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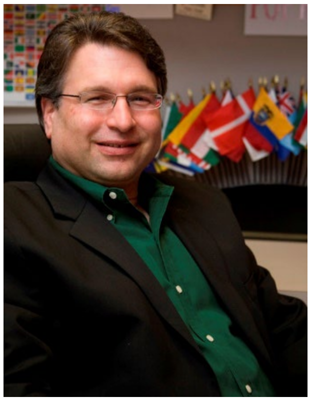

Paul A. Fadil,
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President's Message

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 37th annual International Academy of Business Disciplines (IABD) conference in Tempe, Arizona. This is our twentieth issue of the IABD Proceedings. I would like to personally thank Editors Cindi Smatt and Robert Smith and the authors and track chairs who made sure everything went smoothly as they brought the IABD Proceedings together.

I also appreciate the work of Cindi Smatt and Robert Smith, who, also, in tandem, organized our conference program. Their work over the past year has been critical in making our conference a success. Our executive team, journal editors, track chairs, and our membership all contribute to the success of our organization and our conference. I am truly grateful for all you do.

I hope that I will have an opportunity to meet you this year, if I do not already know you from past conferences. It has been a pleasure to be the President of IABD over these past 14 years. We always look forward to getting your feedback on all aspects and important issues at the conference. I invite you to participate actively, and if you would like an opportunity to become more involved, please let us know.

IABD is continuing to evolve and move forward. But no matter how we evolve, keeping a family atmosphere amongst our members is our most important value. So, welcome to the IABD family! We have a unique culture here at IABD, one that you will find nowhere else. Thanks for another wonderful year and enjoy yourselves in Tempe!!

Sincerely,

Paul Fadil, President
International Academy of Business Disciplines

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A REASONABLE ASSURANCE MODEL FOR THE USE OF AI

Robert Slater, University of North Florida, Robert.Slater@unf.edu
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Assessing the accuracy and reliability of information provided by AI is more critical than ever. The ease of use of AI applications comes with many limitations and risks. For example, the Black Box problem refers to the fact that we do not know how AI systems learn or how they choose which information to present to us. We will demonstrate that auditors' skill set (risk assessment, critical thinking, and validation practices) is relevant and essential for anyone relying on AI. The auditors' skill set has been traditionally applied to management's assertions in Financial Statements and corporate disclosures. However, this same skill set provides a robust framework for end users of AI to assess risks and critically evaluate the information these systems provide. We examine problems with AI-generated information and demonstrate how to apply nine of the Auditing Standards Board (ASB) assertions to ensure the integrity and reliability of AI-generated output.

A REVIEW OF GLOBAL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ADOPTION OF AI

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There is little doubt that Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is going to have significant implications for societies around the globe. This presentation highlights the attitudes of people in the United States and 24 other nations regarding AI. The results are taken from a global survey of nearly 37,000 (8,628 in the US and 28,333 outside US) respondents conducted by the Pew Research Center. Data was collected from nations in Africa, Asia, the European Union, the Middle East, North America and South America. Survey questions determined respondents' awareness of AI, level of concern or excitement for the future with AI, as well as their trust in countries or institutions to regulate the use of AI. Globally, 81% of the respondents have heard or read at least a little about AI, showing a high level of awareness, but awareness is also positively correlated with a nation's gross domestic production per capita. Additionally, respondents are generally slightly more concerned about AI than they are excited about its prospects for the future. Respondents across the globe are generally more trusting of their own governments to regulate AI use than they are of other governments or institutions. However, that trust varies dramatically by nationality and political affiliation. Other than their own nations, respondents were most likely to trust the European Union to regulate AI, rather than either the US or China.

AI IN HEALTHCARE INFORMATION SYSTEMS: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR PRIVACY, GOVERNANCE, AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

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As artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly integrated into healthcare and business information systems, concerns regarding the protection of sensitive patient data continue to emerge. AI-enabled clinical and administrative applications increasingly rely on electronic health records and enterprise systems to support decision-making, analytics, and operational efficiency. As such, governance challenges surrounding protected health information (PHI) have grown more complex. With emphasis on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), this paper examines the intersection of AI technologies, healthcare information systems, and other regulations governing patient privacy. It also explores how AI systems within health organizations process, collect, and share PHI, which can push the limits of traditional compliance frameworks. Key challenges include the potential for re-identification of data, secondary use of health information, algorithmic bias, and reliance on external vendors. The implications of emerging consumer privacy laws and governance gaps for health-related data generated outside clinical settings are also examined. Recommendations on policy, technical, and organizational approaches to ensure AI systems meet ethical and privacy standards are discussed.

AMBIENT AI: GOVERNANCE INSIGHTS FROM THE HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMUNITY

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Ambient artificial intelligence (AI) scribe applications are rapidly emerging in healthcare environments, and many healthcare organizations are currently piloting these technologies. As adoption accelerates, questions arise among key stakeholder groups, including patients, clinicians, and information technologists, particularly around governance, trust, workflow integration, and the responsible use of patient data. Drawing on prior research on ambient AI in healthcare settings, we convened an interactive workshop at a major healthcare practitioner conference to engage the health information systems community in a conversation about these emerging challenges. The session surfaced issues that many participants were encountering in practice but had not yet had the opportunity to collectively discuss. Participants shared experiences, current implementation activities, and organizational considerations from their respective institutions. Through this exchange, we captured and reflected on practices emerging across healthcare organizations, particularly from the perspectives of patients, clinicians, and information technologists. These insights provide an early view into how organizations are navigating the governance and implementation of ambient AI scribe technologies. This paper highlights key themes that emerged from these conversations and discusses practical strategies organizations are using to support responsible implementation. By sharing lessons learned from both research and practitioner

dialogue, we aim to inform the health information systems community about emerging governance considerations and organizational practices that can help foster trust and transparency in the adoption of ambient AI in healthcare.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ADOPTION: CHEERS OR CHILLS?

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The adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) - enabled devices evoke a wide spectrum of responses, ranging from apprehension to excitement. For consumers, the degree of acceptance is shaped by multiple factors, including prior technological experiences, levels of expertise, personal philosophies, and psychological attitudes such as skepticism or paranoia. In many cases, AI integration occurs subtly, with users engaging in passive adoption through everyday tools and applications without conscious recognition. While this form of adoption is limited in scope, it illustrates the pervasive presence of AI in modern life. Conversely, some individuals remain firmly resistant, perceiving AI as a threat to human values, privacy, and even societal stability. This presentation examines the diverse motivations behind both enthusiastic adoption and deliberate rejection of AI technologies. By analyzing cultural, psychological, and technological influences, it seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of consumer attitudes toward AI and the broader implications of these perspectives for society.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS APPLICATION IN IMAGE PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

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This study examines Artificial Intelligence (AI) from a theoretical and conceptual standpoint, with particular emphasis on the Deep Learning process. The analysis establishes a connection between foundational principles and their application to image processing and analysis tasks performed by AI systems. The work presents the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of AI systems that employs multi-layered neural network architectures to model complex patterns and approximate aspects of human cognitive processes involved in decision-making. Furthermore, selected examples are discussed to illustrate the application of AI and Deep Learning methodologies across various domains related to image processing and analysis, thereby clarifying their practical relevance and impact in institutional communication.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN POLICING: EVIDENCE FROM KOSOVO

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The use of artificial intelligence in policing is expanding rapidly, yet empirical evidence from smaller state contexts remains limited. This is particularly true for technologies such as body-worn cameras and predictive policing tools. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring how AI-enabled technologies are being adopted within the Kosovo Police and how they are perceived by both practitioners and the public. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research combines semi-structured interviews with police officers and policymakers with survey data gathered from law enforcement personnel and citizens. The findings suggest that AI-supported data analytics are linked to improvements in operational efficiency, while body-worn cameras appear to strengthen perceptions of transparency and accountability. At the same time, persistent concerns emerge around data protection, potential algorithmic bias, and the lack of comprehensive regulatory frameworks. Overall, the study indicates that AI can contribute meaningfully to more effective and legitimate policing, but only when its use is grounded in clear legal standards and strong institutional oversight. By providing context-specific evidence from Kosovo, this research adds to the broader policing literature and offers practical insights for the responsible integration of AI in law enforcement, both locally and in similar settings.

BALANCING INFORMATIONAL RIGOUR AND SENSATIONALISM AT THE CRIME HEADLINES OF LA VANGUARDIA ONLINE, A EUROPEAN LEGACY NEWSPAPER

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This paper examines how digital crime headlines balance informational rigor and sensationalist strategies in a European legacy newspaper. Focusing on the Crime section of *La Vanguardia Online*, the study analyses a sample of 50 headlines using a coding framework based on established indicators of journalistic rigor and sensationalism, including emotional language, exaggeration, curiosity gaps, selective emphasis, and contextual information. The study addresses the following research question: To what extent do digital crime headlines balance informational rigor and sensationalist discursive strategies in contemporary digital journalism? The aim is to determine whether headlines primarily serve an informative function or incorporate attention-seeking mechanisms associated with click-driven environments. The findings reveal a predominance of hybrid headlines, with 31 out of 50 classified as mixed, indicating a moderate and selective integration of sensationalist elements within an overall informative structure. These results suggest that digital crime headlines do not operate within a strict dichotomy between informational rigor and sensationalism, but rather through intermediate constructions that combine both logics. This work contributes to discussions on media ethics and digital journalism by showing how legacy media adapt to attention-driven environments without fully abandoning journalistic standards, giving rise to what can be understood as a form of selective sensationalism.

BEYOND THE BILLBOARD: EVOLVING MODELS OF SPORT SPONSORSHIP IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Sport sponsorship has long been conceptualized as a transactional exchange — brands acquire visibility through association with sport properties in return for financial investment. However, the proliferation of digital platforms, the rise of athlete-driven content, and shifting consumer expectations are rendering this transactional model increasingly insufficient. This paper offers a conceptual re-examination of sport sponsorship through the frameworks of relational marketing and value co-creation theory. We argue that contemporary sponsorship is better understood as a dynamic, multi-stakeholder process in which leagues, teams, athletes, sponsors, and fans collectively generate brand meaning. Drawing on recent developments — including jersey patch partnerships in the NBA, naming rights in esports, and influencer-style athlete sponsorship deals — we identify three emerging sponsorship paradigms: community-integrated sponsorship, content-first sponsorship, and cause-aligned sponsorship. Each paradigm reflects a distinct logic for how brand equity is built through sport. We further examine how measurement frameworks, traditionally centered on media equivalency and impressions, are evolving toward engagement-based and sentiment-driven metrics. Implications for sponsorship theory and practice are discussed, with particular relevance to how sport organizations can position themselves as strategic partners rather than mere inventory providers. This work contributes to a growing body of literature calling for updated theoretical models of sport sponsorship fit for the digital era.

BUILDING AN INVENTORY SOLUTION FOR SMALL BUSINESSES: A REACT NATIVE AND SQLITE APPROACH

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Small family-owned companies frequently struggle with handling inventory because they use inefficient methods like manual records or simplistic spreadsheets. Commercial solutions such as Zettle and Square are effective, although they are too cumbersome and expensive for minor operations. This project presents a self-made mobile inventory management application that suits family businesses but is featured with a cross-platform and offline application due to the use of React Native, Expo, and SQLite. The software combines the abilities of barcode scanning, DYMO label printing, and a lightweight, indexed local database to simplify operations in inventory processes. The functionality and efficiency of the app to enhance the efficiency of tasks, the accuracy of tasks, and the satisfaction of users were tested via a two-week experimental implementation. The outcomes show a remarkable decrease in the times used in functions and error ratio with good user perception, which proves the effectiveness of custom mobile applications in niche operational requirements. The results can be used in current small business digitizing and mobile inventory management debates.

CAN WE BRING OUR FAMILY BACK TOGETHER? HOW TO RE-ENGAGE WITH INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS

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This study examines best practices for collaborating with international professors during these turbulent times. Lately, the international space has been characterized by geopolitical tensions, restrictive immigration policies, and funding volatility. Evidence also suggests that visa constraints and travel bans reduce the mobility of scholars and weaken the United States' ability to attract and retain international academic talent. Effective collaboration with international professors during this time depends strongly on institutional support. First, strengthening digital and remote collaboration infrastructures helps to mitigate mobility barriers. Secondly, fostering transparent communication practices is essential to addressing cultural differences and governmental shifts. Third, build a diversified funding base across multiple countries to facilitate resilient research networks. These dynamics may contribute to increased uncertainty, but successful engagement with international professors depends not only on individual competencies but also on sustained commitment to global cooperation despite political constraints.

CODED CREATIVITY: SUBCULTURES, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND THE FUTURE OF GEN Z

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The perception of Gen Z consumer behavior is significantly marred by persistent stereotypes and exaggerations of the effects of the realities of the twenty-first-century information realities of attitudes, opinions and behaviors in the digital world, particularly with respect to influencer culture. These stereotypes present an opportunity for a well-researched corrective. Among the little-studied cultural factors driving Generation Z consumer behavior is fashion culture. As this article will demonstrate, fashion has been an art form on a global scale, historically, typically morphing to align with, or rebel against, the broader political, cultural, or economic conditions. What this means is significant for the continuing evolution of public relations, not only because of how Gen Z fashion impacts PR's agenda-setting function globally and locally, but because of the continuing shift in opinion formation from both directionally (from the ground up) and generationally (from Gen Z down). Research is needed to demonstrate this claim, which will show how fashion has become not only an essential symbol of Gen Z culture, but even a key part of generational identity. Using the research methodology of trend analysis and deep research, and the lived experience of the author in the trend-setting creative youth culture of China, this article will focus on how China's Gen Z utilizes fashion and subculture trends are expressing a coded creativity, and highlighting the history of youth rebellion against existing social conditions and the anxieties that attend an uncertain future.

CONSTRAINT SENSEMAKING IN PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

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Firms increasingly face sudden and politically charged external constraints, but little is known about how organizations publicly convey such constraints. This study investigates Chinese technology firms' sensemaking of United States export controls by examining their annual report disclosures between 2015 and 2024. Drawing on the attention-based view and organizational sensemaking, we conceptualize corporate disclosure as a discursive channel through which firms translate regulatory shocks into manageable narratives. We analyze 104 disclosure entries from 17 publicly listed firms using a mixed-method design that combines event-anchored episode coding with bilingual dictionary analysis. Our findings reveal two distinct disclosure patterns. Activation episodes follow salient policy events and emphasize immediate impact and uncertainty, whereas normalization episodes embed constraints in routine risk language and institutional abstraction. Nearly half of activation episodes did not explicitly name the regulatory instruments, consistent with instrument non-mention as an observable legitimacy-relevant disclosure choice. The study contributes by theorizing silence as an observable disclosure strategy, introducing an event-centered approach to constraint interpretation, and demonstrating how firms negotiate domestic and international audiences through narrative framing. These findings extend research on nonmarket strategy and corporate transparency under geopolitical pressure.

CROSSING BOUNDARIES: UNDERSTANDING THE CROSS-OVER FAN THORUGH IDENTITY THEORY AND SPORT CONSUMPTION RESEARCH

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Contemporary sport consumers increasingly resist traditional fan boundaries, simultaneously engaging with multiple sports, leagues, and athletic properties in ways that challenge long-standing assumptions about fan loyalty and identity. This phenomenon — referred to here as cross-over fandom — has been accelerated by the globalization of sport, the rise of fantasy and gaming ecosystems, athlete celebrity culture, and algorithmically curated sport content. Despite its growing prevalence, cross-over fandom remains theoretically underdeveloped in sport management literature. This paper addresses that gap by drawing on social identity theory, fan identification frameworks, and sport consumer behavior research to conceptualize cross-over fandom as a distinct and meaningful form of sport consumption. We distinguish cross-over fans from casual or peripheral fans, arguing that cross-over fans maintain high engagement levels across multiple sport properties without a singular primary identification. We further propose that cross-over fandom is facilitated by specific antecedents — including athlete parasocial relationships, transmedia sport storytelling, and platform-driven content discovery — and that it carries distinct implications for sport marketers seeking to grow audiences beyond traditional geographic and demographic boundaries. A conceptual model is presented and propositions for future empirical testing are offered. This paper contributes to broader conversations about the evolving nature of fan identity in a fragmented, multi-platform sport media environment.

DECENTRALIZING GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN: A MODEL FOR U.S. COMPANIES TO FOSTER ETHICAL TRADE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

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Global supply chains remain highly centralized and U.S. firms continue to be exposed to complex ethical, environmental and operational risks in traditional manufacturing sectors. This paper proposes a decentralized trade model that incentivizes U.S. enterprises to diversify their production by partnering with developing countries using ethical, extra-U.S. supply chains. Based on an analysis of numerous case studies, this work highlights how such a decentralization process can minimize supply chain risks, enhance the economic resilience of emerging markets, and help achieve more equitable development outcomes. The proposed model focuses on three integral elements: ethical labor structures that guarantee decent wages and appropriate workplace conditions, sustainable resources management to diminish the environmental footprint and a fair trade partnership that seeks symmetrical mutual economic benefits and local developments. Rather than exposing U.S. businesses to reputational and operational risks, this offers opportunities for innovation, capacity building and inclusive growth in partner countries. Additionally, decentralization would provide firms with an enhanced ability to adapt to disruptions from shifting global market conditions such as political instability, trade disputes or natural disasters in several sourcing locations. Such a framework now provides a roadmap with which U.S. business can practically integrate ethics and sustainability into international operations thereby linking profitability to social responsibility and long-term economic development in the global south.

DEVELOPING A RESPONSIBLE METHODOLOGY FOR LLM-ASSISTED THEMATIC ANALYSIS

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The integration of large language models (LLMs) into qualitative thematic analysis offers genuine efficiency advantages but raises fundamental methodological and ethical concerns. This article develops, from foundational principles, a step-by-step methodology for LLM-assisted inductive thematic analysis, synthesizing the six-phase framework of Braun and Clarke (2006) with the LLM integration procedures of De Paoli (2023, 2024) and the inductive thematic saturation metric of De Paoli and Mathis (2025). Against this methodology, the article then maps six domains of critical concern identified in the literature: interpretive validity, output reliability, researcher reflexivity, algorithmic bias, data privacy, and reproducibility. Six targeted revisions are proposed in response: a pre-analysis positionality statement, a data handling and privacy protocol, mandatory model and session logging, a bias audit checkpoint, a hallucination verification procedure, and an epistemological scope statement. The resulting framework positions the LLM as a constrained assistive tool operating under continuous researcher oversight.

DISRUPTION, FRAGMENTATION, AND THE NEW SPORTS MEDIA LANDSCAPE: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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The sports media industry is undergoing a period of unprecedented structural transformation. The decline of traditional linear broadcasting, the rise of direct-to-consumer streaming platforms, and the growing influence of social and digital media have fundamentally altered how sport content is produced, distributed, and consumed. This paper develops a conceptual framework for understanding these shifts through the lens of media economics and institutional theory. Drawing on recent industry trends — including the collapse of regional sports networks, the entry of Amazon, Apple, and Netflix into live sports rights markets, and the proliferation of league-owned media properties — we argue that the traditional tripartite relationship between leagues, broadcasters, and fans is giving way to a more fragmented, algorithmically mediated ecosystem. We propose that sport organizations must now navigate competing logics: the legacy logic of mass broadcast reach and the emerging logic of personalized, platform-driven engagement. Theoretical implications for sport management scholarship are discussed, with particular attention to how fragmentation affects revenue models, fan identity, and the valuation of media rights. This framework provides a foundation for future empirical work examining how leagues and teams adapt their media strategies in an increasingly unbundled environment.

DO CENTRAL BANKS FOLLOW AN IMPLICIT MONETARY RULE? GRANGER CAUSALITY, REAL GDP, AND MONEY IN THE U.S. AND BRAZIL (1997-2024)

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From general-equilibrium theory comes the notion of the multifaceted interrelatedness of all of the phenomena in an economy. Not only does this notion obviate exogeneity, it opens up the possibility that all phenomena are endogenous. The vector autoregression (VAR), originated by Sims (1980, “Macroeconomics and Reality”), is an econometric method that attempts to model the many multifaceted interdependencies in economic phenomena without the use of arbitrary assumptions about data. In other words, the data are liberated to “speak for themselves.” Sims (1980, “Macroeconomics and Reality”) was in turn inspired by Granger (1969) establishing what is now known as “Granger causality,” or the idea that if x is observationally prior to y, then is it effective true causation. Sims (1972), in a test of Friedman and Schwartz (1963), applied this concept to study the relationship between the money supply and GNP and concluded that money Granger-caused GNP. However, eight years later, he reversed that conclusion (1980, “Monetarism Reconsidered”). This paper examines data from the U.S. and Brazil (1997-2024) and tests for Granger causality between real GDP and the money supply (M2) to determine whether the central bank in either country is following an implicit adaptive monetary rule (Meltzer, 1993, p. 134). In other words, do monetary authorities develop an intuitive feel for the direction of real GDP and, to control inflation, adjust the money supply accordingly? Furthermore, does such a test, among the ones already in existence, qualify as a sound one of central-bank efficacy?

DRIVING PERFORMANCE WHERE? EVALUATING THE BENEFITS OF THE BALANCED SCORECARD

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The Balanced Scorecard has become a ubiquitous component of management and accounting textbooks. With such strong endorsements, one would expect there to be ample empirical evidence of superior corporate outcomes. There are no negative comments about the Balanced Scorecard from consultancies and professional magazines. This observation drives us back to the basic concepts of evaluation. Why is there such broad acceptance of the method? Of course, every manager wants to be diligent and also seen as being diligent, which is different. The purpose of this paper is to challenge a tendency to over-generalize the benefits of the Balanced Scorecard and point to the need for more research into its benefits. What are the necessary underlying steps to success?

EMPATHY VS. EFFICIENCY: HOW CUSTOMERS FEEL ABOUT AI AND HUMAN SERVICE AGENTS

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As companies increasingly deploy Artificial Intelligence to handle customer service calls, understanding the subsequent shift in customer experience is paramount. This paper explores the emotional dynamics of customer interactions, comparing the sentiment of callers who interact with AI-driven systems against those who speak with human agents. Through an analysis of customer surveys and sentiment data, the study finds that while AI is praised for its availability and speed in resolving simple tasks, it often fails to mitigate caller frustration in complex scenarios, leading to feelings of dissatisfaction. In contrast, human agents are shown to build greater rapport and diffuse negative emotions through empathy, despite being perceived as slower. The results underscore a critical consumer preference: a desire for human connection during moments of high emotion or problem complexity. This research contributes to the field of Human-Computer Interaction by highlighting the psychological limits of automated service and provides a framework for businesses to strategically deploy AI without alienating their customer base.

EMPIRICAL STUDY OF IT AFFORDANCES, CONSUMER EXPERIENCES, TRUST AND PURCHASE INTENTION IN SOCIAL COMMERCE

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Social commerce has transformed digital commerce, yet a critical question remains: how do its technological capabilities ultimately translate into sales? While prior research has catalogued platform features, the underlying psychological mechanism—how these features build the trust necessary for purchase—is poorly understood. Bridging Affordance Theory and the Stimulus-

Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, this study develops and empirically tests a model to answer this question. Survey data from social commerce users reveal that IT affordances (product visibility, interactivity, personalization, social connections) shape distinct cognitive and affective experiences. Crucially, these experiences form two unique pathways to trust: a cognitive pathway driven by information and fit, and an affective pathway driven by emotion and community. Trust, formed through these dual pathways, emerges as the paramount driver of purchase intention, fully mediating the effect of technology on behavior. This research provides a novel theoretical lens by conceptualizing trust as a strong predictor of consumer purchase intention, offering managers a clear blueprint: success hinges on designing platforms that strategically leverage affordances to build both the logical confidence and emotional bond that together compel consumers to buy. To succeed in social commerce, practitioners must prioritize engineering trust by optimizing personalization and social connections to create meaningful experiential journeys rather than simply accumulating more features.

ENHANCING LEARNING AND REDUCING TEST ANXIETY: STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE

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This study examines student perceptions of the Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique (IF-AT), a multiple-choice testing format that provides real-time item-level feedback and supports partial credit iterative responding (PCIR). The paper outlines how IF-AT forms operate in live classroom environments and evaluates both advantages and drawbacks from student and faculty perspectives. Survey results indicate that students perceive increased learning, value the opportunity for immediate feedback, and experience reduced anxiety when preparing for and taking IF-AT–based exams. Students also reported a strong preference for the IF-AT over traditional testing formats and believed that the structure of PCIR decreases incentives to cheat. The paper concludes with recommendations for faculty seeking to improve engagement and assessment effectiveness through the adoption of IF-AT. Beyond documenting student attitudes, the study also contributes to the assessment and experiential learning literature by situating IF-AT as a hybrid formative–summative assessment tool. By combining evaluation with real-time cognitive correction, the IF-AT may help align testing practices with contemporary pedagogical goals emphasizing engagement, feedback, and learning-centered assessment design.

EVALUATING GEORGIA DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PLAN PERFORMANCE

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This research evaluates the effects of implementation of the Georgia Defined Contribution Plan. The GDCP is a mandatory participation retirement plan managed by the State of Georgia for part-time, hourly wage earners working for state entities. Specifically, we identify short-term financial

impacts of the program for both the employer (State of Georgia) and the wage earner (plan participant). We use publicly available, audited financial statements to speculate on impacts to state resources. We use one volunteer's actual account statements to speculate on the impacts to plan participants. We find the GDCP provides a cost saving to the state of Georgia through exclusion of the employees from social security retirement costs and reduces overall administrative cost burden on other state retirement programs. For plan participants, overall benefits are questionable. First, there is no matching fund or contribution of any type to the GCCP by the state of Georgia or supported agencies thereof. In addition, plan growth is not tied directly to financial indicators or markets. In fact, the return is dictated solely by the Board of Regents for the Georgia Retirement System.

EXPLORING CROSS-OVER FANDOM—DO FANS OF THE CINCINNATI BENGALS ALSO FOLLOW THE REDS, THE BENGALS, & CINCINNATI FC?

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Contemporary sport consumers increasingly resist traditional fan boundaries, simultaneously engaging with multiple sports, leagues, and athletic properties in ways that challenge long-standing assumptions about fan loyalty and identity. This phenomenon — referred to here as cross-over fandom — has been accelerated by the globalization of sport, the rise of fantasy and gaming ecosystems, athlete celebrity culture, and algorithmically curated sport content. Despite its growing prevalence, cross-over fandom remains theoretically underdeveloped in sport management literature. This paper addresses that gap by drawing on social identity theory, fan identification frameworks, and sport consumer behavior research to conceptualize cross-over fandom as a distinct and meaningful form of sport consumption. We distinguish cross-over fans from casual or peripheral fans, arguing that cross-over fans maintain high engagement levels across multiple sport properties without a singular primary identification. We further propose that cross-over fandom is facilitated by specific antecedents — including athlete parasocial relationships, transmedia sport storytelling, and platform-driven content discovery — and that it carries distinct implications for sport marketers seeking to grow audiences beyond traditional geographic and demographic boundaries. A conceptual model is presented and propositions for future empirical testing are offered. This paper contributes to broader conversations about the evolving nature of fan identity in a fragmented, multi-platform sport media environment.

FACE-ISM THEORY IN THE 2024 UNITED STATES PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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The face-ism theory, which posits that mediated images of men are displayed with more facial prominence than mediated images of women, was the theoretical basis of this research. Visual media coverage of the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election, key still images of YouTube videos, covering Kamala Harris, vice-president of the United States and the Democratic candidate for president of the United States, and Donald Trump, former president of the United States and the

Republican candidate for president of the United States, were analyzed. The time frame was Sept. 4, 2024, when Harris joined the race after United States President Joe Biden, the previous Democratic candidate, dropped out of the campaign after a poor debate performance with Trump, until Nov. 4, 2024, the day before election day. A total of 5,404 still key images of Harris and Trump from YouTube videos published by seven major United States broadcast and cable television networks were analyzed. Two coders reached 98% agreement. A six-point body index cropping scale was the dependent variable. Independent variables were candidate, network, and date. Images of Trump, the white, male candidate (53.3%), were more frequent than images of Harris, the African American, female candidate (46.7%). Images of Trump were displayed with more frequent facial prominence (55.1%) than images of Harris (50.0%). The face-ism theory was supported ($p < .001$). NBC, CBS, CNN, and MSNBC published images of Trump with more facial prominence than Harris. ABC, PBS, and FOX published images of Harris with more facial prominence than Trump.

FROM AMATEURISM TO AGENCY: NIL, PROFESSIONALIZATION, AND THE EMERGING ROLE OF THE COLLEGE SPORT GENERAL MANAGER

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The landscape of intercollegiate athletics in the United States has been irrevocably altered by the advent of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) rights, the transfer portal, and recent revenue-sharing litigation. These developments have collectively accelerated the professionalization of college sport, introducing labor market dynamics previously confined to professional leagues. This paper examines a particularly consequential organizational adaptation: the emergence of the General Manager (GM) role within college athletic departments. Drawing on organizational theory and resource dependence theory, we argue that the proliferation of NIL collectives, multi-million dollar roster construction decisions, and athlete contract negotiations has created a functional demand for front-office expertise analogous to professional sport. We conceptualize the college sport GM as a boundary-spanning role that bridges athletic administration, NIL compliance, donor relations, and competitive strategy. This paper maps the structural conditions that have given rise to this role and proposes a typology of GM functions across different institutional contexts (Power Four vs. mid-major programs). We further discuss the implications of this shift for athletic department governance, the student-athlete relationship, and the long-term identity of intercollegiate athletics as a distinct domain of sport management. This work contributes to emerging scholarship on the blurring boundary between amateur and professional sport.

FROM FAITH TO SERVICE: A VIRTUE-BASED MODEL OF RELIGIOUS SALIENCE AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

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Servant leadership has emerged as one of the most prominent values-based leadership frameworks in contemporary organizational research. Although a substantial body of scholarship has

demonstrated the positive effects of servant leadership on employee attitudes and organizational outcomes, comparatively less attention has been devoted to understanding its antecedents. This paper develops a conceptual model proposing that religious salience—the degree to which religious beliefs are central to an individual's identity—may function as an antecedent to servant leadership through the development of leadership-relevant virtues. Drawing on servant leadership theory, virtue ethics, and research on religion and spirituality in organizations, the model suggests that religious commitment may encourage the formation of virtues such as humility and prosocial motivation that orient leaders toward service and relational responsibility. These virtues, in turn, increase the likelihood that leaders will engage in servant leadership behaviors characterized by empowering followers, prioritizing follower development, and emphasizing ethical responsibility. The model further proposes that servant leadership contributes to positive follower outcomes, including work engagement and organizational citizenship behavior, and that these relationships may be influenced by organizational justice climate. By integrating insights from leadership research, virtue-based perspectives, and scholarship on religion in organizations, this paper contributes to servant leadership theory by identifying religious salience as a potential antecedent and by highlighting virtue formation as a key mechanism linking faith and leadership behavior. The framework provides a foundation for future empirical research examining the relationship between religious identity, virtue development, and leadership practices in organizational contexts.

FROM INTERRUPTION TO ANIMOSITY? EXAMINING WHETHER YOUTUBE'S PLATFORM PRACTICES GENERATE CONSUMER HOSITLITY

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Consumer animosity—traditionally defined as deep-seated antipathy toward a company based on perceived unethical practices, political events, or economic grievances—has been extensively studied in contexts such as international boycotts and corporate social responsibility failures. However, the digital platform economy has introduced new forms of consumer-platform friction that may challenge conventional understandings of what generates hostility. This paper investigates whether YouTube's platform practices, particularly advertising interruptions and anti-ad-blocker enforcement, can generate consumer animosity or whether these responses remain confined to transient irritation. It examines three categories of YouTube interruptions: (1) advertising intrusiveness (increased ad frequency, unskippable formats, and ad-to-content ratio imbalances), (2) technical enforcement against ad-blockers (playback delays, black screens, and playback failures), and (3) communication-related controversies (public statements misinterpreted as endorsing intrusive practices). Drawing on established theoretical frameworks including consumer animosity theory, psychological reactance, and brand hate literature the analysis evaluates whether observed user responses meet the threshold for genuine animosity.

FROM SELF-REGULATION TO RESILIENCE: HOW PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS SHAPE EMPLOYEES, TEAMS, AND ORGANIZATIONS AT WORK

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This paper reviews how core psychological mechanisms shape work outcomes across employee, team, and organizational levels in organizational behavior and human resource management. Although prior research has generated substantial insight into burnout, emotional labor, resilience, psychological capital, and employee well-being, these streams often remain fragmented and are rarely synthesized within a shared multilevel framework. This review addresses that gap by organizing the literature around three broad psychological domains: self-regulatory resources, affective-relational processes, and adaptive positive resources. It then examines how these domains influence outcomes at three levels: employee functioning, team and relational dynamics, and organizational and human resource outcomes. The review argues that self-regulatory resources are most closely associated with engagement, distress, and adaptive performance; affective-relational processes shape trust, support, emotional exhaustion, and retention; and adaptive positive resources contribute to thriving, collaboration, innovation, and organizational renewal. Rather than treating these literatures as separate traditions, the paper shows how they are connected through cross-level processes in which individual regulation influences relational dynamics, relational dynamics shape workplace climate, and climate conditions broader organizational capability. By integrating these streams, the review contributes to organizational behavior and human resource management scholarship by clarifying construct boundaries, identifying underexplored links across levels of analysis, and offering a more coherent explanation of how psychological mechanisms travel through the workplace to affect both people and organizations. The paper also offers practical implications for training, retention, employee well-being, and resilience-building initiatives, especially in labor-intensive service environments.

FROM SWIFT TRUST TO INTRA-GROUP TRUST: AN EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS MODEL IN WORK GROUPS

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Swift trust, first introduced by Meyerson, Weick, and Kramer (1996), refers to an initial, temporary, largely cognition-based form of trust that enables members of temporary work groups to coordinate effectively toward performance goals. Existence of swift trust provides the basis for team members' willingness to work with other members and their expectations about final team outcomes. However, because it forms without prior interpersonal interaction, swift trust is fragile and can be withdrawn readily, particularly following unexpected discontinuities or disruptions. As communication technologies, including artificial intelligence, expand organizations' reliance on temporary, often technology-mediated teams, understanding how swift trust develops and when it is sustained through group processes to become enduring intra-group trust becomes increasingly important. In this study, we examine the evolutionary process through which initial cognition-

based swift trust is transformed into more enduring cognition- and affect-based intra-group trust. First, we identify the group processes through which swift trust accelerates the development of intra-group trust. Second, we investigate which team actions strengthen the effects of swift trust, resulting in more durable intra-group trust. Finally, we explain how teams can respond to swift-trust disconfirmations, mitigate their effects, and rebuild trust by recalibrating expectations. We include a model which reflects these concepts, identifies their interactions, and describes how a permanent and effective intra-group trust evolves.

FUTURE READINESS FOR AI TRANSFORMATION: A META-CAPABILITY PERSPECTIVE ON GENERATIVE AI IN BANKING

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The adoption of generative AI (GenAI) in banking introduces profound strategic, technological, organizational, and regulatory challenges. It also exposes limitations in existing theories of digital transformation. Despite substantial investments, many banks remain confined to pilot initiatives. This is often due to misalignment between GenAI capabilities and organizational structures. Concerns about model opacity, reliability, and regulatory compliance further slow adoption. Together, these challenges highlight the need for a theoretically grounded understanding of how organizations adapt to rapidly evolving, AI-driven environments. We develop future readiness as a higher-order, integrative meta-capability that extends prior work in information systems and strategic management. We synthesize four complementary theoretical lenses: digital transformation as a continuous flow, the resource-based view, dynamic capabilities, and platform ecosystem theory. From this perspective, we conceptualize AI transformation as an ongoing and non-linear process. This process involves interdependent resource reconfiguration, organizational learning, and boundary-spanning collaboration. Future readiness captures the firm’s capacity to align and orchestrate four key dimensions: continuous transformation flows, strategic resource allocation, adaptive sensing, seizing and reconfiguring capabilities, and ecosystem engagement under uncertainty. This integrative framework contributes to the IS literature in several ways. It reconciles processual and capability-based perspectives on digital transformation. It also explains how firms develop sustained adaptability in AI-intensive contexts. Finally, it provides a foundation for theorizing the co-evolution of organizational capabilities and technological change, and for guiding empirical research on AI-enabled transformation in complex, regulated industries.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE 2024 ELECTIONS

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Impressions and observations of an international student of the 2024 U.S. election will be shared providing insight on campaign rallies, campaign ads, special events and targeting of specific voting groups primarily in the U.S. presidential election. This will include takeaways from visits to campaign events in the Northeast including Massachusetts and New Hampshire as well as visits to the Midwest including interviews in St Louis as well as rural southern Illinois.

HOW DO ORGANIZATIONAL AI GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES INFLUENCE AI RISK MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY IN FINTECH FIRMS

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Artificial intelligence (AI) has become integral to the operational infrastructure of fintech firms. While AI-driven technologies enhance efficiency and decision-making speed, they also introduce significant risks related to data governance and regulatory compliance. As a result, fintech firms face increasing pressure from regulators and stakeholders to establish effective internal governance mechanisms for overseeing AI development and deployment. However, limited empirical study has addressed how organizational design choices, particularly the structure of AI governance within firms, shape the capability of organizations to manage AI-related risks. This gap is particularly salient in fintech, where firms vary significantly in technological maturity, regulatory exposure, and operational scale. This study, therefore, examines how organizational AI governance structures influence AI risk management capability in fintech firms. The study conceptualizes AI governance structures such as centralized, federated, decentralized, and risk-integrated governance models as organizational mechanisms that shape oversight, accountability, and decision authority over AI systems. Using a cross-sectional dataset of 83 global fintech firms, the study constructs an AI risk management capability index and evaluates how variations in AI governance structures relate to operational and trust-related outcomes. Our findings indicate a positive relationship between governance structure, measurable risk-management capability, and operational outcomes. Furthermore, the research advances understanding of AI governance as a strategic organizational capability rather than solely a compliance mechanism. The findings also offer practical insights for fintech executives and policymakers.

IC VERSUS IMC: AN OUTLOOK ON CONCEPT OVERLAP

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Organizations in the last four decades have implemented integrated communication (IC) and integrated marketing communication (IMC) to enhance their businesses. The authors postulate that IMC and IC may sound similar and share many roles, however, they are not exactly the same. IMC places a greater emphasis on customers and their needs. The primary goal is to establish strong relationships between both parties. By doing so, one can build relationships with consumers and satisfy their needs. IC, on the other hand, considers all stakeholders of the organization, and not just the customers. The purpose is to build strong relationships for the organization, internally and externally, by unifying all communication aspects. Such efforts not only benefit the organization and its members, but also the consumers and clients since both parties are better understood. Integrated marketing communication and integrated communication strategies share similarities in their goals and objectives for the organization. They both focus on customers' and clients' wants and needs, follow a two-way communication process, and aim to build strong relationships. However, they still have differences in objectives and strategies. For instances, IMC concentrates on unifying all marketing efforts in order to deliver a similar message to the public while IC

emphasizes communication integration not only in marketing, but in all other departments and sectors of the organization.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GREEN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS AND LEADERS

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Reducing carbon footprint is one of the strategic priorities of almost all major organizations. Such priorities are targeted to reverse the impact of climate change. Activities related to reducing carbon footprint have been embedded in supply chain processes. Transition to green supply chain management (GSCM) will be effective when organizations receive strong support from their stakeholders and leaders. Therefore, stakeholder theory and leadership theory play a vital role in explaining green adoption practices. However, studies in environmental management have rarely investigated the interplay between leadership and stakeholder pressure, and interestingly, in the field of organizational management, these were explained to increase competitiveness. The purpose of this study is to investigate the application of both stakeholder and leadership theories to implement GSCM practices. We conducted a systematic literature review to identify articles explaining these two theories on green adoption. Findings indicate that stakeholder pressure has the potential to affect the implementation of GSCM practices, while leadership supports utilizing motivational mechanisms to engage employees to adopt GSCM practices. This study also offers theoretical and practical implications.

IN DEFENSE OF ADVERTISING VALUE EQUIVALENCY: INTEGRATING THE CONTROVERSIAL METRIC IN A COMPOSITE MEDIA RELATIONS EVALUATION FORMULA

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This article critically re-examines the controversial metric of Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) within public relations (PR) measurement, challenging the prevailing consensus that AVE should be wholly discarded. Drawing on both academic literature and industry practice, the study acknowledges AVE's methodological flaws—such as its disregard for sentiment, message quality, and actual outcomes—yet highlights its persistent use due to its simplicity and ability to standardize comparisons across diverse media outlets. The article argues that, when used strictly as a comparative tool for media relations (rather than as a measure of campaign effectiveness or Return on Investment [ROI]), AVE retains a legitimate—if limited—function. To address AVE's shortcomings, the article proposes a composite evaluation framework that integrates AVE with qualitative and outcome-based metrics, including sentiment analysis, engagement scaling, and message pull-through. This multidimensional approach enables practitioners to contextualize AVE within a broader, more nuanced assessment of PR value. The article concludes by demonstrating

the framework's application through case studies, proposing solutions for AVE inconsistencies and digital adaptation, and comparing it to existing models, affirming its value as a pragmatic, hybrid tool in modern PR.

INFRASTRUCTURE-INTENSIVE INNOVATION AND THE CONCENTRATION OF FRONTIER AI

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Recent advances in large language models (LLMs) are transforming artificial intelligence (AI) into an infrastructure embedded in business processes. Yet frontier AI innovation remains concentrated in a small number of countries and ecosystems, even as AI applications diffuse widely across industries. This paper develops a theoretical explanation for this pattern. We conceptualize AI development as a form of infrastructure-intensive innovation characterized by high capital requirements, layered innovational complementarities, and increasing returns. These infrastructural constraints pre-filter participation in frontier model development before conventional product-market competition occurs. But constraints alone do not produce innovation clusters. We argue that concentration emerges when infrastructural constraints interact with amplification mechanisms rooted in digital ecosystems, including platform integration, coordinated resource mobilization, and scaling dynamics. Together, these forces generate a two-dimensional framework defined by constraint intensity and amplification strength that explains four distinct innovation outcomes. The framework helps clarify why AI capabilities concentrate in a few ecosystems even as downstream applications diffuse broadly. The paper concludes with the operational implications for firms that increasingly rely on upstream AI infrastructures they do not control.

IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE MAKING US DUMBER?

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AI has quickly moved from science fiction to everyday life. It helps us author emails, diagnose illnesses, suggest movies, and create essays. Technology raises an unsettling question: are we outsourcing too much of our thinking to machines? This paper explores how AI may be making us "dumber," the risks that come with that shift and the steps we can take to safeguard our intelligence. On a societal level, AI-driven solutions risk creating a population less equipped to question, verify, or challenge the outputs of machines. This vulnerability opens the door to misinformation and manipulation as individuals may uncritically accept algorithmic outputs. AI automation in the workplace may limit opportunities for employees to develop their skills, as AI is increasingly taking over tasks that require knowledge, insight, and practical experience. In education, reliance on AI-powered essay generation can hinder students' ability to engage deeply with material, fostering surface-level understanding rather than mastery. Despite these threats, the solution does not lie in rejecting AI. but in cultivating responsible and balanced use. AI is here to

stay, and it can make our lives better in countless ways. But there is a real risk that if we let machines do too much of our thinking, we will lose the very skills that make us human: memory, critical judgment, and creativity. By using AI responsibly—balancing its convenience with deliberate human effort—we can ensure that AI enhances our intelligence rather than replaces it.

IS SUCKING UP AND PUNCHING DOWN A ONE-WAY TICKET TO PROMOTION?

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This paper examines leadership practice commonly known as "sucking up and punching down," a leadership style in which leaders display "complete and total obedience" toward superiors while exhibiting aggression and hostility toward subordinates. Through a review of leadership literature, this review looks at power distance and impression management. It highlights how such leadership practice erodes psychological safety, fosters toxic workplace cultures, and undermines both individual morale and performance. Conversely, the short-term effectiveness of this strategy cannot be overstated. The paper argues that sustainable leadership effectiveness depends on authentic leadership — consisting of respect and accountability across all levels of the organization. Finally, this paper concludes with recommendations for organizations to mitigate upward impression management and downward abuse through transparent feedback loops. Organizations must stay true to their value systems by fostering an empathetic environment where all voices are heard, and leaders are trained to recognize subordinate views and practices.

LEADING RESILIENCE: HOW LEADERSHIP ENABLES ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE DURING DISRUPTION

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Organizations increasingly operate in environments characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, where disruptions threaten operational stability and performance. Although leadership and organizational resilience have been widely studied, limited research explains how leaders actively cultivate resilience within organizations facing disruption. This study addresses that gap by examining how leadership enables continued organizational performance during disruptive events. Using a grounded theory approach informed by strong structuration theory, data was collected through semi-structured interviews with fourteen experienced organizational leaders across multiple industries. Analysis of the interview data revealed four interconnected themes: organizational culture, leader attributes, individual resilience within the organization, and organizational resilience development. The findings suggest that resilience is not merely a reactive crisis-management capability but rather an ongoing leadership process embedded in daily organizational practices. The study introduces the concept of leading resilience, defined as the continuous leadership effort to cultivate trust, empower employees, and develop organizational agility prior to disruption. By integrating leadership and resilience through the lens of strong structuration theory, this research offers a conceptual framework explaining how

leaders build organizational preparedness and sustain performance during disruption. The findings contribute to both leadership theory and managerial practice by identifying practical leadership behaviors that strengthen organizational resilience.

LEVERAGING AI TO HELP STUDENTS BECOME RESPONSIBLE, ETHICAL, AND COMPETENT LEADERS

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Helping students become responsible, ethical, and competent leaders in AI is our responsibility as educators. Faculty training and institutional support are crucial for effective course delivery and for ensuring that instructors receive the latest AI knowledge, but we cannot all rely on those resources. This presentation will examine how students' values shape their perceptions and behaviors regarding the ethical use of AI. For some students, using AI to check grammar is ethical, while for others, using AI to compose sections of a paper is unethical. There is a significant gap in the educational literature on the ethical implications of AI.

We will explore practical strategies for leveraging AI in coursework. The goal is to guide students to become ethical and competent AI users before entering the workforce; however, to provide that guidance, we must first examine how our own ethics and values align with the AI adoption compendium. Universities teach AI skills while navigating a fine line between academic integrity and ethical use. Much of the literature identifies risks, such as the loss of critical thinking and overreliance on AI, as key concerns for students; however, we argue that the opportunities outweigh the concerns.

Several consistent recommendations emerge for schools seeking to develop responsible, ethical, and competent AI users: integrate AI into every stage of the curriculum, provide clear institutional policies on ethical AI use, use inclusive, accessible, culturally sensitive AI education models, and train faculty to model responsible AI behavior through transparency, oversight, and ethical AI practices.

MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP STYLE MATTERS: HOW MAS ORIGIN SHAPES DECISION-RELEVANT ACCOUNTING INFORMATION IN HOTELS

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Management accounting systems (MAS) are central to financial reporting, control, and decision support. In hotel organizations, MAS are often developed by different authorities; corporate headquarters, management companies, or property-level controllers. Yet prior research has focused mainly on ownership and organizational structure rather than the locus of MAS design. Drawing on agency and contingency perspectives, this study examines how MAS design origin

influences the content and perceived usefulness of accounting information. Survey data from U.S. hotel financial controllers are analyzed using multiple discriminant analysis to compare perceptions across three MAS-origin groups. The results identify four accounting information attributes that significantly discriminate among groups, indicating that MAS design authority systematically shapes reporting emphasis, cost system orientation, and profitability analysis practices. These findings extend management accounting research by demonstrating that MAS origin constitutes an independent structural determinant of financial information characteristics and decision relevance. The study highlights implications for MAS standardization, governance alignment, and performance measurement design in multi-entity organizations.

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT BUNDLES AND SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN RESTAURANT FRANCHISE CHAINS

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Franchising enables rapid expansion in the restaurant industry, yet franchise systems exhibit substantial differences in financial performance despite operating under similar business models. While prior research has examined franchising governance through factors such as ownership structure, royalty rates, and system growth, comparatively less attention has been devoted to the operational support that franchisors provide to franchisees and how these supports jointly influence system-level outcomes. In restaurant franchising, franchisors commonly provide a range of operational support services such as training programs, marketing coordination, site selection assistance, and ongoing monitoring to ensure brand consistency and operational efficiency. However, these mechanisms are rarely examined as interacting organizational arrangements. This study adopts a configurational perspective to examine how bundles of franchisor operational support shape system performance in restaurant franchise chains. Using data from franchise disclosure documents and financial panel data for U.S. restaurant chains, we identify key dimensions of operational support provided to franchisees and analyze how these supports combine with structural characteristics such as firm age and geographic scope. We employ Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to identify configurations of support bundles associated with high and low franchisor profitability. Preliminary findings reveal multiple pathways to high system performance, indicating that no single support mechanism guarantees success. Configurations associated with stronger performance consistently include centralized marketing coordination and broader geographic presence, often complemented intensive training and monitoring systems. These results highlight the configurational nature of franchisor support architectures and demonstrate how operational support bundles jointly shape performance in restaurant franchise systems.

PREDICTIVE FORECASTING INDICATORS FOR SMALL FIRMS AND MARKETING MANAGERS

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Uncertainty is the name of the game. Wars, supply shocks, inflation, deflation, and pandemics all take a toll on how a firm forecasts future customer demand. As a result of this uncertainty, firms must focus more market research on understanding the economy, their industry, and current and future customer demand. With the emergence of new technologies such as AI, both large and small firms are better prepared to assess future business conditions. In this presentation, a model for examining five fundamental and four technical market indicators is offered to assist small businesses and marketing managers in assessing global and domestic market conditions, and in formulating marketing and resource allocation strategies.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PR: MY EXPERIENCE AS A 2025 PRSSA GLOBAL FELLOW

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The focus of my presentation will be to highlight my experience as a 2025 PRSSA Foundation Annual Fellow, a collaborative program specifically designed to provide pathways for 8 underrepresented students pursuing careers in PR and communications. I will share my experiences with V2 Communications as well as explore the challenges and opportunities for PRSSA in an ever-changing local and global environment

RECURRING EVENT TOURISM PLATFORMS: FROM GOLF TOURNAMENT TO TOURISM PLATFORM AT THE WASTE MANAGEMENT PHOENIX OPEN

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Sport tourism research has traditionally concentrated on mega-events, highlighting short-term economic effects related to individual events (Getz, 2008). Many destinations depend on recurring sports events that attract consistent annual visitors and maintain tourism demand. This study explores how recurring sports events can serve as platforms for drawing large numbers of domestic visitors. The annual Waste Management Phoenix Open (WMPO), a PGA Tour event, consistently attracts over 600,000 spectators during tournament week. Using WMPO as a case, this research examines how experiential event design and collaboration among various stakeholders transform a traditional sports competition into a major tourism attraction. The study aims to develop a conceptual framework that combines platform ecosystem theory, eventscape theory, and experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). In this framework, the event functions as a coordinating platform that links spectators, sponsors, media, and tourism businesses. Eventscape, such as stadium-style spectator settings and festival-focused programming, creates memorable experiences that surpass traditional golf spectatorship. This research introduces the concept of

Recurring Event Tourism Platforms (RETP) to describe recurring sports events that align stakeholders and experiential environments to generate consistent, repeatable tourism demand over time. The study uses a qualitative case-study approach, relying on secondary data, including attendance figures and tourism indicators from sources like the PGA Tour, the Arizona Office of Tourism, and Visit Phoenix. Findings indicate that experiential event design and stakeholder coordination enable recurring sports events to serve as scalable platforms for domestic tourism growth.

RUNNING ON HERITAGE: A CASE STUDY OF THE XI'AN CITY WALL MARATHON

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Sporting events are increasingly taking place at cultural heritage sites as destinations look for new ways to promote tourism through experiential programs. While these events can increase visibility and economic benefits, they also raise important concerns about visitor impact, infrastructure pressure, and heritage preservation. Despite extensive research on sport tourism and event effects, little attention has been given to the management challenges of hosting sporting events at historically significant and environmentally delicate locations. By linking sport tourism research with heritage management literature, this study proposes a conceptual framework for governing heritage-based sporting events, offering practical insights for destinations aiming to balance tourism innovation with long-term cultural preservation. It explores the Xi’an City Wall Marathon, an annual race held on the Xi'an City Wall, one of the world's most well-preserved ancient city walls. Using a case-study approach, the research combines and analyzes data on event participation, tourism statistics, route planning, and policy documents from municipal tourism and heritage authorities. The study assesses visitor pressure during the event by estimating runner density along the approximately 13.7-kilometer wall route and reviewing governance arrangements that regulate the event size, participant limits, and heritage monitoring. Expected findings will highlight the conflict between tourism growth and heritage preservation, illustrating how large crowds at sporting events can put pressure on local historic infrastructure. The case is also expected to show how coordinated management among sports organizers, tourism officials, and heritage stewards can help regulate the use of heritage sites for contemporary tourism experiences.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT IN FITNESS WEARABLE USE: THEORY-BASED CONSTRUCT DEVELOPMENT, EMPIRICAL VALIDATION, AND IMPLICATIONS

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Social sharing and *social competing* are widely treated as distinct constructs in fitness wearable research, reflecting the discrete feature architectures of modern wearable platforms. This paper challenges that assumption by drawing on affordance-actualization theory, which holds that the structure of enacted user behavior is shaped by user goals and interaction contexts rather than by technology feature categories. When multiple affordances serve a common motivational purpose, they actualize as a unified behavioral bundle rather than separate behaviors. We propose that sharing activity data and competing with peers represent precisely such a bundle in the fitness wearable context and introduce *Social Engagement* (SENG) as a reconceptualized construct capturing this unified enactment. Drawing on data from 1,028 users of fitness wearables and applying affordance-actualization theory, we report that social sharing and social competition items fail to achieve discriminant validity, yielding a violated Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio. Rather than treating this as a measurement problem, we argue that this reveals a theoretically meaningful phenomenon. Users actualize social affordances of fitness wearables as an integrated behavioral disposition. We provide empirical and theoretical basis of this argument.

STAKEHOLDER EVALUATIONS OF ESG-SOCIAL DISCLOSURE ACROSS OWNED, SHARED, AND EARNED MEDIA

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Within the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) framework, organizations increasingly rely on owned, shared, and earned media (PESO) to disclose and signal social performance to key stakeholders. This study examines how ESG social communication varies across media channels and how different stakeholder groups evaluate the credibility and effectiveness of those disclosures. Employing a 3 × 3 factorial experimental design, the research analyzes the effects of media type (owned, shared, earned), of a social issue on the stakeholder groups (consumers, employees, community members), on perceptions of organizational social performance, and ESG legitimacy. Participants are exposed to standardized stimuli operationalized as corporate webpages, organizational social media content, and simulated news articles, with demographic variables included as independent factors. By systematically comparing stakeholder responses across conditions, this study isolates the influence of communication channels and stakeholder roles on evaluations of ESG social disclosure regarding organizational image. The findings provide empirical insight into which media channels and messages most effectively shape positive perceptions of an organization’s ESG social commitment. The findings will inform strategic communication practices by showing how organizations can more effectively tailor ESG performance disclosures to stakeholder expectations through deliberate media channel selection.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONDUCTING BUSINESS IN THE ERA OF AI

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The current era has unprecedented challenges from the current government and nature. AI gives businesses the opportunity to get more production from employees, but businesses must cope with questions originating from global warming. These include drought, energy supply for data centers with water cooling required, rising sea levels, record number and severity of tornadoes or hurricanes, and soaring costs for business operations and potential customers. President Trump has called global warming a "scam," has decimated the Environmental Protection Agency, and clawed back 65 billion dollars of approved measures intended to fight the global rise in temperature. Public relations professionals are in a business position to advise their clients and their colleagues on ethical approaches to obtain sustainable outcomes. These clients include developers, agricultural interests, environmental policy makers, politicians, and business managers. This presentation includes a discussion of the Edelman PR Agency climate commitments and climate principles.

STUDYING FC BARCELONA AS A CORPORATE BODY – HOW TO BECOME A GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT MULTINATIONAL IN THE POST-COVID ERA

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This chapter embraces a contemporary, topical focus. It seeks to critically examine FC Barcelona as a corporate entity. In doing so, it has three seminal themes. To begin with, it considers the processes by which the club evolved into a global matrix of product, sport, business, and entertainment. It continues to debate the implications of these processes, with an analysis of the strategies employed by FC Barcelona, which enabled it to become such a potent multinational force. Finally, the chapter speculates about the nature of what was called 'Barça Corporate', and the implications of the division of the club into its Audio-Visual content business (Barça Studios), the Innovation Hub, the Academies, and the promotion of merchandising worldwide, or 'Barça Corporate' as the commercial arm of the club. It provides a good example of how football clubs have become entertainment multinationals and illustrates how they compete with other multinational corporations, such as Disney and News Corporation. The authors consider the notion that, in becoming part of the sport- business- entertainment matrix, the club is in the process of 'Disneyfication' to develop its global branding and commodification. In the analysis of FC Barcelona as a global brand, the authors propose five main brand territories (symbolism, innovation, data, entertainment, knowledge, SIDEK) in which the club can have a competitive advantage over its rival.

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING: LEVERAGING GEOSPATIAL TECH TO OPTIMIZE FIELD INSPECTIONS FOR THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE

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The US Forest Service conducts environmental surface inspections at oil and gas well pads located on federal grasslands to ensure compliance on both active and reclaimed sites. These onsite inspections provide valuable information but require personnel to visit each well pad, check the inspection list, take photos as needed, and selectively use drones when possible. These traditional inspections can be time-consuming, costly and risky, and tend to provide limited visual data. Our team is working with the Forest Service to build a robust methodology for monitoring specific wells. The objective is to utilize multimodal data collection to provide a broader array of imagery and spatial products for enhancing monitoring and remediation efforts. Initial results suggest this will allow experts to save time and money by shifting part of the surveillance process to the computer. Consequently, they can focus attention on specific items requiring onsite identification or concentrate on problematic locations. We expect this approach to increase operational efficiency, environmental stewardship and scalability.

TEACHING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: OVERCOMING ACCESS BARRIERS THROUGH APPLIED LEARNING AND AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

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Emergency management practice increasingly relies on digital technologies that support decision-making during disasters. Geographic information systems (GIS), predictive analytics, and artificial intelligence (AI)–assisted platforms are widely used for hazard modeling, situational awareness, resource allocation, logistics coordination, and post-incident assessment. As these tools become more common in professional practice, emergency management education must provide students with opportunities to learn how such technologies are used during emergency response operations. However, many of the most advanced AI-enabled systems are proprietary, expensive, and housed within operational agency environments, limiting direct access for academic programs. This study examines instructional strategies that allow students to learn how emergency management technologies function and how they are applied during disasters, even when universities do not have direct access to operational software platforms. This study examined ten leading university emergency management programs to determine how they teach emergency response technologies and analytical tools to students. The study then analyzed the Emergency Management program at Utah Valley University as a comparison case to evaluate how its curriculum aligns with practices identified in the benchmark programs and to consider implications for emergency management education and curriculum development. The analysis focused on three areas. First, it reviewed major categories of technologies used in emergency management, including GIS platforms, predictive analytics, AI-assisted decision-support systems, and automated data analysis tools. Second, it examined instructional strategies that provide students with opportunities to learn how

technology supports emergency response operations, including demonstrations, simulations, scenario-based exercises, and analysis of real disaster data. Third, it considered the role of partnerships with emergency management agencies in giving students exposure to professional technologies and operational workflows used in practice. These approaches allow students to develop practical technology literacy and applied analytical skills. By emphasizing the ability to interpret and use technology-supported information, emergency management programs can prepare students to effectively engage with GIS and AI-assisted tools during emergency response operations.

TEXT TO INSIGHT: TEACHING SENTIMENT ANALYSIS IN BUSINESS CONTEXTS

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Unstructured text, such as social media posts, customer reviews, and open-ended feedback, is now a key resource for business organizations making data-driven decisions. As businesses place greater emphasis on customer experience and current feedback, students must be prepared to interpret both qualitative data and traditional metrics. *Text to Insight: Teaching Sentiment Analysis in Business Contexts* presents sentiment analysis as a practical approach for transforming text data into actionable business insight. Designed for undergraduate or graduate business analytics courses, the case explains what sentiment analysis is, why it matters, and how it informs data-driven decision-making in areas across customer experience, marketing, and product development. The case offers a concise conceptual overview of common approaches, including lexicon-based and machine-learning methods, while emphasizing interpretation over technical complexity. Students engage in guided, hands-on exercises using real or modeled datasets (e.g., customer reviews or open-ended feedback) to calculate sentiment scores, visualize results, and translate findings into managerial recommendations. Consistent with experiential and applied pedagogical practices, the case engages students in active learning and authentic problem solving while promoting critical evaluation of limitations related to context, sarcasm, domain specificity, and ethical nuances. Suitable for short modules or applied assignments, it requires no computer programming background and is suitable for business students. Linking advanced analytical techniques to practical business decision-making scenarios helps students understand both the capabilities and boundaries of sentiment analysis in contemporary business practice.

THE ANOMALOUS BEHAVIOR OF STOCK PRICES ON THE CANADIAN SECURITIES EXCHANGE

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This paper examines the conformity of the distribution of stock prices on the Canadian Securities Exchange (CSE) to that theorized by Benford's Law (BL). BL follows a logarithm law such that the leading digits have a higher probability of lower numbers such as 1, 2, or 3 versus higher numbers like 7, 8, or 9. This analysis can be used to detect fraudulent manipulation of stock prices. Previous research has applied BL to a broad range of data such as cost data, atomic weights, river areas, and populations, as well as stock prices. After collecting stock prices on the CSE, the number count for each digit was compared to the expected number given the frequencies posited by BL. A chi-square test was employed to determine statistical significance. The first digit was found to adhere to BL; however, the second digit was not congruent with that predicted by BL. There is an indication of possible manipulation on this stock exchange. These mixed results are consistent with the empirical evidence of other researchers. This evidence is relevant to auditors, shareholders, financial analysts, investment managers, government, and the CSE.

THE CONTEMPORARY CONSUMER ETHICS SCALE (CCES): A REVISION AND EXTENSION OF THE MUNCY-VITELL FRAMEWORK

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This study aims to develop and validate a contemporary consumer ethics scale that updates and extends the foundational work of Vitell and Muncy (1992, 2005). Given the profound technological, social, and commercial transformations of the past two decades including the rise of social media, the sharing economy, subscription-based digital services, and increased awareness of corporate social responsibility, existing measures require revision to capture emerging forms of ethical and questionable consumer behavior. The research employs a multi-phase scale development process. First, a comprehensive literature review and a series of focus groups with diverse consumers generate an initial pool of items reflecting contemporary ethical dilemmas. These items are designed to augment the original four-dimensional framework (actively benefiting from illegal activities, passively benefiting, actively benefiting from questionable actions, and no harm/no foul) while also addressing new categories of consumer ethics. The instrument is refined through expert review and pretesting. Subsequently, data are collected from a large, representative sample of adult consumers and analyzed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the scale's dimensionality, reliability, and validity. Preliminary analysis suggests that while the original four-factor structure remains relevant, new dimensions emerge that reflect contemporary consumption contexts. These include: (1) digital piracy and streaming fraud (e.g., account sharing beyond terms of service, unauthorized downloading), (2) social media ethics (e.g., fake reviews, influencer dishonesty), (3) sustainability and corporate accountability (e.g., boycotting based on ethical concerns, green consumption), and (4) sharing economy behaviors (e.g., misusing gig economy platforms).

THE EXPERIENCE OF FLOW IN QUILTING: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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The concept of ‘flow’ was initially posited by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975) in his seminal work. Flow has been found to be applicable to any individual performing any type of activity, as long as the participant meets specific conditions, whilst engaged in the activity. The purpose of

the current study is to determine if quilting activities can instigate a state of flow in participating individuals. Such information will provide much-needed information for marketers in the thriving quilt-based business, which holds a tremendous level of buying power (Kircher, 2017). Such information is needed, as the vast majority of previous studies concerning quilting are of a historic nature. Quilting is currently a very popular international, serious leisure activity, or hobby (Peters & Lucietto, 2024; Stalp, 2006; and Stebbins, 2025), with the quilting industry sporting 9-11 million active participants, a statistic that has remained stable over the past 10 years (Glassenberg, 2024). The authors further predict that by 2027 the quilt market will approach $5 billion annually. The international quilt market is currently dominated by North America, which boasts 4,769 quilt shops (Esomar, 2025; and Rentech Digital, 2025). Previous small, qualitative studies (including 10 participants or less) have indicated that their subjects experienced flow whilst quilting (Atkinson, 2012: Ferrarese, 2018; and Reynolds & Prior, 2006). The current empirical, quantitative study will include a larger number of subjects, and the findings should be helpful in determining a wider range of individuals' flow experiences whilst quilting.

THE IMPACT OF AI ON PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATION WHEN INTEGRATED INTO THE PR PROFESSIONAL CODE OF ETHICS FOR STUDENTS ENTERING THE PROFESSION

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) was integrated into the Public Relations Society of America's Code of Ethics in 2025 and revised extensively in 2026. The analysis focuses on the updates which deeply integrate AI into every aspect of the PRSA Code while deleting updates which deeply integrate AI into every aspect of the PRSA Code while deleting more of the familiar aspects of public relations from the earlier version. The edits indicate a great number of public relations graduates will be needed to meet the challenges of AI. The extensive AI references in the Code of Ethics will require skill in a variety of AI tools and an awareness of the psychological impact the models involved in persuasion. These requirements will impact the education process greatly and demand curriculum notifications. The evolution of public relations through special conferences and commissions eventually mentioned AI in the 2023 education report. However, the impact on the PR discipline is most felt by the PR/AI code o Ethics. This Code emphasizes the critical need to integrate more business concepts into the PR educational efforts to better mis/disinformation in disrupting society and potentially hurting business. There is also an educational concern addressing the need to assure creativity and critical thinking within an ethical structure. The challenges are identified by research and the reality of the impact of Anthropic and OpenAI efforts to train ethical AI models. Yet cultural clashes with the government bring forth a need for more guardrails and regulations to protect society.

THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION OF HEALTHCARE LOGISTICS SERVICE PROVIDERS

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Third Party logistics providers (3PLs) have assisted firms in increasing supply chain effectiveness within the healthcare industry. However, 3PLs have failed to meet their clients' demand to deliver innovative services. Cardinal Health conducted a survey of healthcare leaders and discovered 3PLs fail in critical services. These include last-mile delivery, inventory management, regulatory compliance, and emergency response. As the healthcare industry expands the use of artificial intelligence, the ability for 3PLs to develop to adapt innovative services is critical for healthcare organizations to meet industry expectations. One concern in the industry is the ability of 3PLs to develop acumen to utilize AI applications. This study will review the impact of the ability of 3PLs to utilize artificial intelligence to exchange information and integrate knowledge within 3PLs. Using the knowledge-base view theory, the study will look at the relationship between artificial intelligence, information exchange, and knowledge integration. A proposal of hypothesis will be discussed along with a proposed research model.

THE IMPACT OF PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES ON STUDENT BELIEF REVISION IN THE MENTORING CONTEXT

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Student-practitioner paired mentoring is a widely utilized strategy in management education, aimed at providing students with real-world insights from experienced practitioners. However, there is limited understanding of whether students' pre-existing perceptions of management issues change as a result of discussions with their mentors, or under what conditions mentor input influences these beliefs. This study seeks to investigate the extent to which students revise their existing workplace beliefs following structured mentoring conversations with practitioners (mentors). Specifically, we address two main research questions: 1) To what extent do students alter their prior beliefs after exposure to their mentor’s perspective? and 2) How do individual differences, such as Openness to Experience and Intellectual Curiosity, moderate students’ responses to mentors’ input? Student teams enrolled in a Fundamentals of Management course participated in an hour-long Zoom meeting with a mentor possessing extensive management experience. During this session, students were expected to learn about four controversial management topics from their mentor. Preliminary quantitative results, along with open-ended journal entries, are presented and explore the "why" behind students’ revised reactions and any cognitive dissonance they experienced. This study contributes to the field of organizational behavior and management education by highlighting the cognitive and personality-based mechanisms that facilitate belief transformation within mentoring contexts.

THE PERCEPTIONS OF FIRST-LINE PRACTITIONERS (FLPs) IN MANAGING THE MIGRATION FLOWS IN EUROPE

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The migration debate and the development of migration policy instruments are on the onset of recognizing the critical role that First-Line Practitioners (FLPs) in managing the migration flows in Europe. Science also admits the under-researched key role of FLPs in implementing migration policies efficiently (Bayerl et al., 2020). This research sheds light on the difficulties in providing forefront immigration services by diving into the novel approach of considering the barriers that hamper policy implementation when governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental FLPs professionals assist migrants and potential migrants to Europe. This research integrates the perceptions of FLPs professionals that, on the one hand, provide immigration and asylum support services, such as governance and policymaking support; housing, education, and healthcare services; legal and judiciary aid; and facilitate social and labor integration with the perceptions of the FLPs professionals, such as defense officers and border guards, that, on the other hand, perform immigration control and border management, and deploy security at borders and customs enforcement to European immigrants.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TACTICAL FOCUS AND THE BALANCED SCORECARD: EFFECT ON BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

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In a complex and competitive business world, the setting in which a company operates dictates how the business should plan its internal business processes and its learning and growth development as well to satisfy customers and thus achieve performance. The current paper investigates tactical focus, balanced scorecard (BSC) and how it does influence managerial and business performance. The BSC as envisioned by Kaplan and Norton (1992), though for quite some years in the past, still is a tool being used to analyze business vision, strategy, and business success factors. For this study, we collected data of Canadian companies using the Dunn and Bradstreet database. Using OLS regressions, we tested and analyzed hypothesized relationships of variables. We have two main findings: Environmental Competitiveness and Customer Satisfactions are strongly positively related through the mediation of Learning and Growth and secondly, Financial Performance and Learning and Growth are strongly positively related through the mediation of Customers Satisfaction. However, before the results can be accepted as comprehensive, more research is warranted. Given the fact that our findings may not apply to all industries, it will be interesting to investigate how our findings pan out for other industries.

TOWARD CONCEPTUALIZING RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL FOLLOWERSHIP

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Responsible global followership (RGF) is a proposed construct focused on followers' proactive role in advancing socially responsible outcomes in a global context. RGF extends beyond the responsible global leadership construct, which marries the tenets of corporate social responsibility (CSR) with the factors of responsible leadership and orders them in a global context. A primary dimension of RGF includes global citizenship, which has its roots in cosmopolitanism, the idea that everyone belongs to the global community. Global citizenship is a concept that encompasses general characteristics such as open-mindedness, cultural awareness, and recognition of global interdependence. As for followership, it is grounded in upward influence and in active or proactive engagement of followers within organizational hierarchies. However, in followership scholarship, there is limited research on how followers exercise social responsibility in global contexts and beyond traditional employer–employee structures. Existing definitions of the term followership tend to assume formal leader–follower relationships, leaving a conceptual gap within followers' global citizenship identity and socially responsible practice. The purpose of this presentation is to describe RGF as a construct that could lend greater purchase to global citizenship identity by emphasizing the proactive nature of good followership. Moreover, RGF reframes followers as agents who actively engage in socially responsible activities, both professionally and personally, across cultural, institutional, and societal boundaries. The session will describe the proposed dimensions of RGF and engage with participants in identifying potential research streams and practical applications.

TRUSTING PEOPLE OR TRUSTING TECHNOLOGY? EXAMINING INTERPERSONAL AND AI TRUST IN VIRTUAL TEAMS THROUGH TMS

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As intelligent assistants become part of virtual collaboration platforms, they increasingly coordinate knowledge rather than just act as tools. This shift raises a fundamental question for teamwork research: how does the presence of AI reshape where trust is directed within teams? Prior research has largely examined trust as an interpersonal construct that drives knowledge sharing and performance, yet hybrid human–AI environments may introduce new trust relationships that warrant closer examination. Drawing on transactive memory systems (TMS) theory, this study examines how different trust constructs influence knowledge coordination processes in AI-augmented virtual teams. Specifically, this study investigates two pathways in a dual-trust model: (1) interpersonal trust among human team members, and (2) trust in a specific intelligent assistant. By distinguishing these pathways, the study clarifies how each trust construct separately influences knowledge sharing and knowledge application among virtual team members. Using survey data from individuals working in virtual teams with embedded intelligent assistants, the study develops and tests this dual-path model of trust in hybrid collaboration contexts. This research contributes to our understanding of teamwork and trust by clarifying how trust is conceptualized and operationalized in digitally augmented environments and by examining boundary conditions for traditional trust-based assumptions about knowledge coordination. For organizations, this research offers practical insights for designing collaboration systems that build trust among both human and AI team members, as well as providing guidance on managing knowledge sharing and application in AI-enabled teams.

TRUTH, TRUST, AND CORPORATE MYTHS: TEACHING ETHICAL REASONING IN THE AI INFORMATION ERA

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The rapid spread of corporate misinformation in AI-mediated digital environments raises urgent ethical challenges for business leaders and educators. Conspiracy narratives alleging that pharmaceutical firms suppress cures, corporations manipulate food systems, or companies engage in hidden misconduct circulate widely across algorithm-driven platforms. These claims—often amplified by AI-generated content and engagement-maximizing systems—shape public trust, investor behavior, and stakeholder perceptions. Rather than dismissing such narratives, this paper proposes a structured pedagogical approach that uses corporate conspiracy theories as tools for teaching ethical reasoning, evidence evaluation, and source credibility in business education. Drawing on scholarship in business ethics, critical thinking, and media literacy, the paper presents a classroom module in which students critically examine high-profile corporate conspiracy claims (e.g., Deepwater Horizon, "Big Pharma" suppression narratives, Wayfair trafficking allegations). Students analyze argument structure, evidentiary quality, rhetorical framing, and source reliability while exploring the ethical implications of misinformation for corporate reputation, stakeholder trust, and managerial decision-making. The module also addresses how AI-driven content ecosystems contribute to the amplification of unverified claims and how responsible leaders should respond.

WEATHERING THE CRISIS: WHAT VOLKSWAGEN DID TO REJUVENATE ITS REPUTATION AFTER THE EMISSION CHEATING?

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On September 18, 2015, the German automotive company Volkswagen received a notice of violation of the Clean Air Act from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It was proclaimed that certain diesel engines in cars manufactured by the German company contained a piece of software – a "defeat device". That meant certain emission controls were only activated during laboratory testing. The scandal created mistrust of the company and presented a threat to its brand reputation. This case study assesses Volkswagen's public relations activities to revamp its tarnished reputation. The author used the ROPE model in the analysis as a template to evaluate the PR initiative and structure. The analysis suggests that the activities had both strengths as well weaknesses. In terms of strengths, the company used a video apology from Martin Winterkorn with distressed body language as the first public apology. The company also established two-way communication by opening up a question section on its website so that customers could ask questions or leave opinions for the public relations team to respond. Regarding weaknesses, the team appeared unorganized and slow in responding to public backlash and releasing statements. Volkswagen executives sent out different statements, which showed a lack of organization and planning. The author concludes that Volkswagen did not have the best response to the scandal.

WHEN ICT CONTROLS OR SUPPORTS: TECHNOSTRESS IN REMOTE WORK

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Since COVID-19, remote work has increasingly shifted toward hybrid arrangements, yet findings on employee productivity and mental health remain mixed. While information and communication technologies (ICTs) that enable remote work are associated with technostress and burnout, remote work has also been linked to improved work–life balance and reduced stress. Drawing on Technostress Theory and Self-Determination Theory, this study examines how ICT may be framed and valued differently within organizations to shape employee mental health. We propose that the relationship between technostress and mental health is moderated by two contrasting organizational technology orientations: a behavior control–oriented perspective and an autonomy-supportive perspective. A quantitative research design is proposed to test the model. This study integrates technostress and motivational perspectives to explain the dual effects of ICT in hybrid work contexts and offers practical implications for aligning organizational technology values with employee well-being.

WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE ATTITUDES TOWARD FEMTECH AND AI: ARE THERE DIFFERENCES?

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Femtech encompasses the convergence of healthcare and technology, and it is aimed at addressing women's health. The Femtech industry includes innovative solutions such as apps, devices, and wearables that cater to women's health needs, including fertility, pregnancy, and menopause. In 2024, the global Femtech industry was valued at $60 billion and is projected to increase to $216 billion by 2034. Despite being approximately 50% of the population in the US, women's healthcare has been historically under-funded and under-researched. Subsequently, there is limited data informing the knowledge, prevention, and treatment of women's conditions. Additionally, women tend to experience suboptimal encounters within healthcare systems. They often report feeling ignored and discredited during interactions with a healthcare provider (HCP). Given these challenges, Femtech firms have emerged to improve the gender health gap and to provide accessible solutions. Artificial intelligence (AI) models that have the ability to impact healthcare experiences have materialized. These models have the capability to predict, diagnose, and treat health-related issues. In fact, AI has been executed to provide responses to healthcare questions, analyze treatment risk, and support decision-making. There is, however, limited insight into women's perspectives on the use of AI technologies relative to their healthcare concerns. In light of few empirical reports, this study seeks to investigate women's healthcare perspectives toward Femtech and AI. The nature of women's comfort with these technologies as well as their concerns

about the technologies will be explored. Whether women differ in their attitudes toward Femtech and AI will also be examined.

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