

FKAL Seminar Strengthens Research Excellence Through AI, Islamic Finance Issues

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Professor Dr M. Ishaq Bhatti (fourth left), Dr Ricky Chia Chee Jiun (third left) and Dr Noor Hasanah Husin (third right), all seated, with participants of the international seminar organised by the Faculty of Labuan International Finance recently. (Photo: USMKAL)

LABUAN — The Faculty of Labuan International Finance (FKAL), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), has organised an international seminar aimed at strengthening academic research excellence through the use of artificial intelligence (AI), research visibility strategies and discussions on current issues in Islamic finance.

The seminar featured internationally recognised finance academic Professor Dr M. Ishaq Bhatti of Universiti Brunei Darussalam, who shared insights on enhancing research quality, improving academic visibility and publishing high-impact journals.

The half-day programme, held recently at the Kiamsam Meeting Room and Theatrette at UMS Labuan International Campus (USMKAL), brought together lecturers, postgraduate students and undergraduates seeking exposure to research excellence, publication strategies and the responsible use of AI in academic work.

In his welcoming remarks, FKAL Dean Associate Professor Dr Geoffrey Harvey Tanakinjal expressed appreciation to Prof Bhatti for accepting the faculty’s invitation.

He also acknowledged Prof Bhatti’s significant contributions in finance, financial econometrics, quantitative analytics and international academic research.

Geoffrey said the programme reflected FKAL’s continuous efforts to cultivate a strong research culture and equip academics with the knowledge and skills needed to achieve global academic excellence.

Delivering a lecture titled “Enhancing Academic Research Excellence through AI Tools, Research Visibility, and Publication Strategies”, Prof Bhatti shared practical strategies for building a successful academic career through high-quality research, strategic publication planning, responsible use of AI and effective use of digital platforms to enhance research impact.

Drawing on his extensive international experience, he said sustainable academic success depended on consistent research productivity, ethical research practices, meaningful international academic collaboration and active participation in the global academic community.

A key focus of the lecture was the growing role of AI in academic research.

Prof Bhatti demonstrated how various AI applications could help researchers accelerate literature reviews, improve academic writing, facilitate data analysis and support manuscript preparation for publication.

However, he stressed that AI should be used as a supporting tool to complement critical thinking, intellectual integrity and sound research methodology, rather than replacing the role of researchers.

He also encouraged researchers to maintain a consistent publication record, contribute to editorial and peer-review activities, supervise postgraduate students, undertake consultancy projects and build sustainable international research networks.

Prof Bhatti said strong research performance would not only support individual career development, but also enhance institutional reputation, improve university rankings and create more opportunities for research grants and academic leadership.

Recognising the importance of research visibility in the digital era, he also introduced several digital research platforms that could improve the discoverability of research outputs and citation impact.

He encouraged academics to optimise article titles, abstracts, keywords and section headings using search engine optimisation techniques to increase the visibility of their research among editors, reviewers and researchers worldwide.

Apart from the academic lecture, Prof Bhatti also held strategic discussions with Geoffrey, FKAL Deputy Dean (Academic and International) Dr Ricky Chia Chee Jiun and Deputy Dean (Student Affairs and Alumni) Dr Noor Hasanah Husin to explore future international academic collaboration.

The discussions focused on expanding joint research initiatives and developing international student mobility programmes involving Minhaj University Lahore and Isra University.

The proposed collaboration is expected to strengthen FKAL’s internationalisation agenda, broaden cross-cultural learning experiences and establish long-term academic networks at the regional and international levels.

The programme ended with the presentation of a souvenir to Prof Bhatti, followed by a professional networking session and group photography.

Participants described the lecture as beneficial and impactful, saying it enhanced their understanding of academic publishing, citation management, research visibility, international collaboration and the ethical use of AI in research.

The seminar reaffirmed FKAL’s commitment to developing a globally competitive research ecosystem and nurturing academics who are prepared to face future challenges and contribute meaningfully to the international scholarly community.