LMU | School of Business
LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

First Annual

Advances in Business Education Conference

2025

Proceedings

Advances in Business Education

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Conference Overview

The First Annual *Advances in Business Education (ABE) Conference* was held on May 16, 2025, at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee. Hosted by the LMU School of Business, the ABE Conference was established to promote teaching excellence through innovation and collaboration in business education.

With a focus on fostering meaningful dialogue among educators, researchers, and students, the conference welcomed participants from across disciplines and institutions.

The event was structured around three key tracks:

- **Pedagogy & Teaching Excellence**: Showcasing innovative teaching methods and strategies for enhancing student learning and engagement.
- **Business Research**: Presenting research focused on advancing knowledge and practices within the business discipline.
- **Student Research**: Highlighting student-led research to provide students a platform to present their work and engage with faculty and peers.

The ABE Conference reflects the School of Business's mission to serve the Appalachian region by fostering academic inquiry, advancing innovative pedagogy, and promoting community-engaged scholarship. By facilitating the exchange of ideas and experiences, the conference aims to enhance the quality and accessibility of business education throughout the region and beyond.

Acknowledgements

The organizers of the *Advances in Business Education (ABE) Conference* extend our heartfelt thanks to our presenters, keynote speaker, and peer reviewers for their thoughtful insights and academic contributions.

We are especially grateful to our generous sponsors whose support helped make this event possible: Mr. Mike Dean (LMU Class of 1978), Bodyswaps, Pearson, and Cengage. Their continued investment in business education and student success is deeply appreciated.

We also wish to acknowledge the unwavering support of the Lincoln Memorial University administration, who strive to support innovation and excellence across the entirety of the university.

Conference Planning Committee

The success of the Advances in Business Education (ABE) Conference was made possible through the dedication and collaboration of the following individuals:

- Dr. Kelsey Metz – Conference Chair, Program Co-Chair, and Proceedings Editor
- Dr. Joshua Ray – Program Co-Chair and Conference Planning Support
- Ms. April Anderson – Peer Review Coordinator and Conference Planning Support
- Dr. Lisa Cox – Conference Planning Support
- Dr. Richard Lane – Conference Planning Support
- Ms. Barbara Hipsher – Conference Planning Support
- Mr. Ethan Dyer – Conference Planning Support

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Laura Morrow

Senior Director, Center for Teaching and Learning Associate Professor of Management, Lipscomb University

Dr. Laura Morrow serves as the Senior Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and is an Associate Professor of Management at Lipscomb University. With a career spanning both faculty and administrative leadership roles, she has served at institutions including Brenau University and Mercer University, where she also led leadership development programs for external partners. A 2018-2019 Governor's Teaching Fellow at the University of Georgia's Institute of Higher Education, Dr. Morrow is deeply committed to advancing faculty development and student success.

Since returning to Lipscomb in 2022, she has led major university initiatives including new faculty orientation, department chair training, online teaching certification, and Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL) grant programs. Her academic expertise lies in organizational behavior, with research focusing on workplace stress, stigma, and the student experience. Dr. Morrow holds a B.S. and M.B.A. from Lipscomb University and a Ph.D. in Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management from the University of Mississippi.

Best in Track Awards

We are pleased to recognize the following individuals for their outstanding contributions in each of the conference tracks:

- **Best in Pedagogy & Teaching Excellence Track**: Dr. Jake Simms
- **Best in Business Research Track**: Dr. Christi Sayles
- **Best in Student Track**: Ms. Jenae Matikke

Their exceptional work exemplifies the mission of the Advances in Business Education (ABE) Conference to promote innovation, scholarship, and excellence in business education.

Presentation Abstracts

Track 1: Pedagogy & Teaching Excellence

Enhancing Faculty Involvement in Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation: A Collaborative Approach

Ms. April Anderson, Lincoln Memorial University

Abstract: The engagement of faculty in outcomes assessment and accreditation processes is essential for continuous improvement in business education. However, many institutions face challenges in fostering meaningful faculty participation. This presentation explores structured strategies for involving faculty in assessment activities, accreditation efforts, and curriculum refinement, ultimately leading to a more effective and sustainable assessment culture.

Purpose and Objectives: This session aims to provide a framework for increasing faculty involvement in the assessment and accreditation process, demonstrating its impact on student learning and program development. Specifically, it will:

1. Identify key barriers to faculty engagement in assessment and accreditation.
2. Present strategies for integrating faculty input into assessment planning and execution.
3. Showcase the impact of faculty-driven assessment on curriculum improvement and institutional effectiveness.
4. Offer practical recommendations for fostering a collaborative assessment process annually.

Engaging Faculty in Assessment Contributions Effectively leveraging faculty expertise is essential for developing meaningful assessment processes that drive programmatic and curricular improvements. This section focuses on how institutions can create structured opportunities for faculty to contribute to assessment results, interpretation, and application. It will outline approaches for gathering faculty insights on student learning outcomes, curriculum alignment, and pedagogical effectiveness. Additionally, it will highlight strategies for faculty to identify and integrate evolving educational best practices to enhance the assessment process.

Structuring Faculty Involvement A well-organized faculty engagement strategy is critical to ensuring effective assessment and accreditation outcomes. This section provides best practices for formalizing faculty roles, including participation in annual assessment review, feedback from departmental partners, and making relevant curriculum discussions. It will outline step-by-step approaches to incorporating faculty feedback into accreditation reports, ensuring alignment with accreditation standards, and fostering a shared sense of ownership in the assessment process.

Developing a Sustainable Assessment Culture Transforming assessment and accreditation into faculty-driven initiatives requires a structured approach to engagement and process improvement. This section will provide practical guidance on sustaining faculty involvement, creating feedback loops, and using assessment results to inform continuous curricular enhancements. Key topics include defining clear learning objectives, integrating faculty insights into data interpretation, and developing actionable strategies for ongoing program improvement. By positioning faculty as active contributors to the assessment process, institutions can create a culture of continuous improvement that enhances student learning and overall program effectiveness.

This presentation will equip attendees with actionable strategies for fostering faculty engagement in assessment and accreditation, ultimately advancing excellence in business education.

Maintaining Compliance with SACSCOC as a Faculty Member or Academic Administrator

Dr. Jake Carver, Lincoln Memorial University

Abstract:

Maintaining compliance with an institutional accrediting agency (like SACSCOC) is crucial for higher education institutions. This allows higher education institutions to be eligible for Title IV funding (financial aid). After a brief overview of SACSCOC standards pertaining to faculty, the presenter will provide practical tips for faculty members and academic administrators to help their institutions maintain compliance with SACSCOC standards.

Leadership in the Wild. Demystifying, Reimagining, and Teaching Leadership as an Evolutionary Skill

Dr. Eva Cowell, University of Tennessee - Knoxville

Abstract: One of the challenges faced by current faculty is developing skills and behaviors that transcend the classroom. Phones, laptops, other courses due dates, life happening around us 24/7 are all constant competitors for the attention of our students. Sometimes in our classrooms-while we are teaching, they are physically present, but they are not mentally or intellectually present and engaged. How can we turn understanding of content into actionable behaviors and not just a check sheet on a rubric. That is our challenge.

Creating experiences for students that are memorable are key in helping them both engage with the content and develop behaviors and habits that can be replicated and duplicated across many spheres of influence in their lives. Regardless of discipline, the need and ability to lead and influence is paramount. Even without a significant desire to lead, it is important to understand the role of leadership as both a follower and group member. It also helps students begin to understand and recognize leadership skills and behaviors in themselves and others. In the curriculum, this exercise falls after leadership, traits, and styles have been discussed. For the current traditional population, that have been shielded behind screens in isolation, it forces them to move outside of their comfort zone, which is where true growth happens.

“Leadership in the Wild” is just that! The first step is to leave the classroom. Go outside, change something about the environment. Five key blocks in the bingo card deal with recognizing a trait of leadership in one of your classmates that they have demonstrated through discussions and class participation. Other questions are just getting to know each other. Once they have acknowledged these behaviors/traits, they are sent out to campus with cards they have selected from ‘encouragement or recognition’ cards I provide. They must go up to someone they do not know and tell them that they recognized a leadership trait/behavior in them and wanted to recognize it. They must then document how it made them feel and also what the action/reaction of the recipient was and discuss the importance.

The assignment has evolved but the key findings remain the same. Most recipients are confused that they were recognized (most often noted for just being who they are, doing what they do) but also, they are so appreciative. It has changed the days of some recipients, just having that recognition. The students themselves see the impact of the

recognition and continue to do it throughout the semester. By replicating the activity, it becomes their habit. And that can transform their interactions within and outside of work. It also is a very low investment activity, and the way the students elevated this assignment themselves is something I'm very eager to share.

We must demystify leadership. We tend to think of leaders in a very traditional sense: the CEO's. the person with the most tenure, the person with the largest bank account in the room. But we all can not only be leaders without position or title but start recognizing those traits and behaviors in others. Some may already be in positions of authority, and some may not be there in their career just yet, but they will need to be able to recognize others as their careers develop. In addition, they will be able to finetune the observation and delivery with each subsequent acknowledgement. Their own style will evolve out of repetitive practice. If they are already being intentional, it will make the transition easier when they are called upon to do it in their role of leaders within organizations.

What can you expect in this session? The session will start with the rationalization and personal history of using experiential exercises to cement concepts. Description of the PERMA Model in delivering course content. Understanding the population of your class and the challenges that are faced with each. How serious play can benefit growth. Work through the activity described above-Leadership in the Wild. All the documents used will be shared. And the evolution of the assignment from inception to its current iteration, that the students, themselves, elevated.

Navigating the Impact of Generative Language Models on Discussion-based Pedagogy

Dr. Cheri Flynn, Carson-Newman University

Dr. Lori Thomas, Carson-Newman University

This presentation explores the complex relationship between large language models, including ChatGPT and Claude, and discussion-based pedagogy. Discussion forums commonly serve as critical components of both online and traditional courses, and the ease with which AI can generate seemingly authentic contributions presents unique challenges to traditional notions of academic honesty, assessment validity, and meaningful student engagement.

The presenters draw on combined experience in instructional design, teaching, and academic administration to examine how student use of generative language models impacts the role of student discussion forums, given originality detection issues, potentially negative impacts on student skill development, and model-based ethical concerns.

The presentation will begin with a discussion of the detection challenges that accompany student use of AI in preparing written discussion responses. The inability to definitively evaluate authenticity creates academic integrity challenges. Unlike traditional essays or exams, student discussion posts typically involve shorter, more conversational contributions that AI can simulate with remarkable authenticity. When coupled with the sophistication and continuous development of AI large language models, detecting AI-generated content is particularly difficult in discussion contexts.

Our analysis also incorporates the potential consequences of overreliance on AI for student skill development. Discussion forums are designed to foster critical thinking, peer engagement, and reflective learning. These educational outcomes may be undermined when students outsource their participation to AI. In addition, relying on AI to generate discussion posts may impede students' ability to develop the communication and analytical skills needed for real-world business environments.

The presentation will also consider the nuanced ethical questions around AI use by students in completing discussion-based assignments. These issues include distinguishing between AI as a writing assistant versus a complete replacement for student voice and thought, the potential for AI-generated discussion contributions to include biases found in training datasets, and complications arising from unequal access to advanced AI tools creating disparities in discussion quality.

The presentation will conclude with research-based strategies to encourage original discussion contributions, including strategies for redesigning discussion prompts to emphasize personal experience and contextual knowledge that AI cannot easily simulate, as well as the implementation of scaffolded discussions that reduce opportunities for wholesale AI substitution. In addition, in contrast to a purely restrictive approach, the presentation will offer suggestions for reimagining discussion forums in an AI-integrated educational environment, highlighting ways that AI can potentially enhance rather than undermine the original pedagogical goals of student discussions.

This presentation aims to support the advancement of business education practice by providing practical strategies to preserve the authenticity and pedagogical value of discussion forums in an era of advanced AI technologies. The presentation seeks to help business educators navigate the delicate balance between embracing technological innovation and protecting the core interpersonal and analytical competencies that remain fundamental to student success.

VR: A Clear Vision for Student Engagement

Dr. Richard Lane, Lincoln Memorial University

Dr. Lisa Cox, Lincoln Memorial University

Dr. Sheree Schneider, Lincoln Memorial University

Studies show that a student's attention span declines sharply after the first 10 – 15 minutes of a lecture (Benjamin, 2002; McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006). Further, research indicates student attention span is dependent upon student receptivity to the information and the teacher's transmittal performance (Wilson & Korn, 2007). This low threshold in attention span and dependence on instructor delivery prompts a deeper look to use more effective teaching methods. One such method of delivery is the introduction and instruction of critical thinking and life skills using virtual reality.

The LMU School of Business invested in a VR lab to increase student engagement and enrich the learning experience. This presentation defines VR, outlines how VR was used once implemented in our undergraduate Business Communications course, which critical skills were focused on, and the outcomes of the student interaction with VR.

LMU partnered with BodySwaps to field the VR solution. Advantages of partnering with this vendor were numerous. First, the vendor provided customizable AI roleplay simulations provide a range of roleplay templates which one can customize to personalize the learner's experience. Second, the software has an AI feature for improved assessment that uses Large Language Models to evaluate learners against their objectives, review use of communication techniques, and provide personalized feedback including model answers in some cases. Finally, the playback feature enables students to suspend the in-body experience and observe their comments, mannerisms, and body language from a third person point of view which is a powerful tool for introspection and improvement.

After implementation of the software package, LMU faculty conducted a qualitative study to gauge student perceptions of value, engagement, and the use of Bodyswaps as a pedagogical tool. Student Engagement questions explored how VR fosters immersion, affects motivation, and presents engagement challenges. The value questions examined what makes learning meaningful, how VR compares to other interactive methods, and its implications for career preparedness. Pedagogical Tool questions assessed how VR influences knowledge retention, how it integrates with traditional coursework, and opportunities for improvement. Students reported they had higher levels of comprehension, better retention of the information, and enjoyed the experiential nature of

the learning experience when compared to traditional lecture-based learning methods. Students also emphasized that VR should be used as a supplemental pedagogical learning tool and should not replace traditional learning methods like classroom instruction.

Keywords: Virtual Reality (VR) Lab, Business Education, Experiential Learning, Pedagogical Innovation, Technical Implementation, Immersive Technology

From Vision to Reality: Developing a Virtual Reality (VR) Lab for Business Education

Dr. Kelsey Metz, Lincoln Memorial University

Dr. Lisa Cox, Lincoln Memorial University

Dr. Richard Lane, Lincoln Memorial University

Dr. Sheree Schneider, Lincoln Memorial University

As business education evolves, virtual reality (VR) technology presents a unique opportunity to modernize learning by offering immersive experiences that bridge the gap between theory and practice. This presentation provides a step-by-step guide for developing a VR lab in a business school, focusing on planning, infrastructure, hardware and software selection, user training, safety protocols, maintenance, and curriculum integration. By reviewing best practices and challenges resulting from real-world implementation, attendees will gain the knowledge needed to establish a VR lab that enhances student engagement and learning outcomes.

The presentation will begin by exploring the pedagogical benefits of VR in business education and will emphasize its role in skill-building and active learning. As a form of experiential learning, VR simulations provide students with hands-on experiences in realistic business scenarios, thereby helping them develop critical soft skills such as communication, teamwork, negotiation, and conflict resolution. By offering immersive learning environments, VR enhances retention and comprehension, making it a valuable supplement to traditional teaching methods.

Next, the presentation will cover key considerations for installing a VR lab, including curriculum integration and the technical and operational factors essential for successful implementation. The information to be reviewed includes:

- Curriculum Integration: Embedding VR-based simulations into select business courses to enhance student engagement and skill development through hands-on, application-driven learning experiences.
- Budgeting and Cost Considerations: Estimating costs for hardware, software, networking, maintenance, and long-term sustainability.
- Infrastructure and Space Planning: Identifying the appropriate space, ensuring adequate room for movement, and implementing secure access through ID badge entry.

- Hardware and Software Selection: Choosing high-resolution VR headsets, controllers, charging stations, and compatible business simulation software.
- Network and Connectivity: Ensuring reliable high-bandwidth internet, Wi-Fi, and Ethernet support.
- User Training and Safety Protocols: Implementing spatial boundaries, session duration guidelines, and user onboarding for safe and effective use.
- Maintenance and Updates: Regular equipment cleaning, software updates, and long-term lab sustainability.
- Measuring Academic Outcomes: Evaluating the impact of VR-based learning through student performance metrics, engagement levels, and feedback to ensure alignment with educational objectives.
- Marketing: Promoting the lab through university communication channels and social media.

Attendees will leave with a comprehensive checklist to guide them through each phase of VR lab installation, spanning from initial planning to full-scale implementation. This session will empower educators and administrators with the tools and insights needed to create a state-of-the-art VR lab that fosters innovation in business education.

Linking Academic Confidence to Literature Review Concepts through Research Pedagogy

Dr. Wanda Morgan, Lincoln Memorial University

Early exposure to research methods can have a profound impact on students’ academic confidence (Eika, 2021). In particular, the use of literature reviews can clarify the research process by providing a structured approach to identify research gaps, develop critical thinking skills through analyzing and synthesizing information obtained, and foster a sense of academic identity through completing the literature review process. Literature reviews can establish theoretical frameworks and result in new research questions. This discussion is relevant to the Pedagogy and Teaching Excellence track.

This discussion of pedagogical approaches to teaching literature reviews aims to enhance students’ research capabilities. This discussion contributes to the field of business education by providing a framework for the steps involved in completing a literature review, types of literature reviews, and how to choose the best articles when conducting a literature review. This discussion includes relevant literature such as effective pedagogy, student support, and aspects of conducting a literature review.

Students often feel overwhelmed the first time they encounter the concept of a literature review. Competence and achievement influence students' attitudes toward research, resulting in academic confidence (Bolderston, 2008). When students synthesize findings from numerous studies on a topic, they demonstrate how each researcher's contribution fits into the larger picture, providing valuable background information (Aveyard, 2023). The literature review can teach students to engage with academic sources and familiarize the student with the research process itself. Students must learn to find relevant academic journal articles and sources to develop their research skills and gain a broader understanding of how to organize academic knowledge (Timotheou et al., 2022). As students learn about the distinct parts of a literature review, they study and analyze existing research to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the current literature (Lim et al., 2022). Depending on the student's level, pedagogical approaches to literature reviews can include scaffolding, active learning through peer collaboration, incorporating instructor feedback, and reflection exercises. These methods help students assess their progress and understand the practical value of literature reviews as an essential skill for academic and professional success.

While the complexity of literature reviews might undermine the students' confidence initially, with explicit instruction on how to conduct a literature review, an understanding of sources, and the ability to synthesize information from multiple sources, students are able to develop confidence incrementally which builds a sense of mastery (Motta & Galina, 2023; Walsh et al. 2020). When students are active participants in the research process, educators can cultivate an academic environment where students feel better equipped to manage challenges that come with higher-level research tasks (Nicholls et al., 2022). Academic confidence grows with continued exposure which makes literature reviews and other research tasks less intimidating.

Keywords: pedagogy, literature review, critical thinking, research skills, academic confidence, higher education, pedagogical practices

Optimizing Student Learning Outcomes with Generative AI: A Nudge Theory Approach

Dr. Corey Pendleton, Lincoln Memorial University

Large Language Models (LLM), such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Deepseek, and others, can enhance student engagement, knowledge retention, and understanding of complex content if used responsibly. However, LLMs can potentially be tools for academic misconduct or as a shortcut for assignment completion on behalf of the student. This research examines an intersection between pedagogy and behavioral economic theory to maximize student learning outcomes through the behavioral economic concept of nudging or altering economically rational behavior through subtle changes. With the advent of LLMs, modern students face a novel utility maximization and cost minimization problem. With LLMs, students can shirk by having the LLMs complete educational tasks or assignments, thereby minimizing the cost of learning and researching at the expense of content retention. In this instance, shirking is particularly perilous to student learning outcomes as LLMs, like any other statistical model, are liable to bias, incorrect estimation, or hallucinations. Educators face alternative maximization problems and constraints. Educators wish to maximize student learning outcomes and the likelihood of the student's understanding of the material, which contradicts student cost minimization. Rational educators can leverage LLMs to maximize student engagement and learning but must navigate the incentives of students who wish to shirk. This paper proposes that nudge theory offers a framework for guiding students toward productive engagement with LLMs rather than using LLMs to shirk. Specifically, this paper proposes that educators can curate sample LLM prompts within assignments to nudge students in a way that redirects students from shirking to using LLMs as a proxy tutor and maximize student understanding of the material while minimizing the risk of students being exposed to hallucinated incorrect responses by the LLM. This paper develops a theoretical model that formalizes this digression between student and educator incentives as a principle-agent problem. The educators who act as principals cannot directly observe student effort when completing assignments. The students acting as agents choose between traditional completion of assignments without using LLMs, LLM-assisted shirking, or LLM-assisted learning. Each strategy produces alternative utility outcomes for the student based on their expected grades, the quality of their learning outcomes, effort costs, and detection risks when using LLMs. The educator's optimization problem involves selecting the optimal quantity and quality of prompt curation that maximizes expected learning while minimizing implementation costs. Through analysis of first- and second-order conditions, this paper identifies an optimal level of nudging that balances the direct learning benefits of guided

open-ended AI engagement with the incentives of students to shirk. The model yields several insights for optimal pedagogy in that carefully designed open-ended prompts can shift students from using LLMs for answer generation to using them for knowledge exploration or as a proxy tutor. The model finds that as AI becomes more reliable, traditional teaching methods, which require more student effort, become comparatively less attractive, necessitating adaptation from the educator. The model incorporates student heterogeneity in learning preferences and effort aversion, which require thoughtful, prompt design. The framework of this model provides a practical approach to incorporating LLMs into pedagogy, which is particularly valuable in business disciplines where technological adaptation is critical for success both at the educational level and at the firm level once the students graduate. Rather than attempting to prohibit inevitable technological adoption, educators can leverage behavioral economic thinking to guide students toward using AI as a learning complement rather than a substitute, specifically by providing curated prompts that lead to open-ended exploration rather than direct answers, which run the risk of hallucinations. The implications of this model run beyond single assignments but to curriculum design, where sequenced nudging through increasingly sophisticated open-ended prompts can progressively develop students' critical thinking skills alongside responsible AI literacy.

JEL classification:

A20, D91, D81, D82, D83, D84, I21, O33

Keywords:

Generative AI, Behavioral Economics, Nudge Theory, Principle-Agent Model, Educational Technology

Statements and Declarations: I have not received any funding for this research. I have no competing interests. Large language artificial intelligence models were used in this research.

Student Perceptions of Value in Business Higher Education

Dr. Joshua Ray, Lincoln Memorial University

Dr. Eva Cowell, University of Tennessee - Knoxville

Dr. Cheri Flynn, Carson-Newman University

This panel discussion explores the evolving concept of "value" in business education through the lens of both students and faculty across three institutions. As higher education faces unprecedented challenges in demonstrating relevance and return on investment, understanding what constitutes value becomes increasingly critical for curriculum development, student engagement, and institutional success.

Drawing on combined expertise exceeding 30 years in business education, our panelists will present research-informed perspectives on five key dimensions of value in contemporary business education. First, we examine current student value constructs, highlighting how factors including skills acquisition, credentialing, networking opportunities, and experiential learning are weighted in student decision-making. Second, the panel traces the evolution of these value perceptions, noting significant shifts from traditional career preparation goals toward more holistic educational outcomes including personal development, social impact capabilities, and entrepreneurial competencies.

The discussion then pivots to faculty perspectives on educational value, illuminating how instructors conceptualize and attempt to deliver value within their pedagogical approaches and program design. Our methodological approach incorporates both quantitative survey data and qualitative insights from in-depth interviews with senior faculty members across disciplines. This mixed-methods approach reveals nuanced understandings of value that transcend simplistic metrics such as employment rates or starting salaries.

Our analysis reveals both convergence and divergence between student and faculty value frameworks—with notable alignment around practical skill development but significant gaps in perceptions of theoretical knowledge importance, assessment methodologies, and learning modalities. The panel will specifically address how these perception gaps manifest across different business disciplines and institutional contexts, offering comparative insights from our three diverse educational settings.

The discussion will also examine how external influences and external stakeholders, including employers, accreditation bodies, and policy makers—influence both student and faculty value perceptions, creating a complex ecosystem of competing priorities and expectations. This exploration addresses the critical question of whether business education is effectively responding to market demands while maintaining academic integrity and educational purpose.

Finally, the panel addresses emerging trends and forecasts for value conceptualization in business education, incorporating insights from workplace evolution, technological disruption, and changing generational priorities. By examining these projections through a multi-institutional lens, we offer attendees actionable insights for addressing value perception gaps and enhancing value delivery across diverse educational contexts.

This panel contributes to the ongoing dialogue about business education's future by providing empirically grounded perspectives on a fundamental yet often ambiguously defined concept. The discussion aims to equip educators with frameworks for more effectively communicating, delivering, and measuring educational value in increasingly competitive and resource-constrained environments.

Leveraging AI for Enhanced External Analysis in Strategic Management: A Practical Guide for Business Students

Dr. Joshua Ray, Lincoln Memorial University

Dr. Adam Smith, Indiana University - Kokomo

Dr. Petra Brnova, Lincoln Memorial University

Dr. Derrick Proffitt, Lincoln Memorial University

Strategic management in today's business landscape faces unprecedented challenges due to increasing environmental complexity, market volatility, and technological disruption. The external analysis phase, crucial for informed strategy formulation, must now contend with vast amounts of data and rapidly evolving competitive dynamics. This session explores how artificial intelligence, particularly large language models, can augment and enhance the external analysis process while teaching students to become sophisticated users of AI-generated strategic insights.

The session begins by establishing the foundational importance of external analysis in strategic management, emphasizing how environmental scanning, industry analysis, and competitive assessment form the bedrock of effective strategy development. We then examine why traditional approaches to external analysis are becoming increasingly strained by the volume, velocity, and variety of information that strategists must process and synthesize.

Building on this context, we demonstrate how AI can serve as a powerful enabling technology for external analysis. Through carefully crafted prompts, strategists can leverage AI to rapidly generate initial environmental assessments, identify emerging trends, and surface potential competitive threats and opportunities. However, we emphasize that AI's role is to augment rather than replace human strategic thinking. The session provides practical guidance on prompt engineering techniques specifically tailored for strategic analysis, including methods for improving output specificity and relevance.

A significant portion of the session focuses on critical evaluation and enhancement of AI-generated content. Students will learn to recognize the limitations of AI outputs, which often trend toward generalized observations, and develop skills to iterate and refine prompts for more nuanced analysis. Through hands-on examples, participants will practice transforming basic AI-generated insights into differentiated strategic recommendations that can drive competitive advantage.

The session concludes with an ethical framework for AI usage in strategic analysis, addressing concerns about data quality, bias, and the responsible integration of AI tools into professional practice. Participants will leave with a practical toolkit of proven prompts, evaluation criteria for AI-generated content, and techniques for elevating automated analysis into actionable strategic insights.

By the end of the session, students will understand both the potential and limitations of AI in external analysis, positioning them to leverage these tools effectively in their future strategic management work. This knowledge is increasingly essential as AI becomes ubiquitous in business practice, requiring strategists to be both skilled users and critical evaluators of AI-generated strategic insights.

Leveraging AI for Instructional Design: Strategies for Engaging Students

Dr. Jake Simms, Lincoln Memorial University

Aligned with the Pedagogy & Teaching Excellence track of the ABE Conference, this presentation examines how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming instructional design in business education by fostering personalized, experiential learning. Among AI-driven tools, ChatGPT has emerged as a valuable resource for designing assignments that enhance student engagement, autonomy, and critical thinking (Bognar et al., 2024). As AI continues to influence academic settings, it is essential to explore its role in maintaining student motivation and optimizing instructional efficiency. Research has suggested that AI-assisted assignments can increase engagement, improve learning outcomes, and streamline course development (Hidayat-ur-Rehman, 2024).

This presentation presents a case study from a sport management course, demonstrating how ChatGPT was intentionally leveraged to design an assignment that engaged students while preparing them for real-world decision-making. Attendees will gain insights into the practical application of AI in business education, strategies for integrating AI tools into course design, and the broader implications for enhancing pedagogy in AI-assisted learning environments.

Framed by Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), this presentation highlights how AI-assisted learning supports the three psychological needs that drive student motivation: autonomy (providing choice and control over learning), competence (facilitating skill development and mastery), and relatedness (fostering meaningful connections with peers and instructors). Research indicates that AI-powered learning environments enhance these elements by enabling more personalized, adaptive, and interactive educational experiences (Alshater, 2023).

This presentation provides an overview of the development and implementation of an AI-enhanced assignment for an undergraduate Sport and Society course. In this project, students examined real-world gender-related challenges in sport, such as pay disparities, financial constraints, and the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles (Almohesh, 2024). The instructor used ChatGPT to refine the assignment by generating case studies and structuring research pathways based on key themes identified in a student-led discussion on the topic. This process ensured better alignment between the assignment and student interests, which increased engagement while maintaining academic rigor.

To promote autonomy, students selected a focus area from four key gender equity issues, allowing them to take ownership of their research and engage with a topic that resonated with their interests. Competence was strengthened through AI-generated research prompts, which guided students in diagnosing financial and structural challenges, analyzing industry data, and developing multi-stage strategic plans incorporating short-term, medium-term, and long-term solutions. By scaffolding research into manageable phases, the assignment enabled students to progressively build expertise and gain confidence in their analytical abilities. Relatedness was fostered through structured peer collaboration, where students worked in pairs to discuss findings, refine strategic recommendations, and present solutions in innovative formats such as podcasts, business proposals, and social media campaigns. This collaborative structure encouraged meaningful interaction, reinforcing the importance of teamwork and shared learning in addressing complex industry challenges. Beyond improving student engagement, ChatGPT streamlined the assignment design process, allowing the instructor to efficiently generate research pathways and case study variations while ensuring alignment with course learning objectives (Dai et al., 2023).

This presentation examines the assignment's design, implementation, and student engagement outcomes. Attendees will gain insights into leveraging AI for meaningful, student-driven learning while maintaining academic integrity. By sharing these applications, this presentation contributes to the evolving conversation on AI's role in higher education and potential to enrich experiential learning.

Should we be grading the process instead of the product?: Reframing student assessment in the era of GenAI

Dr. Adam R. Smith, Indiana University - Kokomo

Dr. Joshua Bazzy, University of the Incarnate Word

This Pedagogy & Teaching Excellence track presentation aims to inspire innovation and collaboration in business education by exploring new approaches to student learning and assessment. A core premise of this discussion is that students should not only acquire knowledge but also develop the skills necessary to continuously learn and adapt in a rapidly changing world. Central to this idea is identifying what is most essential for graduates in the modern workforce.

A key area of focus in this session will be the evolving role of generative AI (GenAI) in education. As AI tools become more integrated into the student experience, it is crucial to consider how students should use these tools to enhance their learning rather than see them as shortcuts. This presentation will engage attendees in discussions about AI's role in learning and how educators can leverage these technologies to better prepare students for the job market. Recent discussions have revolved around topics such as AI-proofing or seeking safeguards against AI tools. However, it may be time to flip our perspective.

An important topic for exploration is the debate between process based grading versus product based grading. While product based grading often focuses on the final output, process based grading emphasizes the learning journey itself. This approach has gained traction among various university Centers for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment and is widely discussed in educational blogs. Process based grading assesses the steps students take toward solving a problem, encouraging deeper engagement with the material and fostering critical thinking. It also provides space for creativity and goal setting during the learning process.

By adopting a process based grading approach, instructors can offer more personalized feedback, allowing students to refine their work through multiple drafts and checkpoints. This method encourages students to focus on their learning strategies, rather than simply aiming for high grades. It also helps instructors assess not only the final product but the critical thinking and problem solving skills that students develop along the way.

In this interactive session, participants will explore key elements of process based grading, such as increased opportunities for reflection and goal setting, expanding feedback mechanisms, and incorporating tools such as rubrics, peer feedback, and learning logs or journals. This approach may provide a more holistic view of student progress and better prepare students for real world challenges.

Many students have become too focused on simply "getting an A". By shifting the focus from grades to the learning process, we can better align our assessment methods with the skills needed in today's dynamic business environment, ultimately enhancing both student learning and career readiness.

Engaging students outside the classroom: Experiential learning with domestic and international travel

Dr. Adam R. Smith, Indiana University - Kokomo

Dr. Gloria Preece, Indiana University - Kokomo

This "Pedagogy & Teaching Excellence" track presentation aims to provide educators with practical insights into incorporating experiential learning through travel opportunities into their curricula. The session will cover three primary areas: illustrating specific examples of experiential learning through domestic and international student travel programs, addressing common challenges associated with these programs, and offering guidance for educators interested in implementing travel-based learning experiences. By sharing real-world examples, challenges, and solutions, the presentation will equip educators with the tools to design impactful learning experiences for their students.

In recent years, we have successfully designed and led domestic trips to locations such as Orlando (Disney World) and Nashville, along with study abroad programs to Poland and Denmark. This presentation will provide an overview of these trips, highlighting key course objectives, the planning process, and essential activities such as securing grants, arranging business visits, managing logistics, and conducting post-trip reflection and assessment. We will also discuss the three primary challenges faced during these programs: resistance from academic administration, high program costs for students, and difficulties in securing responses from businesses during the planning stage. By sharing how we overcame these challenges, we aim to inspire educators to take on similar initiatives despite potential obstacles.

One of the most rewarding outcomes of these travel programs has been the transformative impact on students. Students have demonstrated significant personal growth, an increased openness to future opportunities, a greater inclination to apply for internships in the locations visited, and even plans to relocate after graduation. These experiences have deepened their understanding of course content and fostered a greater sense of global citizenship.

The value of incorporating active and experiential learning opportunities extends beyond the classroom, promoting both personal and professional growth. By engaging students in real-world environments, such as international travel, educators can provide both formal and informal assessments that enhance the learning process. These experiences encourage students to apply academic concepts to their personal lives, preparing them to navigate and contribute to a diverse and complex world. Ultimately, the goal is to help students become well-rounded individuals capable of critically analyzing and addressing challenges in a global context.

While the session will focus on the broader impacts of our domestic and international travel programs, we will highlight one specific example—the 2023 study abroad trip to Denmark. This program, which is being planned again for 2025, provided students with an opportunity to critically analyze the sustainability strategies employed by firms in Denmark.

The summer 2023 study abroad initiative was focused on sustainable business development. This pioneering program provided students with the opportunity to learn directly from global leaders in sustainable business practices, gaining firsthand insights into Denmark's commitment to environmental sustainability. In addition to the academic coursework, students were encouraged to translate their experiences and knowledge back into their local community, enhancing the broader impact of the program.

The study abroad program is part of both an undergraduate and an MBA-level course that emphasizes experiential and active learning. Students gain a comprehensive understanding of both macro and micro aspects of doing business in international contexts, with a focus on the environmental dynamics that influence global business. Throughout the program, students examine various environmental dimensions, including economic, financial, political, legal, and cultural factors. The program is designed to deepen students' understanding of the complexities of the global business environment.

The 10-day experiential learning program to Denmark and Sweden in the summer of 2023 involved 20 students and included visits to key organizations such as Better Energy, Grundfos, Bybi Honey, OsterGRO, The Kitchen (entrepreneurship hub), LEGO, the European Environment Agency, Copenhagen Business School, and IKEA. These visits allowed students to engage with professionals in the field, explore cutting-edge sustainable business practices, and gain cultural immersion through tours and experiences.

Integrating experiential learning through travel into the curriculum offers students transformative opportunities that extend beyond the classroom. By immersing students in real-world, global contexts, educators can foster critical thinking, personal growth, and a deeper understanding of course content. As demonstrated through our programs, these experiences empower students to become engaged, informed, and globally-minded citizens, ready to tackle the challenges of tomorrow.

Improving Engagement in the Classroom by using Non-Conventional Teaching Methods

Dr. Noa D. Stroop, Cumberland University

Every generation has its own personality, expectations, and preferences. Students from the Gen Z generation are no longer interested in conventional teaching methods. In an informal survey of 28 senior business students, an alarming 7% (n=2) reported never having read a single, complete chapter of a textbook in any course in their entire college career. With a requirement of 120 credit hours, that equals 40 courses (120/3 credit hours per course). Even if only half of these instructors utilize a textbook, that is 20 courses with required readings on a weekly basis that simply are not being completed. A similar survey of personal finance students, ranging from freshman to senior levels, yielded comparable results. In informal conversation, students nominate that their preference of instructor has a negative correlation with those who have not adapted to a more dynamic teaching style.

While the world evolves, many “standard” teaching methods have not. This reflects a significant disconnect between higher education and its target market, who is becoming increasingly less trusting of the field. In other industries, when a business ignores customer needs or preferences, they are replaced by competitors or substitutes. Higher education is not invulnerable, and it is already in a susceptible position with corporate education systems rising in popularity and traction due to advances in technology.

What worked in the past is not most effective for the students of today. They become disengaged, and when a student is disengaged, learning outcomes are significantly inhibited. Not only are they missing learning opportunities, but because their final grade hinges on the outcomes of these assignments in most cases, they are more likely to plagiarize or cheat. Further, the negative impression of the assignments correlates with their impression of the instructor. This phenomenon can negatively impact engagement in lectures, too.

Certainly, college professors should utilize text to enhance learning in the classroom and uphold academic integrity. However, if work is assigned that students simply refuse to do regardless of GPA or honorifics, it may be pertinent to re-assess the teaching style and associated assignments.

There exists a common and fair argument from instructors that the onus of engagement is the responsibility of the student. However, this mentality encourages stagnancy in an already stale industry whose population’s needs and wants are constantly evolving, furthering a disconnect. While their argument may be valid, it begs the question, “Are we doing our best to ensure student success?” Moreover, while this problem rests at the level of the classroom, it should be considered at the institution level as well for the sake of financial stability. Universities are reporting declining enrollment numbers, and many have shuttered their doors because of it. At any rate, culture is set by leadership, after all, so buy-in should be addressed at every hierarchical level.

This presentation falls under the topic of Pedagogy and Teaching Excellence. Its purpose is to challenge traditional classroom experiences and recommend a variety of methods that engage this population of students, enhancing the quantity and quality of achieved learning outcomes. Combining efforts with technology and outside sources, these approaches should not require a significant amount of time, and with intentional collaboration and research, they may only require nominal creativity. Most importantly, choosing approaches that resonate with present-day student preferences often results in open-mindedness and engagement, wherein learning outcomes and student satisfaction can be achieved with greater success, increasing the likelihood of retention, recruitment, and financial goals being met.

Throughout the Spring semester and before the academic conference, I will be conducting a mixed method survey within the Cumberland University student body to identify weaknesses and strengths pertaining to engagement and achieved learning outcomes.

AI Ain't Hard: A Hands-on Workshop for Educators

Dr. Stephanie Thacker, University of the Cumberlands

Dr. Lois McWhorter, University of the Cumberlands

Dr. Vonda Moore, University of the Cumberlands

In the face of rapid advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI), higher education must evolve. The integration of AI in higher education is no longer a futuristic concept but a present reality. While AI presents both challenges and opportunities, this presentation focuses on empowering faculty to leverage AI as a powerful tool for enhancing teaching and learning, equipping college business professors with the practical knowledge and skills to navigate this evolving landscape.

This interactive presentation, aligned with the Pedagogy & Teaching Excellence track of the conference, will address a critical need in higher education: empowering faculty to integrate AI tools into their teaching practices effectively. While much discussion surrounding AI in academia focuses on student concerns, this session shifts the focus to faculty, emphasizing the importance of AI literacy and exploring how AI can enhance teaching and learning.

The main goal of the presentation is to empower college business professors with the practical knowledge and skills to integrate AI tools into their classrooms and teaching practices effectively. The presentation provides an invaluable opportunity for participants to engage in collaborative activities and explore various AI tools, including ChatGPT, Gemini, and NotebookLMS. Participants will delve into practical applications such as generating creative content and interactive learning experiences and utilizing AI tools to aid faculty in classroom preparation.

During the presentation, the presenters will share their experiences using AI across a variety of courses, provide details regarding the selection of AI tools, and demonstrate numerous examples of how faculty can utilize AI. Presentation participants will be shown how:

- AI tools can enhance course design and delivery through the creation of high-quality educational materials, such as presentations, videos, podcasts, and online quizzes;
- To utilize AI tools to research emerging trends in business and integrate real-world applications into the curriculum;

- To equip students with critical thinking, problem-solving, and AI-literacy skills necessary for success in today's workforce.

Through hands-on demonstrations, interactive discussions, and peer-to-peer learning, participants will gain valuable insights into selecting and implementing appropriate AI tools within specific courses and foster a culture of innovation and exploration within their classrooms and teaching practices by leveraging the power of AI. Presentation attendees will have the opportunity to experiment with AI tools firsthand, develop their own AI-powered learning activities, and receive personalized feedback from the presenters.

This interactive presentation will equip educators with the knowledge and confidence to effectively integrate AI tools into their teaching practices, enhancing their efficiency, improving student engagement, and ultimately elevating the overall quality of the educational experience.

Adult Learning Theory Workshop

Dr. Melinda Turner, Lincoln Memorial University

Abstract
This workshop focuses on the application of adult learning theory within the context of business education and higher education in general. The objective is to equip business educators with practical strategies and insights to create effective learning experiences tailored to the unique needs of adult learners. Adult learners, unlike traditional students, come to the classroom with a wealth of experience, a self-directed approach to learning, and a need for practical application of knowledge. This workshop will explore established adult learning theories like andragogy and self-directed learning. Participants will examine the six principles of andragogy:

• What the learner needs to know • The self-concept of the learner • Prior experience of the learner • Readiness to learn • Orientation to learning • Motivation to learn

These principles will be connected to practical teaching strategies to enhance participant understanding. The workshop will then explore self-directed learning, highlighting its importance in adult education and the competencies needed for successful self-directed learning. The goal is to connect these theoretical frameworks to the specific needs of business education, providing attendees with actionable strategies to foster a more engaging and impactful learning environment for adult learners. This workshop contributes to the field of business education, as well as other fields of higher education, by bridging the gap between theoretical underpinnings of adult learning and practical classroom application ultimately leading to improved teaching practices and student outcomes. The insights gained from this workshop will be especially valuable for educators working with adult learners in regions with limited access to business education resources.

Workshop Activities

• Interactive Presentation: The workshop will begin with an interactive presentation introducing the core concepts of adult learning theory, specifically focusing on andragogy and self-directed learning. This presentation will be grounded in the research of Knowles and other prominent scholars in adult learning. • Case Study Analysis: Participants will be divided into small groups and presented with case studies reflecting common challenges faced by business educators working with adult learners. Guided by the facilitator, they will analyze the case studies through the lens of adult learning principles, brainstorming practical solutions and strategies. • Collaborative Activity: A collaborative brainstorming session will follow the case studies, encouraging participants to share personal experiences, successful teaching strategies, and challenges encountered when working with adult learners. This activity fosters a sense of community and peer learning. • Resource Sharing: The workshop will conclude with a dedicated segment for resource sharing. The facilitator will provide a curated list of valuable resources, including books, articles, websites, and online communities related to adult learning and faculty development in business education. Participants will also be encouraged to share their own resources, fostering an ongoing exchange of knowledge beyond the workshop.

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

• Develop a deeper understanding of adult learning theories and their relevance to business education. • Gain practical strategies for implementing adult learning principles in their teaching practices. • Expand their repertoire of teaching techniques to effectively engage and motivate adult learners. • Cultivate a collaborative learning community and network with fellow business educators. This workshop will be designed to meet the ABE Conference presentation requirements, with a 30-minute presentation and a 10-minute Q&A session.

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Track 2: Business Research

The Productivity Debate in Remote Work: A Literature Review of Effectiveness, Trends, and Measurement Approaches

Mr. Aaron Fraustro, Lincoln Memorial University

This research focuses on remote work, an important and timely issue in workforce management. As business leaders and policymakers debate its effectiveness, understanding remote work's impact on productivity is essential for shaping employment strategies. The primary objective of this study is to evaluate and compare the existing research on remote work productivity, examining its potential advantages and disadvantages.

Interest in remote work has grown over the past few decades as organizations and governments sought solutions to their labor force problems. This interest peaked during the COVID-19 pandemic when a rapid shift to remote work allowed organizations to maintain operations despite lockdowns and travel restrictions. There are other benefits for employers, such as allowing the hiring of sought-after employees who cannot immediately relocate or prefer not to. It also helps reduce overhead by shrinking office space and related expenses. Employees also benefit from remote work, with reduced commuting costs and lower daily expenses. The flexibility of remote work also improves work-life balance. Additionally, remote workers report higher job satisfaction and lower attrition rates.

However, concerns about the viability and effectiveness of remote work persist. Many organizations and the Trump administration have labeled remote workers unproductive and are pushing for a return to in-office work. This ongoing, often contentious debate raises important questions about remote work's true impact on employee performance. Remote workers often face digital and non-digital distractions that hinder productivity. Family members who work in an office may pressure those who work remotely to care for sick children or handle household chores. Additionally, digital distractions like personal electronic devices can reduce focus and efficiency, even for those with a strong work ethic. The blurring between personal and professional use of electronic devices has also exacerbated this as these tools become the primary means for work, communication, and entertainment.

Studies have shown increased productivity for remote workers due to fewer sick days and a quieter, more convenient work environment. However, many of these studies were conducted before COVID-19 when employees voluntarily chose remote work rather than being required to do so. Participants in these pre-COVID-19 studies often had more favorable home conditions or were better equipped to manage remote work challenges. In contrast, more recent studies suggest that fully remote employees are less productive than their in-office counterparts. Research has also shown a decline in team collaboration time, making it harder for employees to acquire and share new information. Furthermore, remote work requires a reliable internet connection and access to appropriate software and hardware, with technical difficulties resulting in lost work time.

This study conducts a literature review and comparative analysis of remote work productivity studies to address these issues, looking at evidence of both productivity improvements and decline. It distinguishes between pre-pandemic remote work studies, where remote work was done more by choice, and post-pandemic research, where remote work often became necessary. It also examines how productivity is measured across these studies, determining if their different methodologies influence findings. These distinctions provide a more comprehensive and balanced perspective on the evolving debate regarding the viability of remote work. This research contributes to business education by informing future curricula on workforce management.

Making Sense of All of This Data: Analytical Reasoning Amongst Business Decision-Makers

Dr. Cheryl Hild, Lincoln Memorial University

Dr. Xi Wang, Independent Researcher

With the rise of AI and cognitive tools for decision-making, businesses are increasingly reliant on data to inform decisions. Managers face significant pressure to support decisions with data and evidence, yet many lack the necessary skills to effectively interpret and apply this information. Despite the increasing availability of data and analytics technologies, research indicates that managers continue to rely more on prior experience and intuition rather than data and analytical insights for change management and operational decisions. In Datacamp's State of Data and AI Literacy Report 2024, the results from a survey of over 550 business leaders showed that 54% of the respondents indicated that there is a significant data literacy gap within their workforce. Hence, this research is based on the premises that analytical thinking skills are important for business leaders, that they can be developed and taught through application and exercise, and that they are essential to promoting data-based decision-making.

Research into the reasons for the gaps in the use of data and analytical processes to support decision-making has suggested three key causal areas – insufficient technical and quantitative skills, a perceived lack of accessibility to analytical resources and data, and immature analytical reasoning skills amongst managers. Insufficient technical skills across organizations limit the potential of data-driven approaches, with additional barriers such as limited understanding of data tools and a perceived lack of accessibility to analytical resources and tools. With the onset of AI-driven analytics, the need for in-depth knowledge of analytical methods, data-based technologies, and traditional statistics has shifted the focus towards analytical thinking skills.

This research explores the role of analytical thinking in big data and AI-driven organizational environments within the context of managerial decision-making. It differentiates between critical thinking, quantitative (or numerical) literacy, and analytical reasoning. The ability to infer insights and trends from data and apply these to strategic and operational decisions is a significant challenge for managers amid the data-enriched and more time-sensitive business culture. Understanding the ability of managers to reason analytically is critical to understanding how organizations become "data-centric", extracting valuable and relevant information from the massive amounts of data across many different sources.

Based on Galbraith's (1973) organizational information processing theory (OIPT), this research explores the role of analytical thinking skills in enabling organizations to effectively utilize analytical methodologies and information processes, such as AI, to access and apply quality information for day-to-day decision-making. The dimensions used in this research are based on the five analytical reasoning value dimensions proposed by Pepperdine's Quantitative Reasoning Assessment committee (2020). These dimensions include interpretation, representation, calculation, analysis and application, and assumptions and limitations of applied methods. Attributes of analytical reasoning in business decision-making are integrated within the core dimensions of analytical reasoning to develop an assessment framework for business decision-makers.

Insights into the following questions are presented:

- What does analytical reasoning mean and how does it differ from other forms of reasoning and thinking processes?
- What is the role of analytical reasoning amongst business decision-makers in this time of big data and AI-enhanced decision processes?
- What are the attributes of strong analytical reasoning skills amongst business leaders?
- What are the attributes and dimensions of analytical reasoning and how can these be used to assess how well a decision-maker or manager "reasons with data"?

Keywords: analytical thinking, analytical reasoning, managerial decision-making, data-driven decision-making, business intelligence, data literacy, quantitative reasoning

Assessing the Impact of Internal Revenue Code Amendments on IRS-Estimated Tax Return Preparation Time: A Quantitative Analysis of Compliance Burden

Dr. Christi Sayles, Lincoln Memorial University

This study investigates the impact of annual amendments to the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) on the time required to complete an individual 1040 tax return, as estimated by IRS-published guidelines. Given the frequent changes to the IRC, the research aims to determine whether these amendments significantly alter taxpayers' compliance time. Using data collected over two decades, the study analyzes the number of IRC amendments and the IRS-estimated preparation time for each corresponding tax year. Quantitative methods, including correlation analysis and regression analysis, were applied to evaluate the relationship between these variables.

The results of the study indicate that the number of annual amendments to the IRC does not significantly affect the time required to complete an individual 1040 tax return as published by the IRS. Correlation analysis revealed no significant relationship between the volume of amendments and preparation time, suggesting that legislative changes do not materially increase the compliance burden for taxpayers. Regression analysis further confirmed that variations in the number of amendments did not predict fluctuations in IRS-estimated preparation time.

These findings contribute to the broader discussion of tax compliance costs and the administrative impact of legislative changes. Contrary to common assumptions that frequent amendments increase taxpayer burden, this study provides empirical evidence suggesting that IRS guidelines and tax form instructions effectively mitigate the complexity introduced by legislative changes. The absence of a significant relationship implies that other factors, such as advancements in tax preparation software and taxpayer familiarity with standard filing procedures, may play a more substantial role in determining preparation time.

The study's results are relevant for policymakers, tax professionals, and taxpayers, as they suggest that legislative volatility does not necessarily translate into increased compliance time. Future research could explore the impact of specific types of amendments, such as those related to deductions, credits, or filing requirements, to assess whether certain legislative changes have a more pronounced effect on taxpayer compliance.

You've Come a Long Way Baby, But We're Not There Yet

Dr. Sheree Schneider, Lincoln Memorial University

Dr. Lisa Cox, Lincoln Memorial University

Ms. Mackenzie Amoureux, Lincoln Memorial University

Dr. Petra Brnova, Lincoln Memorial University

The purpose of this presentation is to explore the significant strides made in gender equality and identify the persisting challenges that hinder progress, with a specific focus on the business sector. This research contributes to the field of business research by providing a comprehensive analysis of gender representation, leadership, and barriers within the industry. By examining statistical data and case studies of influential female business leaders, we highlight the impact of gender diversity on organizational performance, innovation, and profitability.

We will begin with a historical overview of the women's suffrage movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, highlighting key milestones such as the passage of the 19th Amendment, advancements in women's education and workforce participation, and landmark legislation including Title IX and the Equal Pay Act. This historical foundation sets the stage for a discussion on the current state of gender equality, examining ongoing challenges and progress in achieving equal rights and opportunities for women. By exploring both past and present, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strides made and the work that still lies ahead in the fight for gender equality.

The current state of gender equality is examined through statistical analyses of women's representation across various fields such as politics, business, academia, and STEM. By identifying gaps and areas for improvement, we aim to understand ongoing barriers such as the gender pay gap, glass ceiling, workplace discrimination, and societal expectations. Additionally, case studies of influential female leaders will illustrate the impact of women's leadership, highlighting their achievements and demonstrating the positive effects of gender diversity on corporate success.

The presentation proposes policy recommendations such as paid family leave, affordable childcare, and gender quotas in leadership positions to further close the gender gap. Educational efforts are emphasized as essential in promoting gender equality and combating stereotypes. The presentation concludes with a call to action, encouraging readers to support gender equality initiatives and advocate for systemic change. By summarizing the progress made and the challenges that remain, this article aims to inspire continued efforts in the pursuit of gender equality and underscores the importance of ongoing policy reform.

The importance of education and training programs in fostering a more inclusive and diverse business environment is emphasized. By providing employees with the knowledge and skills necessary to recognize and challenge gender biases, these programs play a critical role in creating a workplace culture that values diversity and inclusion. Ultimately, this presentation encourages stakeholders to support gender equality efforts and advocate for systemic change within the business sector, highlighting the vital role that gender diversity plays in enhancing organizational performance and fostering a more inclusive and equitable business environment.

By addressing these objectives, this presentation aims to inspire continued efforts in the pursuit of gender equality and underscores the importance of ongoing policy reform in the business world. The research highlights the vital role that gender diversity plays in enhancing organizational performance and fostering a more inclusive and equitable business environment.

Culture and the Deep Roots of Innovation in the U.S.

Dr. Daniel Solon, Lincoln Memorial University

Purpose and objectives: Cultural traits, such as trust and individualism, have been shown to be important in generating innovation. Innovation is the most important type of economic phenomenon for both global growth and regional development, as it has positive spillover effects across areas. Previously, cross-country data indicated that these traits help explain variation in innovation rates across countries. Many of these cultural traits have deep roots in a country's past and are resistant to change. However, since these countries often differ in other important ways, such as institutions, it is difficult to identify when a cultural effect or an institutional effect exists. Given the large ethnic and cultural diversity of its population, the U.S. is a unique environment in which we can study how these cultural values affect innovation when they are all operating under the same institutional structure.

Methodology: Using panel data on U.S. county patents and county ancestral origin over the last 100 years, I demonstrate that between 1900 and 2010, U.S. counties with ancestors with a history of technology use and a culture of high trust, high thriftiness, and high individualism also had higher innovation rates. The fixed effects model is robust to multiple controls, including state and year fixed effects and race. I also use two instruments, shift-in-share and transportation network access, in an instrumental variable (IV) model to address potential time-varying endogeneity. The results are robust to these identification strategies.

Key Findings: A one percentage point change in these cultural variables is associated with an increase in innovation rates between 2% and 4%. In terms of importance, these cultural traits appear to be almost as important in explaining local innovation as local education rates and economic prosperity. In terms of mechanisms, I suggest that these histories and cultural traits might affect innovation through a wide variety of mechanisms. To test this, I control for years of education and local political culture. The results indicate that even when these potential mechanisms are controlled, these cultural traits remain large and significant. Thus, these cultural and historical traits still appear to be related to innovation rates even when controlling for their most likely and visible mechanisms.

Implications: This research shows that intangible cultural factors play a role in producing local innovation across the United States. The most important implication from these results is that these diverse cultural traits have this effect even within a unified institutional structure at both the federal and state levels in the U.S. Future research is needed to

explore and isolate the subtler ways in which these traits could affect innovation. Do localities with these traits create environments that encourage creative and out-of-the-box thinking, or do they attract innovative thinkers?

Relevance: In business research, these findings bolster the idea that intangible factors such as culture can often be just as important to economic success/prosperity as material conditions (income) or formal training (education levels).

Best Practices for Business Researchers at Rural Institutions When Searching and Applying for Funded Research Opportunities

Mrs. Natalie Sweet, Lincoln Memorial University

In the evolving landscape of business research, securing research grants is a critical step for advancing knowledge and supporting the professional development of researchers. However, navigating the myriad of federal, state, and foundation funding opportunities can be challenging, particularly for those new to the field. This becomes even more challenging when one operates in a region with limited access to business education resources or a large, sponsored programs staff. This presentation aims to provide an in-depth overview of the best practices for identifying, applying for, and securing grants in business research, with a specific focus on opportunities from federal agencies, state bodies, and private foundations.
The primary objective of this presentation is to equip business researchers - especially those in under-resourced areas such as Appalachia - with the knowledge and tools necessary to effectively search and apply for relevant funding sources. Attendees will receive a quick guide to the various types of funding available and strategies for navigating the often-complex grant application process. By focusing on both the nuances of different funding sources and the practical aspects of the application process, the presentation will empower researchers to begin or reinvigorate their search for funding.

The presentation will begin by providing an overview of the three primary categories of funding for business research: federal, state, and foundation-based opportunities. It will highlight key federal agencies, such as the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the Department of Commerce, which provide vital funding for business-related research. It will additionally cover current concerns related to the federal funding landscape. The presentation will also cover state-level opportunities, discussing how to identify and access grants from local government programs aimed at boosting regional economic development. Additionally, the role of private foundations, such as the Ford Foundation and the Kauffman Foundation, will be explored, with a focus on their initiatives supporting research innovation.

The presenter will emphasize practical strategies for navigating the grant application process. This includes identifying suitable funding opportunities through online databases, creating a compelling research proposal that aligns with the goals of funding organizations, and understanding the review process to ensure a higher success rate. Participants will also be exposed to common pitfalls in the application process, such as missing deadlines, inadequate proposal writing, and the challenge of demonstrating research impact. Key tips for overcoming these obstacles will be shared in a digital how-to guide for grant development (funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) ADVANCE Program, Award #2304868) that will be passed out by QR code during the presentation, including best practices for building partnerships, writing strong budgets, and managing project timelines.

A significant aspect of the presentation will be its relevance to business education, particularly in regions with limited access to resources. Many business schools and research centers in rural regions like Appalachia lack the infrastructure to support grant-seeking efforts at a level comparable to R01 and R02 institutions. By addressing these challenges, the presentation aims to bridge the gap, providing attendees from such areas with a clearer path to funding. The knowledge shared will empower researchers to conduct searches for funding that can drive business innovation and improve regional economies.

Mission Statement Components & Company Performance

Dr. Brad Ward, Milligan University

The purpose of this presentation is to review a study I published regarding mission statement components and financial company performance. The study looked at financial firms on the S&P Small Cap 600. Websites were analyzed to determine if they had mission statements present and if they contained any of the nine components listed below. ROA means and ROA growth, from 2018-2021, where the dependent variables in the study. Two major themes were investigated. The main questions asked were as follows. First, do mission statements and their compositions (components) really matter? Popular classroom textbooks like *Strategic Management: A Competitive Advantage Approach* (David et al., 2019) by Fred David, who authored the seminal 1987 study regarding mission statement components and corporate profitability, suggest that mission statements should contain nine components. The components (customers, products/services, markets, technology, concern for survival, philosophy, self-concept, concern for public image, and concern for employees), as the text suggests, should all be included in a firm's mission statement. But are all components created equal? Do they all need to be present? Or more dramatically, do firms even need mission statements today?

Second, as the 1987 study investigated, should profit be the measure used to assess mission statement effectiveness? Business strategy textbooks like David's typically mention Porter's generic strategies, consisting of differentiators and low-cost providers. Typically, differentiators have high margins and low asset turnover, and low-cost providers have low margins and high asset turnover. In other words, firms tend to offer unique products at higher prices that fewer customers afford, or they offer cheap, standard products at razor thin margins that many customers buy. To provide an example, Fresh Market would be a differentiator and Dollar General would be a low-cost provider. Fresh Market should have higher margins but worse asset turnover than Dollar General. Based on a company's generic strategy, firms may focus on margin, or not. Studies often only look at profit margin, but they should also consider ROA as it contains both asset turnover and margin in its formula (profit margin x asset turnover).

The main findings from my study are as follows. First, financial companies that had explicit mission statements posted on their websites had higher ROAs than those that did not. Second, mission statement comprehensiveness did not relate to financial performance.

Adding the nine components did not help firms achieve higher ROAs. Finally, firms that had concern for employees and public image had higher ROA growth than those that did not.

The main outcomes from the study, both for business students and practitioners, are that mission statements matter, having all nine components present is not necessary, certain mission components such as concern for public image and concern for employees should be added, and ROA is a better measure for firm performance than profit if generic strategy is considered. I would also like to seek suggestions for how the methodology for future studies could be improved.

References

David, F. R., David, F. R., & David, M.E. (2019). *Strategic management: A competitive advantage approach*. Pearson.

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Track 3: Student Research & Applied Projects

Blockchain Technology in Business Education: A Review of Current Literature

Mr. Thomas Adam Brambley, Lincoln Memorial University

Relevance

I am beginning to explore the literature on blockchain, the technology behind Bitcoin, its business applications, and how it can supplement the needs in a business classroom. This study addresses the student track of the ABE Conference as it is student-led research. It is designed to explore how blockchain technology can transform business education through enhanced credential verification, transparent assessment processes, and the secure management of academic records. Blockchain can offer transformative innovation to educational challenges like delivery, assessment, and credentialing that can fundamentally transform how business is taught and demonstrated.

Purpose and Objectives

This research aims to examine the potential that blockchain applications can have in business education while focusing on three integrated areas: the current capabilities of blockchain technology within the classroom and its evolution, practical frameworks for business schools to adopt blockchain solutions correctly, and the impact of blockchain on business education students and their learning experiences and outcomes. This study will provide suggestions and recommendations to the research community and meaningful insights for educational institutions to improve and enhance instruction. This study will contribute to the existing literature on improving various aspects of business education.

Methodology

This study will incorporate a qualitative research approach, including a comprehensive review of current literature to suggest potential new avenues of implementing blockchain technology in the classroom. Case studies of such practices will be analyzed to provide further suggestions and recommendations for educational institutions implementing blockchain technology in the classroom. This research aims to inform educators how blockchain technology can transform educational practices.

Key Findings or Innovations

Preliminary findings suggest that implementing blockchain technology in business education provides various benefits, like enhanced credential validation, enhanced assessment transparency, reduced administrative burden for faculty and staff, and improved and enhanced student record security. Existing literature from MIT and Berkely

Haas School of Business demonstrate how blockchain can make possible micro-credentialing for business skills, leading to a more granular and verifiable student record beyond traditional programs. Blockchain technology can transform business education by creating permanent records of student decision-making processes and outcomes in highly complex business cases.

Impact and Implication

This paper also highlights critical implications for supporting the evolution of business education, particularly in areas with limited access to learning resources. Blockchain can verify credentials across institutional and national boundaries, democratizing access to business education and enabling distributed learning models where students accumulate verified competencies from various sources. A cloud-based blockchain option could provide a lower-cost solution for improving educational quality and credential integrity without investing in more expensive on-premise technology. The innate transparency quality of blockchain can address concerns about credential fraud, which disproportionately affects developing countries, thus improving the international view of business qualifications. This study aims to empower business educators to harness the transformative power of blockchain technology while navigating the challenges to successfully implement a solution by incorporating theoretical frameworks and providing suggestions and recommendations to further the discussion around developing practical applications in the classroom.

Hitozukuri - Human Centered Organizational Learning in Sustainable Lean Transformation in Business Education.

Mr. Kevin Hinkle, Lincoln Memorial University

Relevance: Firms across all industries are interested in obtaining sustainable competitive advantage. Lean Management methodologies have become an integral part of many strategic initiatives across all industries. Lean Management implementations are effective at reducing defects, rework, and waste while increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of firm processes. The issue this paper seeks to address is the high failure rate of Lean implementation and the hyperfocus of Lean “tools” and the lack of development of important human dimensions required for long term sustainable change The research in this study aligns with business research, specifically within Lean Management and organizational learning. The paper seeks to address some of the gaps in sustainable Lean Management implementation and the lack of research regarding the development of organizational learning related constructs as building blocks for dynamic capabilities within firms.

Purpose and Objectives: This research analyzes organizations’ Lean Culture Assessment Score (LCAM) based on organizational learning constructs. This information will be important for organizational leaders, researchers, firms, and Lean experts. It may also serve as an indication of how organizational learning cultures facilitate and ensure long-term Lean sustainability for competitive advantage through the development of dynamic capabilities. Finally, it provides some measurements of organizational learning outcomes and potential prescriptive measures for the technical and human dimensions of business optimization. The key objectives of this study are to: Assess whether organizational learning cultures contribute to effective and sustainable Lean implementations, identify barriers that may constrain the integration of Lean principles within organizations, and provide potential prescriptive measures to prepare firms for the management of successful Lean transformations through a learning-based approach.

Methodology: This pilot study employs a mixed-methods approach using cross-sectional analysis and case study analysis to collect data on Lean Culture dimensions and the potential effects of organizational constructs on long-term Lean Management implementation. Quantitative data will be collected using a survey designed to measure how a firm’s LCAM % is affected by organizational learning constructs. Empirical data will be analyzed using IBM SPSS to identify trends, correlations, and conduct regression

modeling. Qualitative data will be collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and artifact review. This data will be analyzed using thematic analysis and pattern matching to identify themes relating to organizational learning and Lean methodology adoption.

Expected Findings: Based on a preliminary literature review and experience, it is anticipated that the more a firm invests in training their labor force in Lean Principles, the higher their Lean assessment score. Additionally, an educated workforce provides higher levels of knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes readily capable of increasing a firm's dynamic capabilities. Higher percentages of process improvements based on Lean learning initiatives will increase the probability of longterm Lean sustainability. Evidence supported in extant literature indicates that leadership involvement in Lean learning strengthens learning outcomes and sustainable Lean culture. Employees that are empowered to admit failure without fear of repercussion are more likely to engage in continuous improvement activities. They will also be more likely to speak up when abnormal situations are present and feel empowered to share ideas for process changes.

Potential Impact and Implications: If the hypotheses are proven, this research could have significant implications for business education, Lean training, and corporate/business level strategy. Business education can utilize these findings to develop new curricula ensuring students understand the importance of organizational learning and the development of people for the successful adoption of Lean tools and methodologies. These findings will also encourage firms to develop a learning culture as a baseline environment for Lean Management implementation while increasing adaptive learning capabilities. If the relationships hold true, Lean Management will be further proven to be more than an operational tool but a mindset and culture of continuous learning.

The Technology Organizational Environment (TOE) Model's Evolution and Application to Small Businesses.

Ms. Jenae Mattike, Lincoln Memorial University

Purpose and Objectives

Businesses worldwide are examining the development of innovative technologies to address new market demands and revolutionize their strategies. The dynamic process of technological adoption generates challenges for all industries. Moreover, small businesses may encounter additional barriers to technological implementation due to limited resources such as funding, employee knowledge, and technological expertise. Unfortunately, many firms are not optimally reaping the benefits of technology, even though they invest resources and time because they tend to approach technology adoption only from a technological perspective. This study was established in Tornatzky & Fleischer's Technology Organization Environment (TOE) framework, which was developed in 1990 to gain more insight into the technology adoption process. Researchers have utilized the TOE model for decades to examine the adoption process for newly developed technologies. The initially proposed TOE framework theorized that the three primary factors influencing nascent technologies' adoption were technology, organization, and environment. However, with the advancement of previously existing technologies and the innovation of new technologies, several researchers have proposed expanding the original TOE 2 framework and including additional components that have been shown to influence technology adoption amongst small businesses, such as change management.

Methodology

This research was based on a thorough analysis of pertinent literature around technological adoption frameworks.

Key Findings or Innovations

Discussions of the amplification of the original TOE framework have arisen in recent years due to the complexity of innovative technologies. Businesses must recognize how technology adoption is changing and consider empirical evidence about new technological, organizational, and environmental factors influencing the successful adoption of new technologies. The examination of such factors and the firm's ability to adapt will undoubtedly impact its ability to implement new technologies and gain a competitive advantage in the market.

Impact and Implications

These research findings will provide empirical evidence about the technological, organizational, and environmental components of successful technological adoption amongst small businesses in the United States. Moreover, this study will help guide the adoption process amongst firms by empowering business owners and leaders with knowledge about the empirically tested critical components of technology adoption amongst small businesses. Additionally, this study can contribute to the success of small firms in this era of unprecedented advancements in technology and support their ability to compete with other businesses. The United States economy depends 3 on small businesses' success, and this research can aid in positioning small firms to flourish in the national and global markets. This study will also provide a foundational understanding of the TOE framework and its evolution, contributing to students' understanding of technology adoption amongst small businesses.

From Vision to Practice: Examining Preservice Teachers' Evolving Concepts of the Ideal Teacher

Mrs. Taylor Weber, University of Tennessee - Knoxville

Relevance:

This presentation aligns with the *Pedagogy & Teaching Excellence* track by examining how teacher preparation programs can better equip preservice teachers for the realities of the profession. While existing programs emphasize pedagogical theory and instructional best practices, this study reveals a critical gap: new teachers often struggle not with teaching itself but with the logistical, day-to-day aspects of the job. This issue extends beyond teacher education, offering insights into how higher education across disciplines can ensure students are fully prepared for the operational and procedural demands of their respective fields.

Purpose and Objectives:

The primary objective of this study is to investigate how preservice teachers in a five-year teacher preparation program conceptualize the "ideal teacher" and how their perceptions evolve as they transition from their internship year to full-time teaching. By identifying gaps in their preparation—particularly regarding practical, administrative tasks—this research contributes to the broader conversation about improving higher education pedagogy. The findings have significant implications for faculty across disciplines, including the field of business education, emphasizing the need to integrate explicit instruction on professional realities to better prepare graduates for their careers.

Methodology:

This qualitative case study explores how first-year teachers who completed a 5-year teacher preparation program at a Southeastern university conceptualize the ideal teacher and how these conceptualizations influence their early teaching experiences. Using semi-structured interviews with four participants from cohort "C," the study examines how their perceptions of the ideal teacher shape their professional identities, instructional decisions, and classroom management strategies. A case study approach was selected to provide an in-depth analysis of participants' experiences within the shared context of their preparation program.

Data analysis followed a systematic coding process, incorporating both deductive and inductive approaches. Initial coding was guided by predetermined categories such as "ideal teacher qualities" and "classroom struggles," while open coding allowed for emergent themes to surface. The iterative nature of the coding process enabled a nuanced examination of how participants' expectations aligned or conflicted with the realities of classroom teaching. Categories such as "teacher identity," "classroom management," and "professional development" were established to organize findings, informed by theoretical frameworks on teacher identity development and professional learning.

Through thematic analysis, key findings highlight the tensions between participants' idealized visions of teaching and the challenges they encountered in their first year. Themes such as "ideal teacher expectations vs. reality" and "adjusting to classroom challenges" underscore the evolving nature of teacher identity as participants navigated the transition from preparation to practice. The study contributes to ongoing discussions about the role of teacher preparation in shaping professional identity and offers insights into the supports needed for early-career teachers to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Key Findings or Innovations:
Preliminary findings indicate that while preservice teachers feel confident in their instructional knowledge upon graduation, they struggle with the logistical aspects of teaching, such as:

- Taking attendance and entering grades into an online gradebook
- Administering progress checks and logging data
- Managing classroom procedures and school policies

These "small" yet essential responsibilities, often overlooked in teacher preparation curricula, contribute to new teacher stress and impact their ability to transition smoothly into the profession. This phenomenon is not unique to teacher education—graduates across fields may enter the workforce with strong theoretical knowledge but insufficient preparation for the practical, day-to-day aspects of their jobs.

Impact and Implications:
By addressing this gap, this research provides valuable insights into how teacher preparation and higher education programs more broadly can enhance student readiness. The findings suggest that universities must go beyond content knowledge, embedding structured experiences that expose students to the operational realities of their future professions. In business education and other disciplines, these insights can inform curriculum design, ensuring that graduates enter the workforce not only with subject expertise but also with the procedural knowledge necessary for professional success. This work is particularly relevant in regions with limited access to business education resources, where graduates may not have extensive mentorship or professional support networks post-graduation.

By rethinking how we integrate practical training into higher education, institutions can bridge the gap between theory and practice, ultimately improving job preparedness, workforce retention, and long-term professional success.

The Connection Between Cause Marketing & Purchase Intentions Through Brand Loyalty

Mrs. Joy Williams, Lincoln Memorial University

This research aims to investigate the relationship between consumer purchase intentions and cause marketing activities. Charitable organizations and non-profit causes, alongside social justice movements, are often integrated by brands as a component of their marketing strategies. This method, known as cause marketing, seeks to build the brand's image while simultaneously increasing sales. This is achieved by putting out a call for corporate social responsibility. However, the influence of cause marketing on consumer behavior is rather complex. This presentation illustrates that brand loyalty is one of the key variables in this relationship, determining the effectiveness of a cause marketing practice from the consumer's perspective. Effective cause marketing resonates with consumers' self-identity, causing a "warm glow" effect, which strengthens brand loyalty. On the other hand, ineffective or inauthentic cause marketing will elicit brand aversion, resulting in decline of purchase intentions and brand sentiment.

This research, a literature review, analyzes the psychological underpinnings of consumer responses, exploring concepts such as self-signaling, perceived authenticity, and value congruence. The research further examines the multidimensionality of brand loyalty, including the difference between purchase loyalty (use of the product) and attitudinal loyalty (emotional sentiments towards the brand). Moreover, it highlights the emotional aspects of brand loyalty such as trust, love, and attachment and how they can be positively or negatively influenced by cause marketing. On the other hand, the study investigates brand dislike, detailing the reasons why consumers tend to avoid brands. More especially, examining brand disconnect including objection against the brand and its causes and the perception of the brand as inauthentic. It also indicates the relativistic nature of brand dislike, showing how a person's value and morals can influence their consumer behavior. The research further explores the impact of social media on cause marketing trends. It considers how social media is used by brands in their advocacy by promoting their values, reaching out to customers, and enhancing marketing of their cause. However, social media also provides a platform for consumers to freely give their views and comment on brand activities. Thus, consumer attitudes toward cause marketing are more amplified and easily disseminated through social media channels.

Finally, this research proposes three key hypotheses for future research. First, it hypothesizes that younger generations, due to their increased exposure to information on social media, are more likely to exhibit brand aversion in response to negatively perceived cause marketing campaigns. Second, it posits that consumers with elevated levels of self-signaling and morality are more prone to long-term brand aversion following negative cause marketing experiences. Third, it hypothesizes that organizational responses to consumer concerns via social media, particularly when aligned with individual and brand values, can mitigate brand aversion. By exploring these hypotheses, future research can offer valuable insights into the complex interplay between cause marketing, brand loyalty, brand aversion, and consumer behavior in the digital age. This research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how brands can effectively strategize for cause marketing to build stronger relationships with their consumers while avoiding the pitfalls of misaligned or inauthentic initiatives.