



UNIVERSITY of
WORCESTER

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE

23-24 June 2025

PROGRAMME



WELCOME WILLKOMMEN

Welcome to the University of Worcester Postgraduate Research Conference 2025. Our desire is for the conference to **IGNITE** your research creativity, enable you to **CONNECT** with the PGR community, and **ENGAGE** in meaningful research discussions.

This conference brings together our University of Worcester Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA), PhD and MRes researchers for our annual two day event. A special willkommen (welcome) to all our students joining us from Fachhochschule des Mittelstands in Germany.

The PGR conference is a truly multidisciplinary event and a celebration of the excellent and innovative research of our PGR community. Over the next two days we will hear from students at all stages of their research degree, in the form of 5 minute lightning presentations (Ignite sessions) and oral presentations. The abstracts for all sessions can be found at the end of this booklet.

We are grateful to our keynote speaker: Professor John-Paul Wilson, University of Worcester, who will open first day of our conference. A special thank you to Dr Andrea Tapia Arenas, Anke Trischler, Dr Gilda Davis, and Dr Helen Watts for supporting our wellbeing panel.

If you need any assistance, the conference team will be more than happy to help.

We hope you enjoy the next two days and leave feeling inspired and energised as you continue on your research journey.

PGR Conference Committee 2025



**UNIVERSITY of
WORCESTER**



Staatlich anerkannte, private
**Fachhochschule des
Mittelstands (FHM)**

PROGRAMME Monday 23 June 2025

9.00	Registration and Refreshments			CH 2008
9.30	Welcoming Address Conference Team and Prof. John-Paul Wilson, <i>Pro Vice Chancellor Research</i>			CH 2006
10.00	Keynote Address: A Short History of Doctoral Education in the UK <i>Prof. John-Paul Wilson, Pro Vice Chancellor Research</i>			
10.45	Comfort Break			CH 2008
11.00	Presentation Stream 1 <i>Chair: Dr Bere Mahoney</i> CH 2006	Presentation Stream 2 <i>Chair: Dr Pauline Kuithan</i> CH 2001	Presentation Stream 3 <i>Chair: Dr Claire McLoone-Richards</i> CH 2003	
	1. 'Troubling the Practice of Inclusion and (Re)Homing Disability in Intersectionality: Physical Activity Experiences of Disabled Women with Multiple-Marginalised Identities' - Helen Black 2. 'Comparative case studies in surrogacy law: assessing the impact legal regulation of surrogacy can have on children and their rights' - Felicity Miles 3. 'Supporting Neurodivergent Response Police Officers: A Case Study of Police Organisations in England and Wales' - Alexander Wood	1. 'Personal Barriers to Physical Activity: An Intersectional Analysis of Divorced Single Mothers in China's IT and Internet Industries' - Chunhong Zhou 2. 'ATTRACTING WOMEN AS A CLIENT GROUP - Developing recommendations for action for German private banks to improve female client's customer experience, satisfaction and loyalty' - Nina Haase 3. "'I wanna live in a world where change is possible": Men co-designing guidance for inclusive eating, exercise, and body image outreach resources for men' - George Mycock	1. 'The role of inspirational motivation in leadership behaviours to shape an effective digital transformation in municipal services organisations in Germany' - Lars-O Böckmann 2. 'A New Operational Model for eMarketing Technology Deployment in Higher Education in the UK' - Amitave Banik 3. 'A new model, based on theory and practice to help to identify strategic drift' - Werner Podkowik 4. 'The Roles of Chatbots and Sustainability in The Marketing of Fashion Brands' - Taiwo Fimihaan Olajumoke	
12.30	Lunch Break			CH 2008
13.20	Round Table Discussion			CH 2008

14.00	Presentation Stream 4 <i>Chair: Dr Charlotte Taylor</i> CH 2006	Presentation Stream 5 <i>Chair: Dr Laila Kasem</i> CH 2001	Presentation Stream 6 <i>Chair: Dr Fleur Visser</i> CH 2003
	1. 'A Critical Examination of Nutritional Advice Received by Mobility-Impaired Adults During Their Chronic Progression and Subsequent Habitual Use of a Wheelchair – Early Findings and Emerging Themes' - Heather Chapman 2. 'Exploring the relationship between children's social media exposure, cognitive, social, motor, and emotional profile and associations with nutritional status and buccal cell fatty acid profile' - Samantha Paskin	1. 'What keeps experienced nurse working within the NHS?' - Liz Fenton 2. 'Targeted RNAi Approaches for Sustainable Control of <i>Peronospora viciae</i> in Pea plants' - Gizem Unal	1. 'Household-Level Vulnerability Assessment Using Remote Sensing and Principal Component Analysis in Parashuram Municipality, Nepal: A Technical Framework for Anticipatory Disaster Risk Reduction' - Beas Banerjee 2. 'Wildflower strip establishment for enhancing sustainability of UK Vineyards' - Joseph Leaper
15.10	Ignite Stream 1 <i>Chair: Anke Trischler</i> CH 2006	Ignite Stream 2 <i>Chair: Dr Scott Andrews</i> CH 2001	Presentation Stream 7 <i>Chair: Dr Luke Devine</i> CH2003
	1. 'The role of collegial emotional labour in understanding the complexities of the workplace relationships between HR Professionals and their stakeholders' - Catherine Thompson 2. 'Passive Heat Acclimation in Females of Varying Fitness Status' - Olivia Barnes 3. 'Lonely Schools: An Integrative Literature Review of the Literature on Coastal Schools in England' - Matthew Martin 4. 'Establishing if there is a metabolic link between mental health and perimenopause' - Bradán Houghton 5. Ahtasham Zameer	1. 'Bipolar Disorder and Trauma' - Matthew Newell 2. 'Exploring the experiences of adult children and their parents in non-caregiving cohabitation' - Irene Conti 3. 'An Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Internalised Weight Stigma in Women with PCOS: A Qualitative Study in the UK' - Utpreksha Gaude 4. 'Association between autoimmune disease and bipolar disorder' - Ian Laws	1. 'Do Maitland mobilisations reposition the talus?' - Emma Gregory 2. 'Interpretive Ekphrastic Response' - Trudi Holland
16.15	Plenary		CH 2006
17.00	Images of Research Awards Event		The Glass Room at the Hive
18.30	Conference Meal (<i>pre-booking essential</i>)		Zizzi

PROGRAMME Tuesday 24 June 2025

9.00	Registration and Refreshments		CH 2008
9.30	Welcome and Panel Session: On the seesaw, balancing work, life, and study		CH 2006
10.40	Presentation Stream 1 <i>Chair: Dr Laila Kasem</i> CH 2006	Presentation Stream 2 <i>Chair: Dr James Green</i> CH 1003	Presentation Stream 3 <i>Chair: Dr Carla Solvason</i> CH 2003
	1. 'Exploration of Pandemic Related Anxiety Impacting the Consumers Grocery Store Choice' - Gianluca Jacob 2. 'What is the habitual intake of polyphenols in different athletic populations, and the effects of supplementation upon performance, recovery, and health markers?' - James Moore 3. 'Preliminary Findings: Circumstances of precarity experienced by forced migrant entrepreneurs (FMEs) and implications'- Tapuwa Mwedzi	1. 'Exploring how non-family employees experience belonging in German Family Businesses and the Role of Communication in fostering this sense of belonging' - Annika Baumgart 2. 'Peeling back the layers to make trust-based selection decisions when vetting job applicants using open-source intelligence' - Joanne Reid	1. 'Autism spectrum traits among adults with bipolar disorder in the UK' - Krista Easton 2. 'What is the impact on primary schoolteachers of working with traumatised children in the classroom?' - Penny Paske 3. 'Bridging Policy and Practice: Local Education Authorities' Perspectives on Implementing National Language and Education Policies in Nigeria' - Cordelia Nwancha
12.10	Lunch Break		CH 2008

12.50	Ignite Stream 1 <i>Chair: Dr Luke Devine</i> CH 2006	Ignite Stream 2 <i>Chair: Dr Alison Prowle</i> CH 1003	Presentation Stream 4 <i>Chair: Prof. Lynn Nichol</i> CH 2003
	1. 'Desensitisation to the Russia-Ukraine War on 'X'' - Ryan Jones 2. 'Constructing Well-being: Students' Lived Experiences and Perceptions of Pressure During High-Stakes Examinations in an Independent School' - Nicola Sears 3. Andrea Johnson 4. 'Between Censor and Censure: Angare (1932) and its Many Lives' - Utkarsh Sharma 5. 'Research on the Experience of Candidates within the Recruitment and Selection Process' - Christin Hall	1. 'Ethics and vulnerable people' - Diane Bushell 2. 'A Systemised Review of Teacher Expectations and Student Performance in Primary Schools: Comparative analysis of India and England' - Raneesha Kalanchira Parayampallath 3. 'A Comparative Review of Literature: The Impact of Conceptual Teaching Strategies on Secondary School Students' Mathematical Confidence and Performance' - Fathimath Zehra Bathool 4. 'Islamic Influence and Muslim Identities in the Crown Colony of Sierra Leone during the Nineteenth Century' - Malina Yallanki 5. 'The role of the Oral Microbiome in Metabolic Syndrome and Quality of Life' - Manal Chouchane	1. 'Internal corporate venturing in the context of family-run SMEs in Germany – a brief literature review' - Elisabeth Grashoff 2. 'Cross-generational stakeholder approach to non-financial reporting in German SMEs: transforming compliance into competitive advantages' - Anke Trischler
14.00	Presentation Stream 5 <i>Chair: Dr Bere Mahoney</i> CH 2006	Presentation Stream 6 <i>Chair: Irene Conti</i> CH 1003	Presentation Stream 7 <i>Chair: Dr Vessela Warren</i> CH 2003
	1. 'Empirical Assessment of Operational Efficiency Gains through Rule-Based Access Management System (RBAMS) in International Airports' - Luca Moheb 2. 'Integrating ESG Measures into Real Estate Development: A strategic framework for enhanced project success' - Andre Wellmann 3. 'Navigating ethical landscapes: The Values, Impact and Sustainability Model' - Gisela Anthony	1. 'The structure of psychological contracts of hotel employees' - Christian Rebehn 2. 'Competition: Too Much of a Good Thing?' - Richard Hadley 3. 'A Survey Exploring Stigma Towards People with Dementia Living in Extra Care Housing' - John Bosco Tumuhairwe	1. 'Green corporate social responsibility practice and green consumption intention. A dual theoretical approach in the context of hotels in Ghana.' - Edward Markwei Martey 2. 'Police use of force: Analysing police/citizen encounters in Ghana.' - Peter Twumhene
15.30	Closing Plenary and Next Steps		CH 2006

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Professor John-Paul Wilson
Pro Vice Chancellor Research

“A Short History of Doctoral Education in the UK”

This presentation will explore the origins of doctoral education in the UK in the early 20th century and track its subsequent development, drawing on my own experiences of undertaking a PhD in the early 1990s and of 30 years thereafter of being a “doctoral educator”. In tracing this history, I will explore what has changed for doctoral students and what has fundamentally remained the same, highlighting the eternal challenges of successfully completing a doctorate.

Prof. John-Paul Wilson completed his PhD on the socio-economic history of the Greek world c.800-500 BCE in the Department of History at UCL in 1994. Subsequently he held a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship from 1996-1999 and a one-year research fellowship on the AHRC-funded Celtic Inscribed Stones project (1999-2000) both also at UCL. During his PhD and postdoctoral employment, he taught at UCL, KCL, St Mary's University and Cardiff University. In 2000, he took up a Lecturer post in the Department of Classics at University of Wales, Lampeter, becoming Head of Department in 2004. He moved to Worcester in 2007 to take up a management role in the Doctoral School and has subsequently held a series of research leadership and management roles, focused on doctoral education, researcher development, research governance and research strategy, culminating in being appointed Pro Vice Chancellor Research in 2023.

PANEL: On the seesaw: balancing work, life, and study

Dr Helen Watts is a Principal Lecturer in Business and Deputy Head of Worcester Business School. Helen's research interests relate to understanding and evaluating decision-making and behaviour. Whilst completing her MSc in Occupational Psychology, Helen worked on MoD-funded research predicting coaching and leadership behaviour in the armed forces and went on to achieve Chartership in Occupational Psychology after working in consultancy. Following this, Helen secured a match-funded PhD predicting customer retention, and other contract research projects exploring membership retention. More broadly, Helen has contributed to research on entrepreneurial personality, big data analytics, and public health research evaluating loneliness interventions, talent management and clinical strategy. Helen is delighted to be supervising doctoral students researching consumer anxiety, feminine leadership, IT recruitment, contractor selection and open-source intelligence.



Andrea Tapia-Arenas is a final-year PhD researcher at the University of Worcester, exploring the use of UAV-based remote sensing to assess bumblebee habitat quality in semi-natural grasslands. Originally from Costa Rica, she has a background in forestry engineer and GIS. As an international student and single parent, she can share her perspective on the challenges and strategies of balancing postgraduate research with family life.

Anke Trischler is a part-time DBA student at Worcester Business School (commenced October 2021) with 30+ years of leadership experience across industry, banking, international consulting, and IT sectors, culminating in founding her sustainability consultancy in 2008.

Her doctoral research focuses on developing cross-generational stakeholder procedures to support German SMEs with non-financial reporting requirements. This research builds directly upon her consulting experience with SMEs, addressing the urgent need for practical, stakeholder-inclusive approaches to sustainability reporting in a sector comprising 99.5% of all European businesses. As a certified training partner for the Sustainability Code and associate lecturer at Goethe University Frankfurt, Anke bridges theoretical knowledge with practical application. Her expertise in corporate transformation management informs her research into intergenerational stakeholder engagement and sustainable corporate development.

Anke holds a Diplom Kauffrau European Business from Paderborn University (D), Nottingham Trent University (UK) and Université Louis Pasteur (F). She is co-author of "CSR in Hessen - Transformation zur Nachhaltigkeit" (Springer Gabler, 2021) and member of the Sustainable Organisations Research Group at Worcester, the British Academy of Management, and the BAM Consultancy Network.



Dr Gilda Davis I originally trained as an Enrolled Nurse in South Wales before training as a Children's Nurse in London. I became interested in working with children with complex care needs when working in Romania with HIV+ children and spent the next 25 years in children's hospice care, with a couple of years lecturing at the University of Wales, Bangor. Having returned to lecturing at UWE, in 2020 (a few weeks before the first Covid lockdown), I am now a Senior Lecturer in Children's Nursing at the University of Worcester. I started my doctoral studies in October 2019, where I explored the choices parents made when considering the place of death for their child, when death was expected, and how the process of liminality impacted upon the narratives of the parents.

ABSTRACTS

IGNITE

'A Comparative Review of Literature: The Impact of Conceptual Teaching Strategies on Secondary School Students' Mathematical Confidence and Performance'

Fathimath Zehra Bathool

This presentation explores the comparative impact of conceptual teaching strategies, both abstract and contextual, on secondary school students' mathematical confidence and performance in England and India. Mathematics is a critical subject in student academic development, yet many struggle due to insufficient conceptual understanding. While England emphasizes inquiry-based, mastery-oriented instruction, India's system remains largely procedural and exam-focused. This research aims to evaluate how these differing pedagogical approaches influence students' conceptual understanding, problem-solving skills, and self-efficacy in mathematics.

Using a qualitative methodology grounded in interpretivism and the Comparative Judgment (CJ) theoretical framework, the study analyses secondary data to identify patterns in instructional practices, curriculum implementation, and learner outcomes across both contexts. The thematic analysis highlights key factors such as student engagement, teacher support, curriculum flexibility, and the real-life relevance of mathematical instruction.

The purpose of this presentation is to share insights into how contextualized teaching can enhance student confidence and deepen understanding, especially when compared to abstract or rote methods. By critically examining the intersection of pedagogy and student perception, the study informs teacher development, curriculum design, and educational policy in mathematics. The ultimate goal is to contribute to improved teaching strategies that support meaningful, confident, and conceptually sound mathematics learning.

'Passive Heat Acclimation in Females of Varying Fitness Status'

Liv Barnes

Background: Climate change is associated with an increasing mean global surface temperature, imposing a higher intensity and frequency of heat waves (GOV UK, 2024; Met Office, 2024). Heat vulnerability is typically discussed regarding those with advanced age and pre-existing health conditions; however, otherwise healthy, younger individuals still report their day-to-day life negatively impacted by heat episodes (Mee et al., manuscript in preparation).

Females are an underrepresented population in research, with findings in males often applied to females without consideration of biological and sex phenotype disparities (Elliot-Sale et al., 2021; Dole et al., 2023). Therefore, it is empirical to investigate females' response to heat stress, utilising consideration of sex disparities to produce targeted guidelines and recommendations.

Aims: This body of research aims to examine the (1) perceptions and education surrounding UK heat waves, (2) acute responses to a heat stimulus via hot-water immersion, (3) adaptive responses from passive heat acclimation and (4) responses to cooling methods in a healthy, female population, with comparisons between varying fitness statuses.

Proposed Methods: Qualitative data will be collected to investigate perceptions and education surrounding heat waves (1) via a self-administered online survey and focus groups. Quantitative laboratory-based data will be collected to examine aims 2, 3 and 4. A study comparing the thermophysiological stimulus of a home- and laboratory-based hot bath (2) will inform whether a home-based passive heat acclimation protocol is suitable to subsequently investigate adaptations (3, 4).

'Exploring the experiences of adult children and their parents in non-caregiving cohabitation'

Irene Conti

In recent years, intergenerational cohabitation between adult children and their parents has become increasingly common across Europe and the UK. Yet, this living arrangement remains underexplored in research, often reduced to narratives of economic hardship or "delayed adulthood", and rarely explored as a legitimate form of family life. Drawing on perspectives from Italy and England, my research explores how family members living in these arrangements define "family" and how broader sociocultural and political discourses shape their experiences. At this early stage, I am conducting a Critical Interpretive Synthesis (CIS) of the literature to interrogate the assumptions embedded in how this phenomenon is represented, theorised, and problematised. The CIS allows me to move beyond description and critically reflect on how knowledge is produced in this field. In this presentation, I will briefly outline the context of my research and share reflections on why I chose CIS as a first step. I will also present early insights from the literature and discuss how this synthesis will shape the subsequent phases of my PhD project.

'The role of the Oral Microbiome in Metabolic Syndrome and Quality of Life'

Manal Couchane

Gaps in research: Increasing evidence linking oral microbiome to systemic diseases like type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease, however:

- Mechanism of action is still unclear.
- Causality: cause or effect or correlation.
- Individual variability: genetics, diet, lifestyle (inc dental hygiene).
- Microbial species: pathogenic vs beneficial.
- 'Increasing' evidence but still limited.

Aim: to investigate and observe the role of the oral microbiome in the development and progression of metabolic syndrome disease and the impact of this on quality of life. To achieve this, the following objectives will be addressed:

1. Analyse the composition and diversity of the oral microbiome in individuals with metabolic syndrome.
2. Measure and assess metabolic syndrome markers such as BMI, waist-to-hip ratio, blood pressure, lipid profiles and inflammatory markers.
3. Analyse the link between oral microbiome composition and diversity data and the above-mentioned metabolic syndrome markers.
4. Investigate the link between the oral microbiome and periodontal disease (periodontitis).
5. Analyse the relationship between oral microbiome, dental hygiene (e.g. frequency of brushing and or flossing) and metabolic syndrome.
6. Observe the link between oral microbiome and metabolic disease and how this impacts quality of life using a validated questionnaire to assess physical, emotional, and social well-being.

'Research on the Experience of Candidates within the Recruitment and Selection Process'

Christin Hall

My research was born out of my personal interest and professional experience in the recruitment industry and knowledge gap I discovered over the last two years. The research goal is to understand candidates' perceptions of the recruitment and selection process post COVID-19, their experiences and thoughts, and to analyse accurately what shaped their beliefs. The research aims to address how candidates have perceived companies' responses to the change in expectation while exploring social dynamics and interactions. (RQ: "How have candidates received the change in the recruitment and selection process post Covid-19 within the real estate industry in the USA and has there been an appropriate adjustment by companies in response to the candidates' expectations?") The study is designed to collect as many opinions and viewpoints as possible to create an interpretation and valuation of all gathered data. This research design will underline the assumptions of interpretivism, be exploratory in its approach, focused on qualitative data collection, aiming to understand individual thoughts and motivations which shape social interactions. Methods will include literature review and interview conduction.

The intent of this presentation is to share the research idea, reflect on the approach, and generate outside feedback and ideas that could benefit the study and its design.

'Establishing if there is a metabolic link between mental health and perimenopause'

Bradán Houghton

Establishing if there is a metabolic link between mental health manifestations during perimenopause' investigates the complex metabolic relationship between mental health and perimenopause (Santoro, 2016; Khoudary et al., 2019). Focusing on the interaction between the hormonal communication, brain changes in menopause, and their effect on women's metabolic profiles. Jung et al. (2000) showed that reduced oestrogen during menopause significantly alters neural circuits and synaptic plasticity in ovariectomized mice, suggesting a metabolic and neurological component during this transition (Jung et al., 2000; Del Río et al., 2018; Boyle et al., 2021; Machado et al., 2024; Mosconi et al., 2024). . These brain changes relate to 51% experiencing significant menopausal-related depression and anxiety (Albert and Newhouse, 2019; O'Reilly et al., 2024). . Freeman's 2015 study identified a bidirectional relationship between depressive symptoms and menopause in women aged 40-61, highlighting menopause's role as a risk factor for mental health issues (focusing on depression and anxiety). This study also explores how perimenopausal effects on metabolic changes can impact mental health (Santoro, 2016; Khoudary et al., 2019).

Menopause is a physiological transition between the reproductive period and the non-reproductive periods of a woman's life (Reed and Carr, 2000; Santoro, 2016; Goldstein, 2021). This transition is marked by a decrease in the hormone oestrogen within the body (Reed and Carr, 2000; Santoro, 2016; Goldstein, 2021). The parts of this process that interest this research study is the gap in research regarding the changes in the metabolism that occur during the menopausal transition (Perimenopause) (Wang et al., 2018; Jeong and Park, 2022). Perimenopause comes with a plethora of symptoms such as Vasomotor Symptoms, Menstrual Symptoms and Neuropsychiatric symptoms (Reed and Carr, 2000; Avis et al., 2015; Gandhi et al., 2016; Santoro, 2016; Goldstein, 2021). This research will explore the effects of the metabolism on the menopausal transition through a combine quantitative and qualitative approach to look at both the biomolecular viewpoint but also a holistic viewpoint for women undergoing perimenopause (Reed and Carr, 2000; Goldstein, 2021; Peters et al., 2022; Coyoy-Salgado et al., 2024)

This study investigates how various metabolic pathways, alongside different lifestyles, co-morbidities, and backgrounds (both clinical and non-clinical), influence women's experiences of menopause (Wang et al., 2018; Albert and Newhouse, 2019; Jeong and Park, 2022; O'Reilly et al., 2024). This will be done by the completion of a pre-screening questionnaire which asks the participants to detail any known secondary factors that may increase there symptoms i.e. triggers.

Identifying a specific metabolic pathway or ruling out others allows for more focused health strategies designed to assist menopausal women (Wang et al., 2018; Jeong and Park, 2022; Andy et al., 2024). Additionally, by including a diverse group of participants, the research can examine how these metabolic pathways have adapted to environmental factors and the stressors faced by the participants (Holmes et al., 2017).

'Desensitisation to the Russia-Ukraine War on 'X''

Ryan Jones

My research focuses on the Russia-Ukraine War through the lens of social media and the contextual frame of a media-saturated society. I aim to explore the links between media saturation through prolonged coverage of the War by the official @NATO 'X' account and desensitisation to the conflict. Additionally, my project considers the role of disinformation on X and the quality of the information that is widely distributed across the platform. I will explore what implications this has for a social media environment. For example, what are the consequences of the absence of fact checking and increased information acceptance on social media? Therefore, my presentation will focus specifically on disinformation and misinformation, which are prominent subjects in my project. Firstly, my presentation will define disinformation and misinformation. Secondly, I will explore how they impact users of social media and why they are important considerations when conducting social media research. Additionally, I will briefly explore how manipulated information has a prominent role on social media during conflict. Finally, I will conclude with closing thoughts on potential steps we, ourselves, can take towards ensuring the information we consume on social media and the beliefs we formulate are as well informed as possible.

'A Systemised Review of Teacher Expectations and Student Performance in Primary Schools: Comparative analysis of India and England'

Raneesha Kalanchira Parayampallath

The presentation will share summary about the research includes title, overview of research context, aim, research question, objectives, rationale and limitations of the research. And the presentation will also include data collection methods and data analysis tools. Teacher plays a crucial role for the intellectual growth, motivation and competence of the students. Teacher expectations have shaping students' academic performance, classroom interaction, motivation, instructional quality, self-belief and learning environments, particularly during primary education which forms the foundation of lifelong learning and achievement. The research systematically reviews literature on teacher expectation and student performance, comparing primary school settings in India and England particularly in the comparative understanding of cultural, systemic and pedagogical differences. Synthesis of both qualitative and quantitative studies will use to identify recurring patterns, contrasts, and implications. The study grounded in the Pygmalion effect and sociocultural theory.

The aim of the research is to conduct a comprehensive, systematic review of existing literature to critically examine the influence of teacher expectations on student performance in primary schools, mainly focusing on a comparative analysis between India and England.

Through the presentation I can share my research work summary and I can take early feedback about the research.

'Association between autoimmune disease and bipolar disorder'

Ian Laws

The aim of this project is to examine the association between autoimmune disease and bipolar disorder (BD). To date there is a small body of literature on the link between autoimmune disease and the possible link with immune dysfunction in BD. Within the proposed project I will explore rates of a range of autoimmune disorders and how these compare to reported rates in the general population and other samples of individuals with BD

relationships between the presence of autoimmune disease and clinical features and outcomes in BD including bipolar subtype, illness course, other psychiatric and medical comorbidities.

The proposed project will involve the analysis of complex data collected by the UK Bipolar Disorder Research Network (approx. 6000 individuals) All participants have undergone a detailed assessment of their psychiatric history and data have already been collected on history of autoimmune disease.

It is hoped this research will lead to improved understanding of the potential underlying link between BD and autoimmune disease. This could lead to further research including potential underlying mechanisms which ultimately may guide the treatment and management of BD.

The purpose of this presentation is to share my plans, learn of any similar research and gain early feedback.

'Bipolar Disorder and Trauma'

Matthew Newell

Bipolar disorder (BD) is a complex, heterogeneous condition, influenced by a number of unpredictable individualistic biopsychosocial factors. Previous work has largely focused on childhood adversity, substantially lacking reports of wider traumatic encounters moving into adulthood. This work aims to investigate the range and types traumas reported by individuals with BD and quantify such disclosures. Initially concentrating on possible illness course effects, thereafter looking for associations between diagnosed psychiatric comorbidities, personality and temperament trait profiles and probable post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) cases. Applying a quantitative, post-positivist approach, a secondary, pre-collected dataset, shared with permission from the Bipolar Disorder Research Network (BDRN), underpins this project. It is hoped significant findings add value to involved medical practitioners' and support team's knowledge that utilise trauma-informed care and early intervention procedures to improve, or sustain, the quality of life of individuals with BD where required.

'Lonely Schools: An Integrative Literature Review of the Literature on Coastal Schools in England'

Matthew Martin

Coastal regions in England are often romanticised in popular discourse. They are seen as places of sun, second homes and serenity. Yet, this is not necessarily an accurate representation in reality. Coastal schools suffer from geographic and socioeconomic isolation, which limits access to resources, effective teachers, HE pathways and teacher professional development. Recruitment and retention are a significant challenge, coupled with constrained job opportunities for teachers' partners, meaning there is a stagnation in the workforce. Moreover, these coastal schools also fall victim to education isolation. They are frequently excluded from government initiatives and funding models, which are primarily designed for urban and suburban schools. The lack of funding initiatives for coastal schools means frequent disparities in achievement and progress between schools in coastal regions and their inner-city counterparts. This also hinders school improvement efforts. Because of this, these educationally isolated institutions are often referred to as 'lonely schools'. The purpose of this paper is to review the current corpus on coastal schools and shed more light on the reality of teaching and being taught in a coastal school in England

'Constructing Well-being: Students' Lived Experiences and Perceptions of Pressure During High-Stakes Examinations in an Independent School'

Nicola Sears

My study explores how students in an independent school experience well-being during the high-stakes A Level examination period. While exam stress and well-being have received considerable attention, little is known about students' broader, context-specific experiences of well-being, particularly in independent schools, where academic and cultural pressures may differ from the state sector. Framed within a qualitative interpretivist paradigm and grounded in a social constructivist epistemology, the research adopts a context specific design. Walk-along interviews, conducted over two academic years, will allow students to guide me through school environments they associate with well-being. This participatory method supports the co-construction of meaning and centres students' voices in the research process. This short presentation will outline the conceptual and methodological foundations of the study, with a focus on the rationale for using walk-along interviews and a socially constructivist lens. The aim is to share early reflections and invite discussion on how we can better explore and support student well-being during periods of academic pressure.

'Between Censor and Censure: Angare (1932) and its Many Lives'

Utkarsh Sharma

The publication in 1932 of *Angare* (lit. "Embers"), a collection of short stories and one play, by Sajjad Zaheer, Ahmed Ali, Rashid Jahan, and Mahmuduzzafar, was a watershed moment in the developing canon of progressive writing in India. After its proscription in 1933 by the colonial government on religious grounds, it was only in 1995 that the text was republished in Urdu by Khalid Alvi, albeit after being "sanitized" (Girja Kumar, 1997) with its controversial elements removed out of fear of censure. Four translations of the text have appeared since then—two in 2014 in English (one by Vibha S. Chauhan and Khalid Alvi himself; another by Snehal Shingavi), one in Hindi by Shakeel Siddiqui (2016), and another in "Hindustani" by Fareed Ahmad (2022). In this paper, I seek to undertake a comparative study of the translations to explore the history of the text with special focus on its relationship with religious censure over the years. My presentation aims to focus on the re-emergence of the text, after a period of about sixty years, and invite suggestions on possible methods for my investigation.

'The role of collegial emotional labour in understanding the complexities of the workplace relationships between HR Professionals and their stakeholders'

Catherine Thompson

This research will explore how HR Professionals (HRPs) experience and manage collegial emotional labour (CEL). The aim is to further our understanding of the challenges, contradictions and complexities of the HRP role by examining their stakeholder relationships through the lens of CEL. By interviewing HRPs themselves it will explore their own 'lived experience' beyond the often prescriptive academic models of HRM. It will also seek to delineate between different types of stakeholder (for example, line managers, employees, trade union representatives), and will explore whether factors including gender and professional status make a difference to the HRPs' experience.

There is a plethora of research into EL in the context of customers relations with front-line service workers in the service industries. However research into EL and particularly CEL in the experience of the HR professional is an area that has been under-researched. Furthermore, whilst it is recognised in many academic models of HRM that the HR has a 'customer service ethos', HR's colleagues or stakeholders are not deemed to 'customers' in the literature. This research will explore this contradiction and what it could reveal about the role.

The purpose of the presentation is to seek views on the approach of exploring HRPs collegial / colleague relationships through the lens of emotional labour as a way of understanding the complexities of the HR Professional role.

'Islamic Influence and Muslim Identities in the Crown Colony of Sierra Leone during the Nineteenth Century'

Malina Yallanki

Historiographical debate on the Crown Colony of Sierra Leone has largely emphasised British and Christian influences in its development, with the result that its diverse makeup has received less attention. This research aims to explore the Crown Colony from a different perspective by focusing on the identities and experiences of Muslim communities. Established on the upper Guinea Coast of West Africa, the abolitionist-inspired settlement became increasingly reliant on the Islamic commercial networks that dominated the region. The presence of Muslim communities in the colony, composed of Muslim migrants from the hinterland and Muslim 'Liberated Africans', remains underexamined. Drawing on a range of primary sources held at the Sierra Leone Public Archives and the National Archives at Kew, the study aims to explore the social, religious, and cultural relationships formed by Muslim communities to understand how these interactions shaped the lives of inhabitants and influenced the development of the Crown colony. By focusing on the identities and perspectives of Muslim individuals, this research aims to interrogate the silences and biases of colonial sources and contribute to a more balanced understanding of the complex interactions that shaped the Crown Colony

ABSTRACTS

PRESENTATIONS

'Navigating ethical landscapes: The Values, Impact and Sustainability Model'

Gisela Anthony

Ethical decision-making within socially innovative, technology-based businesses in the start-up stage is a vastly unexplored area in Business Ethics. The study introduces the Values, Impact, and Sustainability (VIS) Model, derived from qualitative analysis, which identifies three key themes: the interaction between organisational values and business realities, the critical role of stakeholder engagement in driving social impact, and the ethical challenges of 'tech for good' initiatives. The VIS Model conceptualises ethical decision-making as a dynamic process consisting of three interconnected components: proactive social innovation, an ethical conflict resolution framework including 'social osmosis,' and an ongoing ethical innovation process fostering learning and adaptation. The findings highlight the importance of user-centered design, impact measurement, and addressing resource constraints for founders. The research underscores the need for proactive ethical strategies and invites further exploration of the VIS Model's applicability across different contexts, especially regarding data integrity and Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion principles.

'Household-Level Vulnerability Assessment Using Remote Sensing and Principal Component Analysis in Parashuram Municipality, Nepal: A Technical Framework for Anticipatory Disaster Risk Reduction'

Beas Banerjee

Floods and landslides remain persistent threats in Nepal's rugged terrain, especially in rural municipalities like Parashuram in Sudur Paschim Province. This study applies the MOVE (Methods for the Improvement of Vulnerability Assessment in Europe) framework to assess household vulnerability at a granular scale by integrating geospatial indicators with socio-economic survey data. Orthophotos, UAV imagery, and a digital elevation model (DEM) were used to extract physical exposure and susceptibility variables, including distance to rivers, elevation, slope, and land cover. Simultaneously, household-level socio-economic and resilience indicators were gathered through structured surveys covering income, construction type, road access, education, and disaster preparedness.

A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was employed to reduce dimensionality and identify key drivers of vulnerability. The results highlight distinct spatial patterns of exposure and resilience, revealing that proximity to rivers, poor construction materials, and limited access to roads significantly contribute to vulnerability clustering in low-lying wards. The PCA-derived vulnerability index enables anticipatory action by identifying high-risk households before disasters strike. This method provides a replicable technical approach for integrating spatial data and statistical analysis into local disaster risk reduction (DRR) planning and early warning systems.

'A New Operational Model for eMarketing Technology Deployment in Higher Education in the UK'

Amitave Banik

The terms "eMarketing", "online marketing", "digital marketing" and "Internet marketing", are frequently interchanged, and can often be considered synonymous. eMarketing technologies, tactics, tools and strategies can help UK universities to achieve potential competitive benefits. In UK universities, the uptake of eMarketing has been relatively limited, and the complexity of managing eMarketing has become more challenging. Many UK universities are only at an early stage of developing their online marketing capabilities and have not yet to identify their core eMarketing tools and techniques. This research investigates eMarketing adoption and deployment initiatives and provides insights into how to successfully develop and implement these initiatives in UK universities. Moreover, this research puts forward a provisional conceptual framework for eMarketing strategy implementation that relates strategy objectives and operational requirements to technology utilization. The research conducted the epistemological assumptions relate to "how things really are" and "how things really work" in an assumed reality. Based on the concept, the framework recognizes the various eMarketing channels, eMarketing techniques and eMarketing strategies that are used to reach the widest student base. A qualitative case study research approach, is inherently inductive, collecting data and then allows patterns and themes to emerge from the analysis, which includes an empirical investigation at the University of Gloucestershire, University of Wales Trinity St David, Bournemouth University and University of Westminster. The selection of university provides additional value because there is no previous study studied at this level. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews have been conducted to gather data from selected universities' academics and professional services staff. Verbatim quotations (or word for word) transcription as illustrative material has been employed as a tool for complex data investigation process to access conversations and interviews. The "look and feel" of the data set from which generated research findings to "know" something in a new way.

Framework analysis used to identify common themes to innovate an operational model from the original provisional conceptual framework. The proposed operational model has been developed and testing in progress to provide appropriate eMarketing strategies that create and sustain a competitive business development (business expansion and market growth). In this context, the operational model will serve as an instructional-technological interactions roadmap, outlining essential components to guide the eMarketing technological deployment in UK universities. The operational model, at its most basic level, explain how eMarketing works to support complex strategy along with technological capability to facilitate a multifaceted approach.

'Exploring how non-family employees experience belonging in German Family Businesses and the Role of Communication in fostering this sense of belonging'

Annika Aruba Baumgart

Family businesses can be identified as social systems that amalgamate family and business aspects which only work through a communication foundation (Frank et al., 2010). The term "familiness" refers to the manner in which the family affects the family business. It encompasses a plethora of resources that arise from the interactions between family members, businesses, and non-family members (Randerson, 2023). The emotional aspect of familiness is connected to the sense of belonging within the family businesses (Habbershon and Williams, 1999; Frank et al., 2010). There is only a small body of literature on belongingness in family businesses, especially in relation to non-family employees. Internal communication (IC) is usually examined within the context of intergenerational communication, with only limited consideration given to the role of non-family members (Magrelli et al., 2022; Zehrer and Leiß, 2020). The researcher aims to extend the current knowledge on how internal communication can shape and enhance the belongingness of non-family employees in German family businesses by conducting narrative interviews. Through the data collection the researcher constructs and captures a set of realities to build a model to strengthen the sense of non-family employees' belongingness within family companies. Subsequently, the family members receive recommendations to improve the sense of belonging of their non-family employees, who are the engine of every family company (Pilarska, 2021; Ponterotto, 2005).

'Troubling the Practice of Inclusion and (Re)Homing Disability in Intersectionality: Physical Activity Experiences of Disabled Women with Multiple-Marginalised Identities'

Helen Black

Reports in disability physical activity (PA) research indicate that physically disabled individuals face heightened risks of poor physical, mental, and social health. Despite well-documented physiological and psychosocial benefits of PA, participation rates among disabled people remain low. Previous studies highlight societal ableism and "able-bodied" hegemony, revealing how the world is inadequately designed for inclusive participation. Research calls have urged policymakers and sport practitioners to enhance equitable access to PA by promoting accessible spaces, amplifying lived narratives, and validating exclusionary experiences to enhance physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

There is a significant gap in disability studies concerning social justice in PA access, particularly regarding the multiple and fluid intersectional identities of disabled individuals across sociodemographic factors such as age, sex, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

The doctoral study's objective was to identify PA inequities experienced by disabled women with at least one other marginalised identity and rigorously shape meaningful practice as those relate to PA employees. This presentation highlights disabled women's lived experiences in gyms, using coproduction strategies to explore intersectionality in applied settings and propose strategies for inclusion.

Preliminary findings indicate that disabled women often feel "in the way" in gym environments. Suggested improvements include cultural inclusivity measures, such as Ramadan specific membership offers and the sale of Muslim swimsuits.

'The role of inspirational motivation in leadership behaviours to shape an effective digital transformation in municipal services organisations in Germany'

Lars-O. Böckmann

This research explores the underexamined relationship between digital transformation (DT) and leadership within the German public sector, focusing on municipal service organisations.

Although DT is a widely discussed topic across media, academia, and consulting, its implications for leadership in this specific context have received limited scholarly attention, even though effective transformation is difficult to achieve without capable leadership.

The study addresses this gap by examining how top managers perceive and shape DT in organisations that are essential to public welfare and subject to unique political and economic conditions.

Using a qualitative, interpretative research design, the study highlights inspirational motivation as a key component of transformational leadership to investigate how this leadership behaviour can facilitate DT and be integrated into a practical leadership framework.

The research is guided by four objectives:

1. Explore and understand DT from the perspective of top managers in municipal service organisations
2. Investigate the meaning and role of inspirational motivation in leadership behaviour in this context
3. Identify development steps for leaders to demonstrate inspirational motivation in the age of DT
4. Reflect and validate findings with leaders to design a practical model for implementation

Based on interviews with 16 top managers and using reflective thematic analysis, five themes emerged from the data that especially highlight tensions between the intersections - and at the same time provide starting points for coping with the challenges. A model was then developed and critically reviewed with three top managers regarding its practical applicability before the findings of the reflections were incorporated into the model.

The findings offer theoretical contributions and practical guidance for leadership development and change management in an essential yet understudied sector.

'Ethics and vulnerable people'

Diane Bushell

Using the practice of Goethean delicate empiricism, this research project will explore the meaning of connectedness in the researcher's interactions with people living with dementia, who are experiencing changes in their verbal communication so may use body language, gestures and sounds rather than words. The research aims to generate outputs for the research participants to help them remain connected and reduce isolation.

The presentation is a whistlestop tour of the researcher's journey through the ethical approval process. It will cover:

- Designing participant information for people who have a diagnosis of dementia, but who may use other terms to describe their condition;
- Designing a consent process for people who may have moved beyond words;
- Using a method that has only been used once before in dementia research and sits outside materialist science; and
- Translating university policies into practice as a self-funding student living 200 miles from Worcester.

'A Critical Examination of Nutritional Advice Received by Mobility-Impaired Adults During Their Chronic Progression and Subsequent Habitual Use of a Wheelchair– Early Findings and Emerging Themes'

Heather Chapman

This mixed-methods study investigates the nutritional advice received by mobility-impaired adults who have transitioned over time to habitual wheelchair use. The research aims to explore the historical experiences and perceptions of these individuals, the origin and practicality of the nutritional advice received, and how their changing nutritional needs have been addressed throughout this transition.

The study employs a two-stage approach, utilising in-depth qualitative interviews to gather insights into participants' experiences, followed by an online anonymous survey to quantify the prevalence and sources of nutritional advice.

Qualitative data will be thematically analysed both by the researcher's lived experience and by using AI tools to identify common patterns and issues and provide a comparative interpretation of the narratives.

In the second quantitative phase of the study, data will be statistically analysed to assess the prevalence and practicality of the nutritional advice received.

Despite the critical importance of tailored nutritional guidance, preliminary observations indicate that such support may be lacking during this lifestyle change and early results seem to show consequences due to this omission.

The findings will contribute to existing literature on nutrition and disability, informing potential interventions aimed at improving the nutritional status and overall health outcomes for wheelchair users.

'Autism spectrum traits among adults with bipolar disorder in the UK'

Krista Easton

Aims: Research into autistic traits among adults with bipolar disorder (BD) is limited. This study examined the distribution of autistic traits among a large sample of adults with BD in the UK.

Approach: Autistic traits, measured by the self-report Autism Spectrum Quotient Short version (AQ-Short), was determined among 1477 adults with a main lifetime DSM-IV diagnosis of bipolar I disorder (BDI, n=1059) or bipolar II disorder (BDII, n=418) recruited into the UK Bipolar Disorder Research Network.

Findings: The mean AQ-Short total score in the full sample was 65.66. Scores were significantly higher in BDII (M=67.35) than BDI (M=54.99, $p<0.001$), with higher scores in the Social Skills, Routine and Attention Switching subscales of the AQ-Short.

Conclusions: Adults with BD in our large UK sample showed elevated autistic traits, on average higher than those reported in non-clinical English samples. The findings highlight overlapping social difficulties between BD and autism. It is likely that overlapping BD symptoms, co-occurring conditions, and difficulties with cognitive functioning contribute to elevated AQ-Short scores in adults with BD. The next phase of this research will further examine clinical correlates of the BD illness course in the context of autistic traits.

'What keeps experienced nurse working within the NHS?'

Liz Fenton

The Nursing and Midwifery Council's survey (2024) suggests nurses are leaving due to poor physical and mental health, burnout or exhaustion. With a shortfall of 37,000 nurses anticipated by 2028/29 the Royal College of Nursing (RCN, 2024) suggest this creates a perfect storm for patient care. However, such data only provides one part of the picture.

This phenomenological research focuses on the experience of those registered nurses who have chosen to stay asking, "What keeps experienced nurses working within the NHS" and explores with registered nurses what it is keeps them within their role.

Insights have been drawn from in depth interviews with registered nurses who collectively have more than 300 years' experience. Using interpretative phenomenological analysis experiential statements have been developed from each interview and this session will focus on the emerging experiential themes that encompass:

- What matters to the individual
- What they need from those around them
- What they need from the NHS and their employer

'An Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Internalised Weight Stigma in Women with PCOS: A Qualitative Study in the UK'

Utpreksha Gaude

The research project explores the lived experiences of women in the UK with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS), with a particular focus on experiences of Internalised Weight Stigma (IWS). PCOS is a complex endocrine disorder with physiological, psychological, and behavioural symptoms, including weight-related concerns. IWS occurs when negative stereotypes related to weight are internalised to the self, contributing to the social and emotional turmoil of women with PCOS. These issues are often overlooked or addressed inadequately in both society and medical contexts. The study aims to explore how IWS influences these social interactions and experiences with healthcare professionals and their implications for the management of PCOS. The study employs a qualitative and value-laden approach grounded in critical realism, examining the causal mechanisms and adopting a feminist lens to strengthen the voices of women with PCOS. Semi-structured interviews will produce data from the lived experiences of the participants, and hybrid thematic analysis will allow for inductive and theory-informed perceptions. The research will address ethical challenges like the sensitivity of the issue with care. Ultimately, the research will seek to deepen our understanding of IWS among marginalised voices and aid in better management of the health consequences of PCOS.

'Internal corporate venturing in the context of family-run SMEs in Germany – a brief literature review'

Elizabeth Grashoff

This study focuses on entrepreneurial families as an institution or social structure that can both promote and constrain entrepreneurial activities (Nordqvist and Melin, 2010), with an emphasis on corporate venturing, i.e., entrepreneurial activities through which existing companies create new business organisations (Chrisman and Sharma, 1999; Brumana et al. 2017; Covin and Miles, 2007; Covin et al., 2003; Kuratko et al., 2009; McGrath et al., 2006).

However, the risks and changes associated with entrepreneurial activities can limit a family business's investment in entrepreneurial action, as it strives to preserve wealth (Carney, 2005; Chrisman, Chua & Steier, 2005), focuses on family values and has an emotional attachment (Anwar, Clauss and Meyer, 2024). It is therefore crucial for family businesses to invest in entrepreneurial activities and education (Soares et al., 2021; Sirmon and Hitt, 2003; Rogoff and Heck, 2003; Salvato, 2024; Kellermann and Eddleston, 2006). Despite the high importance of entrepreneurial activities in family businesses, little attention has been paid to how such organisations develop when they pursue entrepreneurial strategies to ensure their long-term adaptability and growth (Anwar, Clauss and Meyer, 2024). This study examines the conceptual boundaries of what constitutes an 'entrepreneurial family business' and attempts to identify the transition point at which a traditional family business becomes an entrepreneurial organisation. The aim is to understand how and why family-managed organisations behave as they do when they enter the realm of entrepreneurial activities. By focusing on the dimension of venturing, this study examines how family businesses initiate and manage new ventures within their broader organisational framework. Since family businesses, like all businesses, must adapt to dynamic environments, it is crucial to examine how they can successfully engage in corporate venturing, as entrepreneurship is more complex in the context of family businesses (Anwar, Clauss and Meyer, 2024). The study fills an important gap in the existing literature and highlights the need for more practical guidance on managing entrepreneurial activity in family businesses (Akram, Ghosh and Sharam, 2022).

I would like to describe my literature work to date, my research problem and, consequently, my research aim. Speaking in front of such a large group helps me to challenge what I have been working on recently. It also gives me practice in giving presentations in the English language.

'Do Maitland mobilisations reposition the talus?'

Emma Gregory

Context/aims: Anterior talofibular ligament injury is hypothesised to cause anterior translation of the talus relative to the fibula, resulting in functional impairments. An anterior to posterior (AP) Maitland mobilisation of the talus is hypothesised to return the talus to its correct anatomical position, thereby restoring function. This study aims to explore their efficacy.

Methodology: Thirty-six participants were categorised into two groups: Healthy (7 males, 11 females, 24 ± 5.7 years) and CAI (7 males, 11 females, 21.61 ± 3.96 years). Participants attended two treatment sessions, at least two weeks apart. Talus position was measured pre- and post-intervention using a diagnostic ultrasound. Participants lay on their side with their ankle in talocrural neutral while the distance between the anterolateral aspect of the lateral malleolus and the peak of the talus was measured. This was repeated three times. Interventions involved a 120s GIV AP talus mobilisation.

Findings: Analysis revealed a significant effect for time ($p = .015$); however, talus position only significantly changed in session 1 for the CAI group ($p = .008$), with a large effect size ($d = .08$).

Implications: The intervention significantly moves the talus. However, the effect on function requires further research

'An Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Internalised Weight Stigma in Women with PCOS: A Qualitative Study in the UK'

Utpreksha Gaude

The research project explores the lived experiences of women in the UK with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS), with a particular focus on experiences of Internalised Weight Stigma (IWS). PCOS is a complex endocrine disorder with physiological, psychological, and behavioural symptoms, including weight-related concerns. IWS occurs when negative stereotypes related to weight are internalised to the self, contributing to the social and emotional turmoil of women with PCOS. These issues are often overlooked or addressed inadequately in both society and medical contexts. The study aims to explore how IWS influences these social interactions and experiences with healthcare professionals and their implications for the management of PCOS. The study employs a qualitative and value-laden approach grounded in critical realism, examining the causal mechanisms and adopting a feminist lens to strengthen the voices of women with PCOS. Semi-structured interviews will produce data from the lived experiences of the participants, and hybrid thematic analysis will allow for inductive and theory-informed perceptions. The research will address ethical challenges like the sensitivity of the issue with care. Ultimately, the research will seek to deepen our understanding of IWS among marginalised voices and aid in better management of the health consequences of PCOS.

'ATTRACTING WOMEN AS A CLIENT GROUP - Developing recommendations for action for German private banks to improve female client's customer experience, satisfaction and loyalty'

Nina Haase

The role of women is becoming increasingly important in economic terms. By 2030, there will be 100 million more working women worldwide than in 2020, meaning women's income will also increase significantly. From 2018 to 2020 alone, the total income of women rose by 4 trillion dollars from 20 trillion dollars to 24 trillion dollars. An even faster upward trend is forecast for the future (Holmes 2019). However, according to a study by Oliver Wyman, women are the largest underserved group in the financial services sector. According to the study, companies in the sector are missing out on around 700 billion dollars in revenue worldwide because they are not catering sufficiently to female customers (Gadhia and Cohen, 2020). This study aims to gain in-depth knowledge about the experiences, expectations, satisfaction, and loyalty of female clients of German private banks to provide German private banks with ideas for improvement on how they can optimise their interaction with this target group.

'Competition: Too Much of a Good Thing?'

Richard Hadley

Contemporary academia has been reimagined in recent decades as a competitive marketplace in a globalised knowledge economy. Meanwhile, there is an epidemic of unhappiness and mental ill-health among students and academic staff in UK universities. Using a Foucauldian critical perspective and discourse analytic method, this PhD psychology research, nearing completion, focuses on university academics, exploring qualitatively their subjective experiences of competition in what Teo describes as its "entangled" messiness, ordinariness, and complexity. Using a critical perspective, the research interrogates how competition is normalised in society - and psychology - as an inevitable and beneficial law of nature.

Findings suggest competition is a potent force in the working life of academics, shaping profoundly their sense of self, colleague relationships, and workplace behaviour. Many academic interviewees report widespread stress within their institution, dysfunctional social relations, and a culture driven by notions of institutional excellence as part of the competitive game. Performance measurement, competitive rankings, striving for personal advantage, and authoritarian managements are prevalent, alienation-inducing dynamics of academic competition.

Challenging current doxa (Bourdieu 1977), this PhD research questions whether competition is always a Good Thing: how it is founded on social conflict, creates a few winners and many losers, and may lead to negative social and psychological consequences.

'Interpretive Ekphrastic Response'

Trudi Holland

Interpretive Ekphrastic Response is a Practice-led research method designed to aid creative writing practitioners in the functional application of Sallis' Research Fiction. Sallis outlined Research Fiction as an approach:

"Research fiction is not fiction which involves research simply to verify or authenticate certain details, characters and events. It is fiction which, to a significant degree, expresses the outcomes of a body of research and which is the culminating point of an investigation which could have been written up, at least in part, in academic prose."

Sallis did not develop a methodology through which to practically employ this research approach, so I have developed Interpretive Ekphrastic Response. I seek to blend critical and creative elements in order to perform creative writing as an act of Research Fiction; and produce creative work infused with critical theory. This is achieved through continual creative response to both critical and creative research texts and innovative resource cataloguing.

In my second year of study, I reflect on the benefits and limitations of this method and how it may be further applied to other artistic disciplines. environments to foster customer trust and resilience in the event of future disruptions.

'Exploration of Pandemic Related Anxiety Impacting the Consumers Grocery Store Choice'

Gianluca Jacob

Context / Aims: This research explored how anxiety triggered by the pandemic influenced consumer decisions in German grocery retail. During the crisis, concerns about hygiene, crowding, and emotional safety often outweighed traditional determinants such as price and convenience. The study aimed to understand how anxieties affected supermarket loyalty.

Methodology / approach: The research employed an interpretivist, inductive qualitative approach. A two-stage, multi-method strategy was employed: first, reflective diaries were completed by participants, and second, semi-structured interviews were conducted using the Critical Incident Technique. Thematic analysis was used to identify key patterns in emotional responses and behavioural adaptation.

Findings: This research explored how anxiety triggered by the pandemic influenced consumer decisions in German grocery retail. During the crisis, concerns about hygiene, crowding, and emotional safety often outweighed traditional determinants such as price and convenience. The study aims to understand how these anxieties affected supermarket preferences and loyalty.

Implications: The research contributed to the literature on servicescapes and consumer behaviour by demonstrating how emotional responses influenced retail decisions during crises. In practice, it has provided retailers with guidance on creating emotionally supportive environments to foster customer trust and resilience in the event of future disruptions.

'Wildflower strip establishment for enhancing sustainability of UK Vineyards'

Joe Leaper

Wildflower strips have been widely introduced in agricultural systems to promote biodiversity and support natural pest control, but these interventions are often studied in isolation. There is a lack of integrated research in UK vineyards assessing the combined impacts of wildflower strips on biodiversity, soil health, and arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi communities.

In spring 2024, wildflower strips were established at four sites across three commercial vineyards in Sussex and Surrey. At each site, two plots of sixteen 75 m alleyways were selected – one sown with a mix of native wildflowers in the central 1.5 m of alleyway, and one left as a control under standard vineyard management.

Botanical surveys in September 2024 assessed establishment by recording plant species composition and percentage cover in four alleyways at each plot. Preliminary results show that several sown species, including *Plantago lanceolata*, *Leucanthemum vulgare*, and *Centaurea nigra* established successfully with higher cover values compared to control alleyways. These results indicate good establishment of key species, allowing ongoing assessment of the wider benefits to beneficial insects, soil health, and arbuscular mycorrhizal fungal communities.

'Green corporate social responsibility practice and green consumption intention. A dual theoretical approach in the context of hotels in Ghana.'

Edward Markwei Martey

The aim of this paper is to investigate the factors that influence green corporate social responsibility practice and green consumption intention in Ghana and develop conceptual framework that combines Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) and Social Cognitive Learning Theory (STC). A response from 535 consumers was gathered from hotels using a mall-intercept survey method. Structural equation modeling was employed as a statistical tool to examine both the direct and indirect effects of the proposed paths. The outcome shows that green corporate social responsibility positively motivates the protection of the environment. The media and social sanctions positively moderate the relationship between green corporate social responsibility and green consumption intention. Contrary to community, personal issues, and self-comparison negatively influence the relationship between green corporate social responsibilities on green consumption intention. The study is useful to practitioners, administrators, and policymakers as the outcome motivates the practices of green corporate social responsibility among hotels as a tool for green consumption among consumers and sustainable development in the country as a whole. The study added to the knowledge on pro-environmental behavior by addressing the gap between green corporate social responsibility and green consumption intention again it is the first study to use dual theories in the settings of green consumption intention in Ghana.

'Comparative case studies in surrogacy law: assessing the impact legal regulation of surrogacy can have on children and their rights'

Felicity Miles

My research aims to examine whether the current law on surrogacy in England and Wales adequately promotes and protects the rights of children born to surrogate mothers. This paper focuses on how undertaking comparative case studies is informing my research in appraising how different approaches to the legal regulation of surrogacy can impact children's rights in domestic and international law.

The jurisdictions chosen as case studies represent very different models of surrogacy regulation: from complete prohibition in France, to a more permissive approach in Ukraine and finally a commercial model in some states of the USA. All models raise ethical and legal questions in protecting children's welfare, as well as practical challenges, such as how parentage should be allocated and recorded. These case studies have revealed compelling findings that reveal children's rights can be affected greatly by the way the law controls the surrogacy arrangement and treats the intended parents and the surrogate. Analysis of these jurisdictions has revealed the potential impact changes to surrogacy laws may have on the child and has been used to evaluate proposed reform to surrogacy in England as Wales, such as recommended by the Law Commission.

'What is the habitual intake of polyphenols in different athletic populations, and the effects of supplementation upon performance, recovery, and health markers?'

James Moore

CONTEXT: Polyphenols are a diverse range of phytochemicals that provide health benefits through antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Typical dietary consumption is ~900 mg/d, however, for those undertaking regular exercise and sport training, sports nutrition has greater requirements of energy and protein requirements. The typical polyphenol consumption for those following sports nutrition are not known. AIM: The aim of this study was to examine typical polyphenol consumption in a variety of sports and performance levels.

METHOD: This study used a quantitative method, cross-sectional design, and assessed polyphenol intake in N=243 participants who played and compete in sports. Participants were recruited July-December 2024 via social media, university posters, and training sessions.

RESULTS: Total mean polyphenol intake was 110 ± 134 mg/day, range 4 – 1053 mg/d. Flavonoids total ranged 1 – 241 mg/d, anthocyanins 0 – 78 mg/d, flavanols 0 – 126 mg/d and flavanones 0 – 102 mg/d. Higher intakes were observed in active, non-student athletes, contrastingly low intakes were observed in students.

IMPLICATIONS RESEARCH: These findings support the typical polyphenols intake of ~900 mg/day, Flavonoid ~182 mg/d, anthocyanins ~12.5 mg/d, flavanols ~59 mg/d and flavanones ~26 mg/d highlighting consistency with the literature. Further research into specific polyphenol classes on performance and recovery. IMPLICATIONS PRACTICE: Individualised approach for polyphenol recommendations based on the specific sport.

'Empirical Assessment of Operational Efficiency Gains through Rule-Based Access Management System (RBAMS) in International Airports'

Luca Moheb

This research investigates the potential of Rule-Based Access Management Systems (RBAMS) to enhance operational efficiency (OE) in international airports, where rising passenger volumes and security demands necessitate more agile, data-driven infrastructure. Focusing on key metrics—passenger throughput, queue times, and resource utilization—the study empirically assesses RBAMS's capacity to outperform traditional gate management systems. Guided by the Information Systems Success Model and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, the research adopts a pragmatic, quantitative methodology across multiple international airport case studies. Baseline and post-implementation data will be collected and analyzed using regression, correlation, and comparative statistical tests to isolate RBAMS's impact on OE. Preliminary findings anticipate measurable reductions in queue lengths and improvements in throughput efficiency, with additional benefits in system adaptability and staff usability. The study bridges technological design with human-centered operational dynamics, offering a scalable framework for RBAMS integration.

Implications extend to both academic theory and airport management practice, delivering evidence-based strategies for improving gate operations, optimizing staff workflows, and enhancing passenger experience. This research contributes a novel, empirical perspective on the intersection of access control technologies and airport efficiency, equipping stakeholders with actionable insights for modernizing aviation infrastructure.

'Preliminary Findings: Circumstances of precarity experienced by forced migrant entrepreneurs (FMEs) and implications'

Tapuwa Mwedzi

The focus of this study is precarity and forced migrant entrepreneurship (FME) that is precarity which emerges from the forced migration (FM) and entrepreneurial journeys. The definition of precarity is contested across different fields and themes since precarity is broad and multidimensional (Waite, 2008). In relation to the experiences of FMEs, their traumatic lived experiences before, during and after migration, Allan et al.'s (2021) definition of precarity as the psychological states of fear, uncertainty and insecurity related to work and the ability to earn income and meet basic needs is closer to capturing precarity and the psychological challenges experienced by FMEs. Hence, in this presentation, precarity will refer to the psychological states of fear, uncertainty and insecurity that emerge from different life, FM and entrepreneurial experiences and interact with business decisions, activities, and continuity, and abilities to earn income and meet basic needs. In form, psychological states can be subjective, objective and attitudinal (Martin, 1990). In addition to fear, uncertainty and insecurity as psychological states in their subjective, objective and attitudinal forms, this study has identified aggression, mental illness, trauma, imprisonment, survival mode, impulsive decision making, shock, alienation, angst, poor self-confidence, and dehumanisation. This paper focuses on the circumstances that can cause, worsen, or alleviate the precarity that FMEs along the FM and entrepreneurial journeys.

“I wanna live in a world where change is possible”: Men co-designing guidance for inclusive eating, exercise, and body image outreach resources for men’

George Mycock

Context: Men’s help-seeking for eating, exercise, and/or body image psychopathology (EEBIP) is limited by numerous barriers (Mycock et al., 2025). One such help-seeking barrier is that EEBIP healthcare resources appear unwelcoming to men. The purpose of the current study was to co-design guidance with men that can inform the design of men-inclusive EEBIP healthcare outreach resources.

Methodology: This study used a modified nominal group technique. Potential resource ideas were collected from 41 men via an online survey, and rank-ordered by 6 lived experience partners (LEPs; men with EEBIP experience). The top-ranked ideas informed guidance design focus groups with LEPs. A reflexive thematic analysis of these focus groups generated six themes (i.e., key considerations for resources). The drafted guidance was then reviewed by healthcare and academic organisation representatives (HAOR) before receiving final feedback from LEPs.

Findings: The LEP’s and HAOR’s collaboration resulted in three principles for the guidance document. Resources for men should: (a) contain person-centred content tailored to specific groups of men, (b) be purpose/progress-driven, and (c) encourage self-recognition.

Implications: This is the first study to co-design guidance for EEBIP healthcare organisations wishing to create men-inclusive outreach resources. The findings may inform healthcare organisations when reviewing and/or developing such resources.

‘Bridging Policy and Practice: Local Education Authorities’ Perspectives on Implementing National Language and Education Policies in Nigeria’

Cordelia Chukwuemerelam Nwancha

This research explores how national language policies are put into practice in Nigerian primary schools, with a focus on the viewpoints of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and the factors influencing policy implementation. A qualitative methodology was used, involving thematic analysis of interviews with nine LEA staff and two policy documents: the National Language Policy (NLP) and the National Policy on Education (NPE). The analysis revealed an overarching theme, seven main themes, and sixteen subthemes. Key findings suggest that while LEAs value these policies, they face significant challenges in implementation due to resource constraints, infrastructural issues, and misalignment between policy goals and local realities. Essential for effective policy execution are support systems, awareness campaigns, and training programs. The study highlights the complex interplay of factors affecting policy implementation, including government priorities, funding, and parental expectations. Comparative insights from other countries, particularly China, suggest potential strategies for policy improvement. The research contributes to the understanding of language policy implementation in Nigerian primary schools by offering a comprehensive analysis of challenges from the LEAs’ perspective, emphasizing the need for a multi-stakeholder approach, policy continuity, and context-specific solutions. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers, potentially shaping future directions in education policy development and implementation strategies in Nigeria and beyond.

'The Roles of Chatbots and Sustainability in The Marketing of Fashion Brands'

Taiwo Fimihan Olajumoke

This research presents an empirical enquiry into the roles of chatbots in the marketing of fashion brands and how this strategy may improve sales and contribute to a company's digital marketing strategies. The study explores artificial intelligence-powered chatbots as a communications interface between fashion brands and consumers on digital platforms. This study also addresses the impacts and the roles of sustainability concepts in the marketing of fashion brands. The present study advances the horizon of knowledge and understanding on the roles of chatbots in the marketing of fashion brands, the significance of chatbots in building relationships with customers, the roles of chatbots to establish interactions and communications with customers, and act as interface platform to disseminate information to customers about fashion brands and sustainability. It thereby enables practitioners to understand and acknowledge the roles of chatbots in the marketing of fashion brands and to further develop more related tools that can contribute to the development of innovative digital marketing strategies that can advance product sales and strategic marketing communications to promote, advertise, and persuade customers during their purchase decision-making process.

'What is the impact on primary schoolteachers of working with traumatised children in the classroom?'

Penny Paske

Professionals caring for traumatised individuals are considered at risk of developing Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) which has similar symptoms to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Although recognised in many health care professions, there is a comparative lack of STS research within education. More than two thirds of children will have experienced at least one traumatic event before the age of 16, highlighting both teacher's exposure to trauma and STS vulnerability.

This study aims to measure the prevalence and levels of STS among a sample of UK primary schoolteachers and to better understand teachers' experiences of STS and of supporting traumatised children in the classroom. A mixed methods study, the qualitative aspect of this study involved interviewing 14 active primary schoolteachers. The semi-structured interviews explored, in detail, teachers' experiences of STS and working with traumatised children.

A Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021; 2019; 2006) was used to engage with the data and develop themes from my research. Using this method of analysis, several themes were developed which encompass the dominant narratives relating to teachers' experiences supporting traumatised children in the classroom.

Preliminary Results : The themes constructed and the story being told are discussed in detail in response to the overarching research question and research aims.

Capturing teachers' experiences could provide clear directions for future STS measurement and research within the profession. Increased awareness of STS within teaching could impact on teacher training, policies, and procedures to support teachers.

'Exploring the relationship between children's social media exposure, cognitive, social, motor, and emotional profile and associations with nutritional status and buccal cell fatty acid profile'

Samantha Paskin

Exposure to social networking sites (SNS) and non-educational gaming (NEG) may cause anxiety, depression, and stress in individuals (WHO 2024, BPS 2024, CMHS 2024). Fatty acids are central neuropsychological mediators, where the links between nutritional status, fatty acid profile (FAP) and neurocognitive function are established (Dyall et al 2022). High omega-6 and low omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid (n-6/n-3 PUFA) ratios are identified in individuals diagnosed with depression. However, the relationship between exposure to SNS/NEG, nutritional status and neuropsychological profile among individuals is yet to be established. Children have and continue to be exposed to screentime as early as 6 months of age. Mental health issues are showing to be a growing concern for generations such as Millennials, Gen Z and Gen Alpha, (1981-2024). The Gen Z and Gen Alpha generations (1997-2024) are showing to be higher risk generations of experiencing mental health decline (WHO 2024, BPS 2024, CMHS 2024). As children are displaying mental health well-being concerns, there is a demand for further investigation. Adolescents have been exposed to screentime for longer periods of time; therefore, participants within this age bracket are used to provide researchers with a clearer understanding of long-term exposure and the effects upon neurological well-being. Therefore, the aim of this research was to Investigate this relationship of screentime exposure, focusing on SNS/NEG and the effects towards children and adolescents' mental health well-being and cognitive functioning.

A total number of 61 individuals participated. Participants were recruited from mainstream public primary and high schools. Groups were recruited and stratified into a) 9-12 years (n=31) and b) 15-16 years (n=30) age groups. As adolescents are post-puberty the age group was limited between ages 15-16 years. Psychometric analyses were performed to identify measures of depression, Anxiety, and disruptive behaviours i.e. showing signs of stress. FAP analysis was performed by gas chromatography from the membrane extract obtained from participant buccal cells at point of recruitment. Pearson's correlation and Linear regressions analysis was performed to determine trends between screentime exposure, more specifically SNS/NEG and mental well-being and cognitive performance decline. Two-way ANOVA with Tukey post-hoc test were used to identify differences between age and sex for a further classification on high screentime use effects upon mental health well-being and cognitive performance.

The psychometric analysis revealed highly significant associations between time spent on SNS/NEG and mental health well-being decline ($p<.001$) more specifically associations of high mobile phone use. Other measures such as deficiencies in macro and micro-nutrients were highly significantly associated with high phone and console use ($p<0.01$). The FAP analysis revealed associations of high screentime use, more specifically SNS/NEG use and increased n-6 and decreased level of n-3 PUFA ratio ($p<0.01$).

'A new model, based on theory and practice to help to identify strategic drift'

Werner Podkowiak

This research aims to create a new model based on theory and practice to help identify strategic drift.

Strategic drift describes a gradual deterioration of competitiveness, often related to changes in the business environment. This may lead to a loss of strategic position in the market, followed by an organisational crisis, major transformation and possibly bankruptcy. The number of business failures in 2024 alone, with its adverse economic effects on creditors and employees, amounts to 21,964 company insolvencies in Germany and 23,876 in the United Kingdom. Early detection and response to strategic drift could make the difference between survival and demise.

The aim will be achieved in three stages through an exploratory sequential mixed methods research design. It includes a comprehensive literature review on appropriate processes and elements of strategic frameworks, strategic leadership, and corporate culture in organisations to detect strategic drift (stage 1) and semi-structured interviews with strategy experts from academic backgrounds (stage 2) for complementary input. The findings will create a conceptual model for strategic drift detection. It will then be exposed to critique via a two-round Delphi study, using panels of practitioner and professional strategists. The panels will evaluate, refine, and rank the processes and elements. The model will be adjusted accordingly to produce a 'final' version.

In order to reduce bias and to improve credibility, the research will use data source and method triangulation. Different respondents will be used for each component, to help avoid self-fulfilling prophecies. The concepts of convergence and divergence will be important in developing.

'The structure of psychological contracts of hotel employees'

Christian Rebehn

The hotel industry has struggled to attract and retain talent, leading to a shortage of qualified labour that enhances stress and workload on existing employees while endangering business goals.

Using Q Methodology, the structure of psychological contracts of 36 hotel employees in Northern Germany was explored by examining their prioritized employer inducements. Eight distinct viewpoints emerged:

Viewpoint 1: prioritizes professionalism, loyalty, and work-life balance. It was most prevalent in early-career employees in large cities.

Viewpoint 2: specific to young professionals, who value independence and career growth.

Viewpoint 3: older and very experienced employees. They share a priority for rewards and work-life balance.

Viewpoint 4: mid-career experienced professionals who expect their employers to provide career opportunities and inducements that tangibly improve quality of life.

Viewpoint 5: prioritize being able to work in an empathetic and communicative environment. Mostly individuals who moved into the hotel industry late in their careers.

Viewpoint 6: young but experienced professionals with very clear career ambitions, who wish to be able to contribute actively to their organization's development.

Viewpoint 7: mid-career individuals in all types of hotels who value stability and an environment in which they can comfortably express their authentic personality.

Viewpoint 8: early career employees who require empathetic, dependable management as well as a stable organizational environment.

The variety of personalities and viewpoints shows that HR practitioners need to adapt their inducement strategies to cater to the needs and expectations of their existing staff, as well as to be efficiently attractive to the desired prospective employees. The eight viewpoints uncovered in this study can support practitioners in the development of targeted and cost-effective staff retention strategies

'Peeling back the layers to make trust-based selection decisions when vetting job applicants using open-source intelligence'

Joanne Reid

There has been a growth in popularity for using technologies, such as social media and open-source intelligence (OSINT), to vet job applicants in recent years. Researchers such as Berkelaar and Buzzanell (2015) and McDonald et al., (2022) have examined the benefits and drawbacks of using this predominantly online practice for selectors and applicants. However, research has not yet explored the approaches selectors take to vet applicants using OSINT. Using Phenomenography and González's (2010) multistep analysis, sixteen semi-structured interviews were conducted across Business sector selectors to explore the different ways they experienced OSINT applicant vetting for trust-based decision making. Findings showed there are four types of selector approaches to vetting when making trust-based selection decisions. A new framework has been developed to show the depth of vetting searches used by each type of selector and how these are influenced by multiple varying components which interact with one another. These form an overall level of vetting intensity, known as a 'layer' within the study. This facilitates an understanding that there is not a unified approach to vetting, and instead varying factors should be considered to help achieve consistent and fair processes.

'Cross-generational stakeholder approach to non-financial reporting in German SMEs: transforming compliance into competitive advantages'

Anke Trischler

This qualitative multi-method study examines the increasing demands on non-financial reporting faced by German SMEs due to trickle-down effects in the supply chain. The aim is to design a guiding procedure incorporating cross-generational stakeholder engagement to combine compliance with the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) with the integration of sustainability aspects in corporate strategy.

The research design comprises semi-structured interviews, remote surveys and document analysis of SMEs' sustainability reports. The methodological framework incorporates triangulation, which facilitates the integration of intergenerational perspectives.

Findings indicate that SMEs that embrace structured dialogue between generations, facilitating interaction between experienced employees and young professionals, anticipate dual advantages, including reduced compliance costs through knowledge exchange and management, an enhanced strategic positioning in competitive markets through the development of transformation and sustainability expertise and capacities.

The study contributes insights into transboundary organisational challenges, delineating how regulatory provisions cascade to SMEs and educational institutions and advances stakeholder theory by extending existing frameworks to include generation-specific dimensions in the context of sustainable development.

For SMEs, the findings will be of interest as they provide operational recommendations to comply with CSRD-regulations within resource-constrained contexts, while facilitating intergenerational knowledge transfer and thus the development of future-relevant transformation competencies.

'A Survey Exploring Stigma Towards People with Dementia Living in Extra Care Housing'

John Bosco Tumuhairwe

Context: Dementia-related stigma has been identified as one of the drawbacks of living in Extra Care Housing (ECH) for people with dementia and this research aims to explore that further. More specifically, this study aims to understand the possible causes, contributory factors and impacts of dementia-related stigma in ECH, and determine the successes achieved and challenges faced by housing providers in managing unfavourable attitudes of other residents, staff, family members and other people towards residents living with dementia.

Methodology: An online survey of Managers/Dementia Specialists/ Senior Care Staff Members was carried out to address some of the above aims and objectives of the study and to inform the development of the qualitative phase.

Findings: Sixty nine percent (69%) of the respondents revealed that stigma exists in their ECH setting, with residents without dementia (92%) leading in stigmatising people with dementia. Ninety seven percent (97%) of respondents had received training on dementia awareness but were facing a challenge addressing dementia-related stigma stemming from lack of interest from residents to attend awareness sessions.

Implications: These findings were used to develop questions for a focus group and interviews in which these themes are being explored in more depth.

'Police use of force: Analysing police/citizen encounters in Ghana.'

Peter Twumhene

This study examines the use of force by police officers during interactions with citizens in Ghana, focusing on factors that influence their decision-making process, and adopts pragmatic measures to establish effective policy guidelines in order to enhance police/citizen relationships. Against the backdrop of the complexities and multifaceted nature of policing related to force usage and human rights infringements, the study seeks to provide a deeper insight into how force is deployed and perceived in daily encounters. Adopting a qualitative methodology, the study draws on focus group discussions with commercial drivers in the Ashanti Region, a group frequently subjected to routine and sometimes confrontational situations with the police. Through thematic analysis, the study identifies recurring issues such as ineffective communication, inadequate training on de-escalation strategies, and a perceived absence of accountability. These factors contribute to citizens' mistrust of the police, which leads to a strained relationship between police officers and the public. Considering the systemic and behavioural factors affecting police use of force, the study offers valuable insights for policymakers and the Ghana Police Service to prioritise public safety and reduce the use of force. Ultimately, these findings aim to fill the existing gap in the literature, crucially addressing the paucity of data in this study area within Ghana.

'Targeted RNAi Approaches for Sustainable Control of *Peronospora viciae* in Pea plants'

Gizem Unal

The obligate biotrophic pathogen *Peronospora viciae* f. sp. *pisi* (Pvp), which causes downy mildew in pea plants (*Pisum sativum*), poses a significant challenge for sustainable disease management. Traditional control relies on fungicides, raising concerns about resistance and environmental impact. RNA interference (RNAi), particularly Spray-Induced Gene Silencing (SIGS), offers a targeted, environmentally friendly alternative for pathogen suppression.

In this study, we evaluated the efficacy of externally applied double-stranded RNAs (dsRNAs) in silencing key *Pvp* genes involved in infection and development. A total of 28 candidate genes were screened using short synthesized dsRNAs (SS-dsRNAs), and several, including *Cellulose Synthase 3* (CesA3), were selected for further investigation using longer dsRNAs. Gene expression analysis confirmed effective silencing, leading to significant suppression of spore germination and disease progression both in vitro and in planta.

Additionally, small RNA (sRNA) sequencing revealed bidirectional cross-kingdom RNA interactions, where pea-derived sRNAs targeted three *Pvp* genes, while two *Pvp* genes produced sRNAs that modulate host immunity. Silencing these five genes with SS-dsRNAs completely inhibited *Pvp* development, demonstrating the potential of RNA-based disease control.

These findings provide new insights into the application of dsRNA against downy mildew and reinforce SIGS as a scalable, non-transgenic strategy for managing the disease in pea plants.

'Integrating ESG Measures into Real Estate Development: A strategic framework for enhanced project success'

Andre Wellman

ESG measures are becoming increasingly important for German real estate development. This is not only because the real estate industry is more and more affected by ESG-related challenges, but also because ESG requirements are being integrated into legislation and demanded by investors. Despite numerous drivers, a standardized approach to integrate ESG measures has not yet been established. Therefore, the study aims to close the knowledge gap at the intersection of ESG and real estate development. The purpose of this study is to propose an ESG measures integration framework to enhance the success of German real estate development projects. To achieve this, a multi-method qualitative research approach was adopted. As research in real estate and ESG is dominated by quantitative methods, conducting semi-structured interviews and focus groups sheds a different light to the real estate development process and ESG measures integration. The findings of this research, along with the proposed ESG measures integration framework, can make a significant contribution to improving the integration of ESG measures in practice. This can, on the one hand, positively contribute to the success of projects and, on the other hand, help achieve the collateral benefits associated with ESG for all stakeholders.

'Supporting Neurodivergent Response Police Officers: A Case Study of Police Organisations in England and Wales'

Alexander Wood

This research aims to explore how different police organisations support neurodivergent response police officers across England and Wales. The objective of this research is to identify and understand how police organisations support neurodivergent response officers and how neurodivergent response officers perceive the support available. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines a survey and case study research strategy to identify suitable cases. Through qualitative interviewing of police officers and staff, a rich and deep understanding of the issue is sought. This research contributes to new knowledge through a detailed, in-depth exploration of the subject, providing a rich evidence base that will inform the police service to improve their current practices and policies.

'Personal Barriers to Physical Activity: An Intersectional Analysis of Divorced Single Mothers in China's IT and Internet Industries'

Chunhong Zhou

Research discovered that workplace culture produced barriers to women's physical activity (PA) participation. The pervasive overtime culture, particularly in China's IT/Internet industries, is reported as a major source of stress for professional women. Divorced single mothers (DSMs) working in these industries may face unique PA participation barriers due to the intersection of overtime culture, single motherhood, a male-dominant work environment, and financial challenges. Yet, research has underexplored their PA experiences and intersectional analysis remains deficient in explaining how the intersection of these factors jointly create personal barriers to their PA engagement. My study aims to fill in this research gap and make recommendation for promoting inclusivity and equity in the Chinese workplace PA context. It identified six personal barriers, including lack of time, low motivation and energy, financial constraints, plus mental and physical health challenges.

DSMs face gender inequalities in PA participation due to the triple oppression of the capitalist mode of production and reproduction, the economic system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and male dominance in China's private IT/Internet industries. Findings suggest that enhancing Chinese women's PA participation requires both organizational and structural support and targeted incentives to remove the identified constraints and promote women's active PA engagement.