30th ABMC

Business, AI, and Humanity: The New Convergence

23–24 October 2026 · Le Méridien Dubai Hotel & Conference Centre, Dubai

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Two days where business, AI and humanity converged



200	20	20	10	57
Participants	CEOs	Deans	Journal Editors	Researchers

Dubai, UAE · 29 countries · 54 universities

COLLABORATORS

AUD | AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN DUBAI

emerald PUBLISHING

TALENT NURTURES
NURTURING THE GEN NEXT!!

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OVERVIEW

The 30th ABMC International Conference brought **200 participants** to Dubai on 23–24 October 2026 under the theme **"Business, AI, and Humanity: The New Convergence."** They included **20 CEOs, 20 business school deans and 10 editors of Scopus Q1-indexed journals**, and **57 researchers presented their scholarly work** over the two days.

	Day 1 -Friday 23 October	Day 2 -Saturday 24 October
Format	In person, Le Méridien Dubai Hotel & Conference Centre	Online (Zoom), then Dubai City & Global Village tour
Programme	Opening, 4 keynotes, CEOs, Deans and Editors roundtables, awards, Track I papers	Welcome, Editors Roundtable II, 8 parallel paper sessions, closing



Dr. Rock-Antoine Mehanna, CEO, ABMC, opening the 30th edition



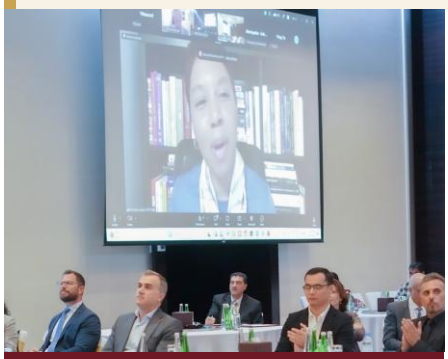
H.E. Salah Al Shamsi delivering his keynote address to a full room

DAY 1 · OPENING

Opening and keynotes

Dr. Rock-Antoine Mehanna (CEO, ABMC) opened the 30th edition with the conviction behind the series since 2010: "When academia and industry work together, nations rise." Participants came from 29 countries and 54 universities. "AI is not coming. AI is here. The question is no longer whether machines will become more intelligent, but whether we will become wiser." Citing the World Economic Forum's projection of 170 million new jobs against 92 million displaced by 2030, he reframed the jobs debate: "The real question is who will prepare our people for the jobs AI creates." He told the room: "Don't just attend. Connect. Leave with a partnership, not just a photograph." He thanked co-organiser American University in Dubai, knowledge partner Emerald Publishing, the conference chair and the organising offices in China, the UK and the UAE.

> *"When academia and industry work together, nations rise."*
>
> **-Dr. Rock-Antoine Mehanna, CEO, ABMC**



Dr. Michellana Jester
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)



Prof. Richard Pettinger
University College London (UCL)



Dr. Vijay Gerard D'Silva
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

Dr. Michellana Jester, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), set the tone: "AI makes answers abundant. What becomes scarce is human: trust, context and judgment." In emerging markets, the model is a commodity and context is the moat. AI is "removing the bottom rungs of the ladder" and with them the struggle that builds judgment. She asked leaders where their 2036 leaders will learn judgment, editors what they certify when a polished manuscript costs nothing, and faculty whether they grade outputs or thinking.

Prof. Richard Pettinger, University College London (UCL), cited three recent technology failures: hacked supermarket freezers in France, 32 UK government departments offline, and a possible university data leak. Without human expertise, "we don't know whether we are building on rock or sand."

H.E. Salah Al Shamsi (Chairman, Liwa Investment Holding, UAE) urged applying technology for value, through autonomous hospitals, refineries and buildings with a "super brain." "Technology will not replace anyone; it will replace the lazy." He asked universities to monetise research and to graduate people "who can think outside the envelope."

Dr. Vijay Gerard D'Silva, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), traced three corporate AI waves: personal productivity, process automation with humans in the loop, and business-model reinvention. That third wave, he said, has yet to arrive.

> *"Technology will not replace anyone; it will replace the lazy."*
>
> **-H.E. Salah Al Shamsi, Chairman, Liwa Investment Holding**

ROUNDTABLE

CEOs Roundtable: AI across business, education and research



Dr. Tahir Qureshi moderated the session and closed by saying AI must connect academia and industry, and that users must be trained.

Mr. Ramy Hassanien
Emerald Publishing

Publishers' stance on AI has turned "completely the opposite" in a year, and AI is now embedded for search and discovery. Still, "human accountability is not negotiable." Emerald backs impact beyond citations and runs free monthly author training for the region.

Dr. Puan Shahawati Binti Umar
Innovative University, Malaysia

Southeast Asia and the Middle East should combine the region's speed and boldness with Asia's diversity and affordability. "Don't build a university the way you understand it. Build it for the future."

Dr. Asaad Farah
American University in Dubai

Prepare faculty first and embrace AI "not as a cheating tool." Grade how students prompt and refine AI. Only the MBA student who "used it smarter" scored 90.

Ms. Yulia Stark
European Women's Association

AI "pushes you to be much more human." Her UAE financial-literacy work showed that behaviour change needs relationships, and she urged CEOs to build the talent pipeline with universities.

Dr. Rock-Antoine Mehanna
ABMC

Some entry-level jobs will go, so universities must teach skills over knowledge. He proposed a chaebol- or keiretsu-style consortium linking industry, banks and universities to fund applied research on national priorities.

> *"AI makes answers abundant. What becomes scarce is human: trust, context and judgment."*
>
> **-Dr. Michellana Jester, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)**

ROUNDTABLE

Deans Roundtable: the business school in the age of AI



Moderated by **Dr. Nikolina Ljepava** (Dean, University of Khorfakkan), who warned against "outsourcing intelligence to AI."

Prof. Murat Akkaya
Girne American University

"Knowledge is in our pockets." The core skills are AI use, creativity and international collaboration, and curricula now change every semester.

Prof. Jean-Paul Arnaout
Abu Dhabi University

"If a chatbot could answer it, the assessment should change." He sees the future school as "a boutique gym of human skills," adding that "humans should never outsource what makes us different."

Dr. Wissam El Khoury
AUD

"AI will replace people who can't create value with it." He has students challenge an AI board chair: "I don't want to turn artificial intelligence into human stupidity."

Dr. Anu Vij
EM Normandie, Dubai

"We cannot just coexist with industry; we must partner," using live cases instead of "dead" textbook ones. "AI can give solutions, but it cannot take responsibility for the strategies that result."

Mr. Abdallah Harfouch
EcoLearn & Alpha Universe Group

"The objective is transformation," with universities and ed-tech firms as co-creators. He wants "AI that makes humans smarter, not dumber."

> *"Without human expertise, we don't know whether we are building on rock or sand."*
>
> **-Prof. Richard Pettinger, University College London (UCL)**



Day 1 was moderated by **Prof. Abhilasha Singh** (Senior Editor, *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*). She noted that reviewers must not upload manuscripts to generative-AI tools.

Dr. John E. Katsos
EIC, *Society and Business Review*

"It's naive to assume people aren't using AI." He has seen AI-fabricated quotations and treats AI detectors as unreliable. "The super-majority of papers have zero value. That's our problem, not industry's." His advice: "Collect real data and do real research."

Dr. Virginia Bodolica
EIC, *Emerging Markets Case Studies*

Her journal's acceptance rate has fallen from 45% to 18% in the AI era. She wants practitioners on editorial boards and offers five Ps for strong cases: protagonist, problem, place, plot and paradigm.

Dr. Osama Khassawneh
Employee Relations

Industry doesn't read journals, so partner with it early. Mixed methods and multi-source data make a manuscript stand out.

Dr. Mohamed Yacine Haddoud
IJEBR

Quantity-driven appraisal breeds "trivial papers to tick boxes." "Pick the right journal. Don't submit blindly."

Day 2 (online) was moderated by the **conference chair**, whose takeaway was to use AI, but ethically and within limits.

Prof. Mark Anthony
The Service Industries Journal

"Success of AI in services should be measured not by how much we automate, but by how much value we create."

Prof. Monica Violeta Achim
Humanities & Social Sciences Communications

Open access widens reach, but costs are rising. Uploading manuscripts to chatbots for review is "not ethical," so build a niche and favour quality over citations.

Prof. Sherif Ismail
American University in Cairo

"If your idea is a finding, write an article; if it's a conversation, build a book." He added that "our regional context is not a limitation; it's our competitive advantage."

Prof. Daniel Balsalobre-Lorente
Evaluation Review

AI will automate the research process, so original ideas and human exchange at conferences matter "more than ever."

> *"The third wave, business-model reinvention, has yet to arrive."*
>
> **-Dr. Vijay Gerard D'Silva, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)**

SCHOLARSHIP

57 research presentations

57 researchers presented their scholarly work across nine sessions. These were Track I, held in person on Day 1, and eight parallel online sessions on Day 2.

Track I, chaired by **Prof. M. Abdul Aziz Jumaa** (Dean, Jumeira University), featured four papers:

- **Dr. Ritika Rathore**: an AI-enabled Lean Six Sigma roadmap for hand-hygiene compliance.
- **Eshbayev Oybek**: AI and university brand equity in Uzbekistan.
- **Dr. Dimitra Skandali**: the agentic-AI paradox: "Trust in AI is not the same as authorising AI."
- **Dr. Puan Shahawati Binti Umar**: human-centred leadership across 168 Malaysian private universities. This paper won the Best Paper Award.

The **eight parallel sessions** were chaired by Dr. Zafar Mueen Nasir, Dr. Saif-Ur-Rehman, Dr. Marija Runic Ristic, Dr. Muhammad Suhrab, Dr. Muhammad Salman, Dr. Mahwish Sindhu, Dr. Waseem Irshad and Dr. Saša Drezgić.



Presenting research at Track I



Recognition at the awards ceremony



Addressing delegates at the opening



Presenting research work from the podium

WHAT WE LEARNED

Key takeaways

The conference reached one conclusion: **AI makes answers cheap, so value moves to human judgment, context and the questions we ask.**

01
Judgment is the new scarcity.
Expertise must be protected even as AI removes entry-level work.

02
Skills over knowledge.
Universities should update curricula every semester and use assessments AI cannot answer.

03
Partner, don't coexist.
Industry and academia should co-create programmes and fund applied research on national priorities.

04
Publishing is under strain.
Submissions are surging and acceptance rates falling, so editors want real data and real problems.

05
Ethics demands human accountability.
Researchers should be transparent about AI use and should never hand a manuscript to a chatbot for review.

06
Regional context is an advantage
when it is framed in strong theory.

RECOGNITION

Awards and closing

Award	Recipient
Best Paper Award	Dr. Puan Shahawati Binti Umar, Innovative University, Malaysia
Excellence in Higher Education Leadership	American University in Dubai (received by Provost Dr. Asaad Farah)
Scholarly Publishing Impact Award	Emerald Publishing (received by Mr. Ramy Hassanien)

The conference's most concrete outcome is a new competition, with financial prizes, that **Emerald will sponsor**. Universities will submit business cases on how they are adapting curricula and faculty training to the AI era, and the winners will be published in *Emerging Markets Case Studies*. Participants praised the organisation; Dr. Judipat Obiora called the event "intellectually stimulating."

> *"AI can help us work faster and smarter. People must remain at the heart of progress."*
>
> **-Closing message, 30th ABMC**

Presenters are invited to submit their papers to any of the 10 Scopus-indexed participating journals, citing the 30th ABMC. Certificates and proceedings will follow within a week, and the next ABMC is in 2027.

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS · H.E. Salah Al Shamsi
Chairman, Liwa Investment Holding, UAE

WORLD-CLASS KEYNOTES · MIT · UCL · MIT



Michellana Jester, PhD
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)



Richard Pettinger, PhD
University College London (UCL)



Vijay Gerard D'Silva, PhD
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

ROUNDTABLES: CEOS · DEANS · JOURNAL EDITORS



CEOs Roundtable



Deans Roundtable



Editors Roundtable

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DELEGATES OF THE 30th ABMC
CEOs, deans, journal editors and researchers

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> — Dr. Rock-Antoine Mehanna, CEO, ABMC

LEADERS AND SCHOLARS FROM 29 COUNTRIES



Conference leaders & speakers



Networking in the lobby

RESEARCHERS AND AUDIENCE



Research presenters



Engaging with the MIT keynote



Live from Cambridge, MA

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Dr. Rock-Antoine Mehanna
CEO, Academy of Business Management Conferences (ABMC)

WHERE

CEOs, Deans & Journal Editors meet Researchers

Ideas, partnerships and publications that move business and academia forward.

LEAD THE CONVERSATION


CEOs Roundtable


Deans Roundtable


Editors Roundtable

PRESENT · CONNECT · GET RECOGNISED


Present your research


Connect with leaders


Get recognised

EVERY VOICE IN THE ROOM


Ask the experts


Conversations that open doors


An engaged audience

Thank you

to every speaker, panellist, researcher, and delegate
who made the 30th ABMC a success.

SEE YOU AT THE NEXT ABMC

2027

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