

CEO MONTHLY



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شركة جامعة أبوظبي القابضة
Abu Dhabi University Holding Company

ADUHC IN FOCUS WITH DR. ALI BIN HARMAL ALDHAHERI



Dr. Ali Bin Harmal AlDhaheeri
Chairman & Founder | ADUHC
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In this edition I am pleased to have an in-depth discussion with Dr. Ali Bin Harmal, an accomplished entrepreneur in the education sector and the Chairman of Abu Dhabi University Holding Company (“ADUHC”) and a Board Director at Amanat Holdings. With a track record spanning nearly two decades, ADUHC boasts a strong reputation as a specialized leader in private higher education across Abu Dhabi and Al Ain with experienced leaders that combine global experience with local market intelligence.

- Technology and the impending impact it will have on the provision of education
- ADUHC’s exceptional performance in 2020/21 and the trends expected to continue
- Growth drivers in the future of ADUHC

Highlights

- Over two decades of experience in establishing and launching successful ventures in various industries;
- Chairman & Founder of Abu Dhabi University Holding Group, Chairman of Bin Harmal Group, Chairman of Liwa Education;
- Chairman and board member of several government and private entities, including Magna Investment and Al Ramz Cooperation.

Friends,

In 2018 Amanat acquired a 35 percent stake in Abu Dhabi University Holding Company (“ADUHC”). Today, ADUHC is home to more than eight thousand students enrolled across its institutions and thousands more that receive vocational training through its corporate training solutions companies. The proactive initiatives driven by the management helped drive the group’s **exceptional performance** during one of the most unprecedented periods. Nonetheless, ADUHC’s contribution to Amanat’s bottom line recorded a remarkable 75.5 percent growth. This month I am pleased to host an **education veteran**, **Dr. Ali Bin Harmal**, the Chairman of ADUHC, to discuss the drivers of the group’s growth, the role of technology in this day and age, as well as **the future of higher education and ADUHC**. I will now leave it to Dr. Ali to share his insights.

Technology and the impending impact it will have on the provision of education

Technology adoption has accelerated worldwide. The COVID pandemic transitioned technology from a preference to a necessity and the education industry is no exception. Technology in higher education was always an enabler, a nice to have if you can afford it. Now, it is driving the industry. The way AI is being integrated in education delivery, pedagogy, decision making is

revolutionizing the industry. At ADUHC, we see it as an opportunity to improve delivery, minimize costs, and make more informed decisions.

The use of augmented and **virtual reality**, online learning, flipped classrooms, and digital simulators are all currently being provisioned as part of ADUHC's revised curricula, and we are also piloting **learning management** and assessment solutions that help provide faculty with real-time feedback to **improve student success**.

ADUHC's exceptional performance in the 2020/21 and the trends expected to continue

We believe this performance is exceptional, but not necessarily unintentional. Our leadership and management focused on thinking ahead about the likelihood of different scenarios and strategized courses of action for each one. I can confidently say that we made the best out of a bad situation. The increase in profitability was due to a combination of **revenue growth** and the successful implementation of **cost efficiency** initiatives. In terms of

efficiency initiatives, related to governance, operational costs, and administrative costs. The management has adequately monitored and controlled spending through a set of **robust finance policies**.

Our **strong student recruitment** functions and the quality of our offering allowed us to attract students and capitalize on the opportunities resulting from the pandemic. Our increase in enrollment was mostly driven by local students and more specifically postgraduate students. The pandemic provided many individuals with the opportunity to reskill themselves for the job market and drove them to utilize their time more effectively by taking on more credit hours. A significant portion of **expat high school students** decided to remain in the UAE and pursue their higher education instead of going back to their home countries to do so. A portion of **Emirati students** who originally intended to pursue their studies around the world has changed their decision to remain in the country close to their families. Finally, distance learning has made certain study options more available to students. It provided us with the flexibility to merge sections and offer certain courses in semesters that we typically would not in an offline format.

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The proactive initiatives driven by the management helped drive ADUHC's exceptional performance during one of the most unprecedented periods. ADUHC's contribution to Amanat's bottom line recorded a remarkable 75.5 percent growth

-Dr. Mohamad Hamade-

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At **Khawarizmi International College (KIC)**, our strategy is and remains to find the right talent and empowering them to make decisions to succeed in the way we think it can succeed. In the past year or so, we hired a new Vice President of Academic Affairs to manage the health of the program portfolio and plan for the **introduction of new programs** which contributed to its strong rebound during the year.

Going forward, and as the UAE government continues to rapidly vaccinate its people and manage the situation effectively, we believe that the **“new normal”** is just around the corner. The shape of this new normal changes constantly and rapidly based on developments in student behavior, revisions of industry regulations, and the advancement of technology. We believe we have in place the capabilities and **value proposition** to allow us to build on the recent performance.

Growth drivers in the future of ADUHC

We have plans to grow the business both organically and inorganically. At our existing university portfolio, we are focusing on **organic growth**. We believe there is real **potential** in the **international student** market. Students around the world are

looking to the UAE as an attractive destination to work and are looking to local universities as a gateway to that market. We developed two fully **online post-graduate programs** and plan to use them as a pilot to drive international students to the university. In terms of geographic location, the new **Al Ain campus** presents the real potential to drive enrollment to Abu Dhabi University. On the academic agenda, we believe **specialization of business degrees** typically in FinTech, Digital Transformation, and Analytics also has real potential.

On the corporate training front, our focus was and remains primarily in the UAE. However, for a while now we have been servicing several key important clients in KSA and the region and we are currently restructuring our value proposition to cater more broadly across the region. Our **strong international partnership** support and our **favorable positioning** as an ADUHC group spanning different parts of the value chain will enable us to provide customers with quality services and deliver **outstanding online programs**.

As an organization, we don't shy away from taking **calculated risks** and we trust in our ability to collaborate effectively to adapt to the needs of the student. This all links back to our organizational **culture and mindset** to be agile in a rapidly changing industry. In addition to this, the university operates as part of a **family of learning institutions** at ADUHC group that support its success in a wide range of strategies, and we look forward to continually showcasing the success of these ongoing initiatives.

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-Dr. Ali Bin Harmal-

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