gender identity in an interactive way, as well as presenting recent findings of a study investigating how gender identity affects individuals' psychological well-being. Recent updates to measurements

of gender identity take into account personal and public gender models and the effect of gender stereotypes on behavior. Contemporary studies identifying links between gender and psychological well-being are merited. Research investigating children's developing identity and well-being has found gender typicality to be a significant predictor of self-worth and adjustment whilst studies on adults have found the same to be predictive of self-esteem. The current study identifies a shift in the 21st century in the effect gender identity has on psychological well-being across age groups, implying the need for appropriate psychoeducation regarding gender and well-being both in adolescence and adulthood.

## Research Seminar Series 187

### **An American in Pyongyang: A photo essay of a tourist to North Korea**

Dr. Cody Morris Paris

Middlesex University Dubai

In the summer of 2014, I traveled to Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea during my holiday. I spent a total of six days on tour. In this photo essay, I will provide a glimpse at life in Pyongyang and provide reflections on my experiences. Kim Jong Un and the DPRK have invested heavily to develop its tourism infrastructure with hopes of attracting upwards of 2 million international tourists (mostly from China) by 2020. Currently, there are about 100,000 tourists visiting the DPRK annually of those only about 5-6000 are non-Chinese tourists.

## Research Seminar Series 188

### **An exploratory study of undergraduate students' learning from case study competitions in the United Arab Emirates**

**Muneeza Shoaib, Vijaya Kumar, and Neelofer  
Mashood  
Middlesex University Dubai**

This exploratory study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of case study competitions as learning tools from the perspective of undergraduate students who have already participated in such competitions in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The study considers the affective, cognitive and skills development aspects of learning. Quantitative data is collected by surveying undergraduate students from various universities in the UAE who participated in any case study competition.

This is done to understand the cognitive, affective, and skill development these students perceive to derive from participating in such competitions. The data is analyzed with the help of frequency tables and descriptive statistics. The findings of the study affirm the benefits of the case method in promoting student learning and engagement even in a competitive environment. Most dimensions of the learning exhibit high

mean scores and low standard deviation suggesting that the participants perceive case study competitions to have a positive impact on their learning and skills development. However, it is evident that the participants did not like the ambiguity associated with having to make decisions with incomplete information, especially in a competitive context. Moreover, they find library, referencing, and writing skills less vital to the learning process in case study competitions. The findings of this exploratory study are beneficial for educational institutions, professional bodies, and companies for the purpose of student learning and teaching, development of transferable and employability skills, and knowledge transfer between industry and academia in the UAE. The findings may also provide some insights to the organizers of such events and facilitate them in designing their marketing campaigns surrounding case study competitions. The education literature clearly highlights the benefits of the case method for active and experiential learning. Despite the increasing number of local, regional and global competitions, the larger number of graduates, and an extremely competitive work environment, the efficacy of such events in the various domains of learning has not been explored. This study aims to fill that gap.

## Research Seminar Series 189

### **Fostering a reading motivational environment for K-3 students**

Nuzhat Dawood

Middlesex University Dubai

This presentation includes a review of literature that focuses on the fundamental factors of reading motivation and some of its effective strategies of creating classroom cultures that foster reading motivation for K-3 Arabic school students in the Middle Eastern countries. Although the

study focused reading motivation of children in the United Arab Emirates but it will help teachers and parents in any country because student motivational factors are universal. It also includes a section on the activities of (a) building self-esteem, and (b) instructional motivation for students. These activities are designed to help create opportunities for children to build vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, prediction, inferring, and many other skills which will ultimately help them in the development of reading motivation. The conclusions indicate that teacher's positive attitudes, parent's involvement, stimulating classroom environments, library facilities, self-efficacy, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are all responsible for the development of reading motivation in children.

## Research Seminar Series 190

### **Borat Revisited: Film, image building, and emerging tourism in Kazakhstan**

Lucyann Kerry

Middlesex University Dubai

This research examines the relationship of film representations with an emerging tourism in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. It argues that films depicting Kazakhstan will support the future development of tourism's potential in the Central Asian country. I further argue that the film industry's globalization processes of production, distribution and exhibition are interconnected with this tourism development and serve as an effective promotional strategy. Although the film Borat (2006) made fun of an imaginary Kazakhstan, the country had responded to these misrepresentations with an image building multi-million dollar 'Heart of Eurasia' campaign and the production of feature films showing the country's mythic past. As the only Central Asian country to be nominated for an academy award with the Genghis Khan biography 'Mongol' in 2008 Kazakhstan has used film to counter what it perceived as negative representations. It has a

well-developed film production infrastructure and a government commitment to fund production. Yet recently it has also come to realize that Borat has had a positive influence and boosted its tourism. Although tourism in Kazakhstan, a former Soviet republic and the ninth-largest country by area, has been largely underdeveloped, its government has now started a tourism initiative, 'Tourism Industry Development Plan 2020'. Its goals include seeking investment, the creation of new jobs in a tourism industry and increasing tourism's contribution to the country's GDP. This is at a time when it is launching a ten-part television series Kazakh Khanate, based on Game of Thrones, as a 'visual extravaganza' of its history and the establishment of the first Khanate in 1465. Targeting Chinese, Turkish, and English-speaking markets, this series may generate appealing representations for the growth of tourism. The research for this paper uses an analysis of industry trade press and industry data for production, exhibition and distribution within a theoretical framework of Tomlinson's theory of globalization and culture. This theory is based on the conceptualization of cultural representations and economy as forming complex connectivities in global markets. This research analyzes these connectivities to better understand the synergistic relationship of film and the tourism. It concludes that new film representations may have a positive influence for tourism growth in Kazakhstan.

## Research Seminar Series 191

### **Impressing for success: A gendered analysis of a key social capital accumulation strategy**

Savita Kumra

Middlesex University Dubai

Social capital theory assesses the career benefits that accrue to individuals from the stock of relationships they have. Such benefits can be in the form of guidance and advice, access to key projects and assignments and help with setting up business deals. However, when assessing whether such career-enhancing resources are available equally to men and women, we find that gender impacts on the access to and accumulation of social capital. The article seeks to address two key research questions. The first is whether women are aware of the need to accumulate social capital to advance their careers and the second is whether they use impression management techniques in order to assist them

## Research Seminar Series 192

### **Short term investment opportunities in emerging markets**

Rajesh Mohnot

Middlesex University Dubai

Stock market returns have constantly been attractive, especially in developed countries, and this is one of the reasons everyone likes to invest in this market. If historical facts and figures are reviewed, it is evident that stock market returns have been double digits in many decades since 1900. Stock markets in developed countries, especially the US, returned around 10% in 1900s, 15% in 1920s, 19% in 1950s, 18% in 1980s and 1990s, and 16% in 2010-13. More importantly, these stock market returns have historically

in doing this. Findings are reported from a study in an international consulting firm with 19 female consultants. In respect of research question one the findings indicate that women in the sample are aware of the need to accumulate social capital to advance their careers; with particular emphasis being placed on the importance of gaining access to influential sponsors. In respect of research question two, the findings confirm that women in the sample do perceive the necessity to utilize impression management techniques to help them to accumulate social capital. This is done in a defensive way and is linked to ensuring that one is seen as ambitious, likable and available. It is argued that these are key organizational norms, and it is perceived that in order to accumulate social capital, women need to actively work to dispel the negative stereotypes that attach to them because of their gender. The article calls for greater recognition of the impact that masculine organizational cultures have on the career development of women, who not only have to perform at a high level but are also required to expend additional energy conforming to masculine organizational cultures they have had little say in creating.

outperformed corporate bonds and treasury bills returns. It has always been a field of inquiry for individual and institutional investors to observe the past behavior of stock prices in order to determine their probable future course of movement. While technical stock analysts use graphs to predict the future movement of stock prices, fundamentalists more often consider the economic, industry, and company-specific factors to rationally predict the future movements of stock prices. Both have succeeded in the past in indicating future value of stocks, but not always. This research is a work-in-progress study which aims to investigate whether short-term opportunities exist in emerging markets. Risk-return profile will be examined using the Sharpe model in order to find which time horizons provide better returns. The research also attempts to find out if time varying characteristics across different time horizons can be predicted, and if investors can explore short-term opportunities around them.

## Research Seminar Series 193

### **A case study in human centred visualization: Principles, questions and inspirations**

Simon Attfield

Middlesex University London

Interactive visualizations are tools which are intended to help users explore data in the interests of deriving insight. Designing the right information visualization for a given

user-problem however remains as much an art as it is science. In this talk, I will walk through the problem, design and evaluation of a visualization tool for patterns of life analysis. I will show how some general principles as well as some less general principles were brought to bear on design decisions and how inspiration also arrived from an artist's videos of flocking birds. One of the questions I will engage with is whether the use of animation in visualization can provide analytic advantage. I also report an experimental evaluation of the system with users which addressed some questions of user performance and user experience with the system.

## Research Seminar Series 194

### **Hiring trends and employability skills for job aspirants in UAE: An empirical study**

Shanthi Rajan

Middlesex University Dubai

In a diverse and global business environment such as United Arab Emirates (UAE), organizations are constantly confronting challenges with attracting and retaining skilled manpower. Employers and graduates have different expectations of the work place. Expectations of graduates' getting work placement purely lies with the belief that they have acquired essential knowledge, skills and abilities to perform well at work, whereas, employers' expectations about educational institutions are that it will provide students with fundamental skills and workplace competencies for them to perform well. A recent report on UAE HR trends and employability assert that organizations are on

the lookout for knowledgeable professionals who are both job and organization fit. Given the importance of UAE's vision (NQA framework) which is 'to build a UAE education and training system that includes vocational education and training and improves its relationship with the economy and labour market' the purpose of this paper is to explore the relevance and workplace demands of employability of college graduates. In order to identify the gap and expectations and chalk out effective strategies, this research will focus on collecting data from the banking industry. The findings will reveal the importance of focusing on certain essential foundation skills as well as workplace behavioral competencies that could enhance employability of college graduates. Further, it will also recommend the importance of continuous communication that needs to be maintained between industry and academia as lack of communication could lead to a void in terms of understanding the changing demands of the industry thereby restricting academic institutions to update their academic contents to enhance employability.

## Research Seminar Series 195

### **Semantic integration and dissemination of medical information**

Aisha Naseer

Sahara Innovations Limited / Fujitsu Laboratories of Europe Limited

Healthcare data and medical information need to be seamlessly accessible and available at all times to the various healthcare stakeholders. Inability to share, integrate and access critical healthcare information is

a challenge for the healthcare IT. Moreover, semantic interoperability of health-related heterogeneous data sources is a challenging issue and HealthGrids are expected to address this challenge in a systematic manner. This research talk presents a novel architecture: ASIDS (Architecture for Semantic Integration of Data Sources), a potential candidate for solving the challenge of semantic interoperability of geographically distributed heterogeneous data sources. ASIDS has three main components that are loosely coupled (through interfaces) in a distributed manner. This architecture sets the basis for future research in terms of implementing a HealthGrid application in real environments.

## Research Seminar Series 196

### **Gender and employability in the GCC: Looking forward?**

Mona Hamade

Unity for Global Development

There is a strong correlation matching the skills of graduates and their entry into the labour market. Bridging the gap between soft skills in higher education and what's needed in the labour market will unlock the potential of human capital across the GCC. This presentation is part of a larger research based on my PhD thesis findings at the University of Cambridge Centre for Gender Studies, my current book on Gender and the Workforce in the UAE, and Career Development Workshops. It seeks to elucidate the main barriers – structural, institutional, and normative – to women's educational

attainment and enhanced economic participation in GCC countries. It will explore policies and practical measures to promote more “female-inclusive growth” throughout the region. This talk seeks to shed light on the need to translate high number of graduates into active contributors to the economy. This issue is one of the main priorities for government, universities as well as the private sector across the GCC. Thus, engaging with researchers, practitioners and policy makers interested in youth employment and capacity building in the GCC. The research methodology is informed by a combination of qualitative interviews with graduates and experts. Field interviews were conducted with graduates and leading experts in recruitment and diversity in the UAE and London between 2012-2016. The overall conclusions present gender focused and flexible recommendations in an effort to reduce the gap in employability skills and increase youths' productivity in the national workforce.

## Research Seminar Series 197

### **Assessment of bilingual language context and its effects on interference suppression**

Angélique Blackburn

Texas A&M International University

Bilinguals often outperform monolinguals on tasks that require suppression of interference from irrelevant stimulus information, likely as a result of strengthening neural networks involved in managing interference between languages (Martin-Rhee & Bialystok, 2008). However, not all studies have replicated this bilingual advantage, indicating that bilingualism alone may not be responsible (Hilchey & Klein, 2011). To test this, the Assessment of Code Switching Experience Survey (ACSES) was designed to categorize bilinguals according to how they use their

languages, specifically, how often they switch between two languages within a conversation (code switch; Blackburn, 2013). Bilinguals with different code-switching experience were compared during sentence reading and interference suppression tasks to determine whether code-switching experience modulates both the ability to comprehend a code switch and the ability to suppress non-linguistic interference. Results indicate that code switching experience impacts both language cognition and aspects of cognition that are not specific to language. A survey of the field suggests that bilingual experience strengthens aspects of cognition specific to the way in which language is used by each bilingual. Results are framed according to the Adaptive Control Hypothesis – that language control differs across bilingual contexts and repeatedly engaging each aspect of control differentially impacts the brain – and a new survey to assess time spent in each bilingual context will be discussed (Green & Abutalebi, 2013).

## Research Seminar Series 198

### **Literacy acquisition and dyslexia as a function of orthographic transparency**

Ilhan Raman

Middlesex University London

Successful acquisition and execution of literacy skills are perceived as fundamental aspects in contemporary everyday life. Although much research has been conducted to understand cognitive processes involved in learning how to read and write, it must nevertheless be noted that until relatively recently the focus was primarily Anglo-centric. Therefore, emerging theoretical

accounts in the field provided explanations solely for literacy development in English. However, alphabetic writing systems vary on many factors one of which is based on orthographic transparency, i.e. the ease with which one can generate phonology (sound) from graphemes (letters). Since the 1990s, attention shifted to examining the role of orthographic transparency on reading in different alphabetic writing systems. Given that dyslexia is estimated to affect approximately 10% of the human population (World Health Organisation), understanding the role of orthographic transparency in reading development has become of paramount importance. The aim of this talk is to review some of the research and theories that address typical and atypical reading development in dyslexia across several alphabetic writing systems from an orthographic transparency perspective.

## Research Seminar Series 199

### **More or less than the sum of its parts? Mapping the Dark Triad of personality onto a single Dark Core**

Bianca Bertl  
Middlesex University Dubai

The Dark Triad of personality has received considerable attention since its introduction to the literature. However, this personality configuration has been assumed to be merely based on observed positive intercorrelations between narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, whereas the underlying factorial structure has not yet been thoroughly

investigated. This study set out to test the factorial structure of the Dark Triad, and further examined one proposed conceptual extension, namely the Dark Tetrad, with trait sadism included. A large, community-based sample (N = 2463, 56% women, mean age = 41.4 yr.) completed self-report measures of the adverse personality traits narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and sadism. Structural equation modelling indicated a better fit for a single latent Dark Core, as compared with assuming the Dark Triad traits as independent constructs. Adding sadism did not improve the explanatory value of the construct. These findings suggest that aversive personalities may best be represented by a single Dark Core of personality.

## Research Seminar Series 200

### **A celebration of student research**

Deena Abdo, Teneille Saayman, Yeshoda Singhanian, Juno Srivastava, Ruby Shaniah Oayda, Tina Jose, Nada Hamayun Al Hammadi, Amna Nasser

To mark this special occasion, Middlesex University Dubai proudly hosted a celebration of student research. This seminar involved a discussion by a panel of former students, who have excelled in research and who have been recognized for their research achievements. It was an interactive seminar where panel members shared their experiences of research engagement, and expanded upon how research has shaped the course of their academic and professional lives.

## Research Seminar Series 201

### **Real change: Authentic content for sustainable development education**

Mariam Abonil

Middlesex University Dubai

Learose Pinkham

University of Vienna

A rapidly globalizing and conflicted world hastens the need for tertiary curricula to foster development of real-life problem-solving skills. Literature shows that models of learning used to achieve objectives involving awareness of sustainable development must reflect those goals through curriculum design based on authentic content. With basis in the works of Dewey and Freire, who posited both the interplay between governments and their people (Dewey, 1916) and the implication for group work in world transformation through

education (Freire, 1970), a World Simulation Activity (WSA) activity was created to support the teaching of sustainability in and across educational settings. A term-long group-work exercise based on the WSA was then used to investigate facilitation of effective learning of authentic content through practical application of sustainable development goals. This qualitative study at an offshore private university in the UAE was carried out with three cohorts in a non-specialist foundation year. Preliminary findings show inclusion of this activity, along with the use of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning and student-led governance, created a knowledge-building approach to scaffolded content, contributing to wider applications of course material. Specifically, the concepts of collaboration, use of real-world research, and accountability for decision-making were observed. These observations will be discussed with regard to the incorporation of such activities into future university curricula.

## Research Seminar Series 202

### **TLC: Pilot programmes prepared!**

Teaching and Learning Committee

Middlesex University Dubai

The Teaching and Learning Committee has spent the year preparing and piloting a number of products and services to support student learning and faculty professional development across Middlesex University Dubai. Enhancing educational quality was the main focus of each project, with an emphasis on either faculty or students. The first project was a part-time observation form to support

part-time faculty in improving pedagogical practice and better supporting student outcomes. The second project focused on the use of a human relations tool to better support students and faculty in their ability to understand themselves and others, and to work together. The third project-centred on the development of a survey tool to better understand the barriers to achievement in post graduate studies to create a training programme to support incoming postgraduate students. The final project has a focus on digital tools to support faculty in teaching students general academic skills across all disciplines through the use of podcasts, Camtasia and Articulate.

## Research Seminar Series 203

### **Analysis of 196 cases of ADHD seen in Singhania Clinic Dubai with a focus on environmental factors**

Rajeshree Singhania  
Singhania Clinic

The purpose of this research is to identify the incidence of environmental factors in a sample of children with ADHD in Dubai, in order to highlight the role of epigenetics in this highly genetic disorder. A sample of 196 children diagnosed with ADHD at Singhania Clinic between 1996 and 2016 was taken. A retrospective analysis was conducted based on comprehensive psychoeducational assessments and patient histories in this cohort. The incidence of perinatal problems was found to be 46.4%; family history suggestive of ADHD was 48.7%; maternal depression was 13.8%; 66.7% of cases were

not studying in their first language; 71.8% of children had changed school at least once and 44% had changed schools multiple times. Additionally, the rates of allergies was 15.9% and allergy related disorders were high: asthma (17.4%); ear infections (16.4%); recurrent tonsillitis (15.4%) and Eczema (5.1%). Large percentages of the sample displayed these specific environmental factors. This may indicate that the role of epigenetics in the incidence of ADHD is important. This study highlights the importance of the environmental factors on ADHD. Specifically reducing allergies, stabilizing the child's school environment, and focusing on oral language skills may be helpful in improving ADHD outcomes. Further research into the causal relationship between these factors and the incidence of ADHD should be examined and addressed.

## Research Seminar Series 204

### **Influencing factors of materialism among residents of the UAE: The role of mortality salience and spirituality**

Anita Shrivastava, Jakob Pietschnig, Ainey Yousuf, and Seada Kassie  
Middlesex University Dubai

According to the theoretical work on Terror Management theory (TMT), the management of existential insecurity and fears of mortality critically informs human behaviour. The awareness of mortality (mortality salience or MS) has been implicated in consumer behaviour and materialistic aspirations, which are generally considered maladaptive (Burke, Martens, & Faucher, 2010). Most spiritual philosophies render materialistic pursuits incompatible with leading a meaningful life and recently spirituality has been shown to reduce the desire to consume conspicuously (Stillman, Finchan, Vohs, Lambert, & Phillips, 2012). The aim of the present study was to examine the influence of mortality salience and spirituality upon materialistic thinking. The hypothesis predicts that there will be a significant difference between type of schema (mortality salience, and spirituality) and materialistic thinking. The sample comprised

of opportunistically recruited Psychology student volunteers. Data from twelve out of 72 originally recruited participants were discarded from analysis due to experimental attrition and missing data. Consequently, data from 60 (55f, mean age = 24.44, SD = 6.51) were included in our analyses. A within-subjects design with 3 conditions (mortality vs. spirituality vs. controls) was applied. Conditions were counterbalanced (i.e., 6 different possible sequences) and questionnaires were administered to the participants on the same day of 3 consecutive weeks. The participants were assessed on materialistic thinking after being provided with one of three different quotations in each week – one related to spirituality, one to mortality, and a neutral quotation. We did not find any significant differences in mean self-reported materialism scores between conditions (mortality vs. spirituality vs. control) in a repeated-measures analysis of variance ( $F(2, 58) = 1.143, p = .326, \eta^2 = .04$ ). In view of these surprising results, reflections on the nature of materialism in a diversified domain of cultural and economic viewpoints are offered, along with implications on the conceptual foundations of TMT.

## Research Seminar Series 205

### **An institutional analysis of the nature of corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting in a developing country context: A case study of the Indian petrol and gas industry**

**Shilpi Banerjee**

**Royal Holloway, University of London, UK**

The evolution of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the Indian petroleum and gas industry from a philanthropic/charity based model to a more 'institutionalized' corporate giving model in recent years has marked a dynamic shift in the ways companies define their CSR and report about their CSR to stakeholders. This

shift is demonstrated by a remarkable growth in CSR spending, growth in corporate codes of conduct, CSR legislations and social reporting in recent times. Companies today attach greater importance to their social and environmental impacts, embracing various CSR initiatives, engaging more with the local communities and displaying a 'nationalistic' and 'patriotic' fervor in all their CSR activities indicating a de-globalization of CSR. In my Ph.D. thesis I argue how this rapidly changing CSR landscape indicates CSR being 'enacted ceremoniously' as a response to perceived expectations arising from various institutional pressures that has led to a corporate commitment for communicating CSR reports. The findings of the study indicate how companies CSR reporting has taken new forms since the launch of the Companies Act of 2013 and how this can be understood as a new form of 'ceremonial myth' little more than a symbolic action meant to testify the company's good faith and its adherence to shared beliefs in order to gain legitimacy.

## Research Seminar Series 206

### **Understanding learning transfer process in different contexts**

**Khalil M. Dirani**

**Texas A&M University**

Researchers have identified variables likely to foster transfer such as supervisor and peer support, role ambiguity, negative change, job stress, intrinsic and extrinsic incentives, among others (Bates et al., 2000; Colquitt et al., 2000). Traditional learning transfer models such as Baldwin and Ford (1988) model or the learning transfer system inventory (LTSI, Bates et al., 2005) are frequently used to measure factors affecting transfer of training and to help human resource development (HRD) practitioners move beyond the question of whether training works to why

training works (Holton et al., 2000). However, little attention has been given to understanding other factors, not included in traditional transfer models in assisting individuals and organizations with the training transfer. In addition, little space has been dedicated to the process of transfer in particular contexts and cultures. This work examines the transfer of training within two distinct cultures: The military context, and the Lebanese business context. This work used self-reported data from individuals in the two contexts in an attempt to understand the process of training transfer and to learn about how different groups transferring the skills and knowledge learned in training to their workplace. Results provide a better understanding on how HRD scholars and practitioners can work with and prepare individuals successfully transfer training skills to the workforce taking into consideration a variety of individual and organizational factors including adult learning principles, motivation to transfer, individual and organizational engagement, peers, and supervisors' support.

# Publications since December 2016

Name in **bold** is MDX Dubai Faculty Member; name underlined is a MDX Dubai student

- Al-Ahbab, S., Singh, S. K., Gaur, S. S., & **Balasubramanian, S.** (In press). A knowledge management framework for enhancing public sector performance. *International Journal of Knowledge Management Studies*.
- **Balasubramanian, S.**, & Shukla, V. (2017). Green supply chain management: An empirical investigation on the construction sector. *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal*, 22(1), 58-81. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SCM-07-2016-0227> (Impact factor: 2.731; Google Scholar h-5 index: 43)
- **Balasubramanian, S.**, & Shukla, V. (In press). Green Supply Chain Management: The Case of the Construction Sector in the United Arab Emirates. *Production, Planning, & Control*.
- Banerjee, R., & **Majumdar, S.** (In press). Impact of firm specific and macroeconomic factors on the financial performance of UAE Insurance sector. *Global Business and Economics Review*.
- **Bertl, B.**, Pietschnig, J., Tran, U. S., Stieger, S., & Voracek, M. (In press). More or less than the sum of its parts? Mapping the Dark Triad of personality onto a single Dark Core. *Personality and Individual Differences*, (Impact Factor: 1.946; Google Scholar h-5 index: 55)
- Chandanani, P., Singh, K., & **Majumdar, S.** (2017). Market Structure and Competition in the Indian Banking Industry. *Indian Journal of Finance*, 11. DOI: 10.17010/ijf/2017/v11i3/111649.
- Fatema, M., & Idikula, A. L. (In press). Examining the relationship between positive and negative superstitions and neuroticism among young adults in the UAE. *Gulf Medical Journal*.
- **Majumdar, S.**, & Asgari, B. (2017). Performance Analysis of listed companies in the UAE - Using DEA Malmquist Index Approach. *American Journal of Operations Research*, 7(2). DOI: 10.4236/ajor.2017.72010
- **Mohnot, R.** (2017). Resilience of Islamic Financial System during Crisis Period. *International Journal of Excellence in Islamic Banking and Finance*, 5(2), <http://journals.hbmsu.ac.ae/Pages/Articles.aspx?AID=351&IID=82>
- Rao, U. V. A., **Pujari, V. C. S. M. R.**, & Rao, G. (2016). Brand Switching Behavior in Indian Wireless Telecom Service Market. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 4(2), 100-109.
- Reed, S., & **Meggs, J.** (In press). Examining the effect of prenatal testosterone and aggression on sporting choice and sporting longevity. *Personality and Individual Differences*. (Impact Factor: 1.946; Google Scholar h-5 index: 55)
- **Russell, D.**, & Warner, R. (2017). Motivational intermediaries of self-regulation among university students. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 9(3), 448-464. (Google Scholar h-5 index: 8).
- Saghir, S., & **Hyland, L.** (2017). The effects of immigration and media Influence on body image among Pakistani men. *American Journal of Men's Health*. DOI: 10.1177/1557988317698627. (Impact factor: 2.141; Google Scholar h-5 index: 21)
- Sayani, H., **Kishore, P.**, & **Kumar, V.** (In press). Internal Determinants of Return on Equity: Case of the UAE Commercial Banks. *The Banking and Finance Review*.

- Sayani, H., **Shoib, M., Kumar, V., & Mashood, N.** (In press). An exploratory study of undergraduate students' learning from case study competitions in the United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Innovation in Education*.
- **Shrivastava, A.**, Pietschnig, J., Yousuf, A., & **Kassie, S.** (2017). Influencing factors of materialism among residents of the UAE: The role of mortality salience and spirituality. *Journal of Articles in Support of the Null Hypothesis*, 13(2), 113-122.
- Valentini, G., **Ferrante, E.**, & Dorigo, M. (2017). The Best-of-n Problem in Robot Swarms: Formalization, State of the Art, and Novel Perspectives. *Frontiers in Robotics and AI*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frobt.2017.00009>

### Book Chapter

- **Abonil, M., Umar, F., & Warner, R.** (In press). The incorporation of Self-Discovery as a feature of the induction process. In S. Abu-Rmaileh, A. Elsheikh, and S. Al Alami (Eds.), *Motivation and classroom management: Theory, practice, and innovation*. TESOL Arabia.
- McMillian, J., **Paris, C.**, Spitz, B., & Toms, C. (In press). Fair trade learning. In N. Arya and J. Evert (Eds.), *Global health education: From theory to practice*. Taylor & Francis.
- **Shoib, M., & Sayani, H.** (2017). The booming GCC retail sector: Prospects for online fashion retailers. In *Doing Business in the MENA region: Cases and insights from the EFMD Case Competition*. UK: Emerald Publishing Limited. ♥

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**Invitation for contributors:** The editors cordially invite article submissions for the upcoming issue of 'Research Matters' from Middlesex University Dubai students and faculty, and from external researchers. If you would like to submit an article, kindly contact Dr. Lynda Hyland at [l.hyland@mdx.ac.ae](mailto:l.hyland@mdx.ac.ae) or Dr. Rajesh Mohnot at [r.mohnot@mdx.ac.ae](mailto:r.mohnot@mdx.ac.ae) ♥

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