

## Proposal for AIBSEAR Conference 2019

Cebu, Philippines

### *Proposed special section theme: **One Belt and One Road (OBOR) and Islamic Finance***

#### *Theoretical perspective:*

OBOR is an exciting global economic development agenda that will link, more efficiently, the trade between 68 countries. Interestingly, many of the core countries along the belt and road are of Islamic origin such as Central Asian republics, Iran, Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Middle Eastern countries among others. This signifies a huge potential opportunity for economic exploitation including collaborations and joint efforts that will ensure more efficient resource allocation.

However, anecdotes suggest that *unfamiliarity* with Islam in general and Islamic finance as a means of economic development is a main issue in China and those Islamic countries along the belt and road. For example, it was claimed that “Chinese people are not familiar with the concept of Islamic finance, and since Muslim countries do not fully understand China's circumstances to effectively promote cultural and financial interconnectivity between China and the Islamic world requires unique and different communication techniques at home and abroad....” (Global Times, 2016).

In theory, Islam in general promotes both individual and society wealth. Islamic finance is an economic tool to achieve such objective in which the economic transactions are to be undertaken according to the principles as outlined by the religion. In the context of OBOR, it is largely unknown to what extent Islamic finance has been practiced. This presents a great opportunity for interested scholars to explore the presence and the prospect of Islamic finance for its implementation along the belt and road. The areas of economic opportunities are immense: banking, insurance, transportation, consumer products, manufacturing, trading, tourism, retails, education, energy, environment etc.

Although not an exhaustive list, topics that are likely to be covered by the special section at the conference include the following:

- To what extent Islamic finance compatibles with the practice of international business within the OBOR context?
- What are the roles of the governments in OBOR countries and related authorities in implementing Islamic finance?
- What are the perceived acceptance of Islamic finance among business practitioners and societies in OBOR countries?
- Does Islamic finance essential for wider manufacturing and distribution of halal products across OBOR countries?
- Does Islamic finance promote social and sustainability agenda across OBOR countries?
- Is there a link between Islamic finance and OBOR-related initiatives across each stage of planning, resourcing and execution?

Theoretical and empirical papers are welcome covering either the general scope of Islamic finance or one of the following specific research areas:

- Islamic corporate financing and capital raising including *Sukuk* issuance
- Islamic capital market development
- Islamic trade financing

- Islamic insurance (*takafu*)
- Consumer and halal products
- Manufacturing, distribution and network
- Social business and entrepreneurship
- Microfinance
- Governance, ethics and sustainability
- Role of government, regulations and policymaking
- Islamic finance education and training

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