2025

Business PHD Research Conference

November 28, 2025

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Conference Program

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The 2025 Business Ph.D. Research Conference Committee would like to acknowledge that the University of Alberta, its buildings, labs, and research stations are primarily located on the traditional territory of Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, and Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe nations; lands that are now known as part of Treaties 6, 7, and 8 and homeland of the Métis. The University of Alberta respects the sovereignty, lands, histories, languages, knowledge systems, and cultures of First Nations, Métis and Inuit nations.

2025 BRC Committee Members:

Conroy Smith	Masoum Talebi	Roghi Teimourfamian
Zhaoyang (Irene) Qin	Wenqi Wan	

Master Schedule

2025 Business PhD Research Conference
November 28, 2025
Business Building Room 5-04

TIME	EVENT
9:00 – 9:10	Welcome and Opening Remarks
9;10 – 9:55	Poster Session 1
9:55 – 10:05	BREAK
10:05 – 10:35	Presentation 1 – Yasser Zeinali, OIS
10:35 – 11:05	Presentation 2 – Leixing Jiang, Accounting
11:05 – 11:15	BREAK
11:15 – 11:45	3MT Presentations Session 1
11:45 – 12:30	Pick up lunch in Lobby and eat
12:30 – 1:30	Breakout Session 1 – Room 5-13 Writing papers and constructing lit reviews
12:30 – 1:30	Breakout Session 2 – Room 5-40 How to maximize impact at conferences and succeed on the job market.
1:30 – 1:40	BREAK
1:40 – 2:10	Presentation 3 – Linfeng Tian, Finance
2:10 – 2:40	Presentation 4 – Arjang Nikbakht, Marketing
2:40 – 2:50	BREAK
2:50 – 3:15	3MT Presentations Session 2
3:15 – 3:25	BREAK
3:25 – 4:10	Poster Session 2
4:10-4:15 pm	Closing Remarks

Discussion & Feedback Guidelines

A key objective of the Business Ph.D. Research Conference is to allow students to learn about the broad range of business research topics being explored by their colleagues Students are encouraged to provide feedback and think critically about other presenter's research.

To encourage interdisciplinary engagement with business research, all students are encouraged to view all posters and provide constructive feedback. Students whose submissions are being discussed are expected to be in attendance to answer questions, receive feedback, and engage in active discussion of their work.

The **Presentations** will consist of a 15-minute talk followed by 15 minutes of discussion, with opportunity for the audience to ask questions.

The **Poster Sessions** will allow attendees to wander among posters and interact with authors and their research.

The **3MT presentations** have three minutes and one slide to engage the audience with their research. There is no time allocated after each presentation for a question from the audience, however the audience is encouraged to provide feedback via the QR code or talk with the presenters during breaks.

All attendees are reminded that while attending the conference all university guidelines and policies, such as those concerning respectful and inclusive conversations, should be followed.

Detailed Schedule

Welcome and Opening Remarks — 9:00 – 9:10

Masoum Talebi (Conference Co-Chair)
Sarah Moore (Associate Dean PhD and Research)
Trish Reay (Vice Dean)

Poster Session 1 (Alphabetical Order by surname) — 9:10 – 9:55

Qi An (Accounting) — Page 9

Leave Russia or Not? Managerial Learning in the Russia-Ukraine War

Chelsea Dufresne (SEM) — Page 25

Is Organizational Inclusion Ever Inclusive? Tracing Inclusion Enactment Over Time

Mehri Baloochi (SEM) — Page 24

This Body Will Not Obey: The Five-Decade Struggle for Legitimacy in Iranian Women's Resistance

Chunzhen Huang (OIS) — Page 20

Impact of Natural Disasters on inventor Innovation

Bowen Lin (Finance) — Page 11

The Hidden Engine of FoF Performance: Unlocking Excess Returns Through Network-Driven Co-Investment

Usama Malik (Finance) — Page 11

Skewed Labor Income and Asset Prices

Masoum Talebi (OIS) — Page 22

One for All: Centralized Destination Decision-Making for Emergency Medical Services

Wenqi Wan (Finance) — Page 13

ESG Performance Gap and the Cost of Debt

Nancy Wang (Accounting) — Page 10

Contingent Convertible Bond design choice

BREAK

Presentations – Moderator Omima El Kailani

Yasser Zeinali (OIS) **10:05-10:35**

Data-driven Optimization for Wildfire Suppression Resource Deployment: A Case Study of Alberta Wildfires Page 22

Leixing Jiang (Accounting) **10:35-11:05**

Does Patent Disclosure Dissemination Facilitate Corporate Innovation? Page 9

BREAK

3MT Session 1 – Moderator Flora Feng **11:15-11:45**

Julian Faid (SEM) Page 26

Institutional Maintenance as Disruption: Evidence from the Alberta Separatist Movement

Amir Faghihinia (Marketing) Page 15

Cautious Tellers, Curious Listeners: Sender-Receiver Differences in Word-of-Mouth about Multiple Experiences

Tim Derksen (Marketing) Page 14

Bad Moods, Good Designs: How Affective State Influences Co-Creation with Generative AI and Product Preferences

Bijit Ghosh (Marketing) Page 16

The Gift Gradient: Unveiling Emotional Trajectories and Backfire Risks in Multi-Gift Scenarios

Erika Polishchuk (Marketing) Page 17

Consumer Responses to DEI and Activism Rollbacks

Erfan Rafieikia (OIS) Page 21

Learning–Augmented Benders Decomposition for Large–Scale Linear Decomposable Optimization Problems

Soroush Sadeghi (OIS) Page 21

Operating Room Scheduling with Downstream Effects: Balancing Post-Surgery Workload

LUNCH

Lunch pickup in lobby & eat on 5th floor in any room **11:45-12:30**

(5-13, 5-06, 5-40 or small lobby breakout rooms)

Breakout Session 1 – Room 5-13 — 12:30-1:30

Writing papers and constructing lit reviews

Moderator: Jessica Therrien

Presenter: Bhuva Narayanan – Writing & Learning Services

Breakout Session 2 – Room 5-40 — 12:30-1:30

How to maximize impact at conferences and succeed on the job market

Moderator: Logan Crace (SEM)

Panellists:
Sarah Moore (Associate Dean, PhD Program)
Curtis Chan (SEM)
Jonathan Craske (Accounting)
Chenghuai Li (OIS)
Shannon Duncan (Marketing)
Sidharth Moktan (Finance)

BREAK

Presentations – Moderator Esther Chau

Linfeng Tian (Finance) — **1:40-2:10**

Patent Litigation Risk and Innovation Strategy — Page 12

Arjang Nikbakht (Marketing) — **2:10-2:40**

Who Leads? A Stackelberg Leadership Refinement — Page 16

BREAK

3MT Session 2 – Moderator Weilin Ye — 2:50-3:15

Bo Han (OIS) — Page 20

Structural inequalities in multilayer transportation networks for people with limited mobility

Yufei Ren (SEM) — Page 26

How the emergence of governance shapes and elaborates a online community

Roghi Teimourfamian (Marketing) — Page 17

Too Much Talk? The Status Effect of Brand Reply Frequency on Social Media

Yi Wei (Marketing) — Page 18

The Social Context of Goal Sharing: How Tie Strength Influences Motivation

Xin Yang (Accounting) — Page 10

Securities litigation and consumer behavior

Shuo Yuan (SEM) Page 27

The Rise of the Chief Wellbeing Officer: The Co-Constitution of a New Way of Feeling and Doing Wellbeing at Work

BREAK

Poster Session 2 (Alphabetical Order by surname) **3:25-4:10**

Roham Bahri (OIS) Page 19

Data-Driven Surgery Scheduling

Mehrnaz Behrooz (OIS) Page 19

Optimal Retirement Timing: A Data-Driven Decision-Making Model for Retirement Planning

Natalie Bolen (Marketing) Page 14

Shared Experiences, Shared Online: The Consequences of Others' Posting

Natalie Eng (SEM) Page 25

When 'Who We Are' Becomes 'What We Do:' How Collective Orchestrators Become Stuck in Organizational Identity Rumination

Ardalan Eyni (Marketing) Page 15

"You are 100!" vs. "You are excellent!" Are they interchangeable? No!

Golnoush Omidali (Finance) Page 12

The Structure and Drivers of Base and Carry Exposures in Bilateral Currency Risk

Alireza Tariverdi (Accounting) Page 10

Boardroom Blame Games: How Ambiguity and Self-Serving Motives Drive Scapegoating After Financial Restatements?

Huijun (Janice) Yan (Finance) Page 13

The Effect of Steel Plant Upgrades on Local Housing Markets

Wenqiang (Jack) Yin (SEM) Page 27

The Family Firm Disadvantage: Are Stakeholders Harsher on ESG Violations?

Xinyin (Cindy) Zhang (OIS) Page 23

High-Ability vs. Functionally Diverse Candidates in AI-Assisted Hiring: Evidence from LLM Resume-Screening Experiments

Closing Remarks **4:10-4:15**

Masoum Talebi, Sarah Moore

Accounting Abstracts

Qi An

Leave Russia or Not? Managerial Learning in the Russia-Ukraine War

Poster

This paper investigates the feedback effect of stock market reactions to geopolitical shocks on disclosure decisions and corporate investment. Focusing on the Russia-Ukraine War breaking out in February 2022, I manually construct a novel dataset for a unique and standalone voluntary disclosure issued by U.S. firms with significant pre-war business in Russia. My analyses based on this dataset reveal four findings. First, firms tend to issue a voluntary disclosure when they experience a negative stock market reaction at the inception of Russian invasion, and such a disclosure is more likely to explicitly state a plan to pull out from Russia (i.e., pullout disclosure) than to commit nothing to pulling out (i.e., wait-and-see disclosure). Second, the stock market reaction to a pullout disclosure is less negative than that to a wait-and-see disclosure. Third, firms tend to divest from Russia when their wait-and-see disclosures engender a more negative stock market reaction, while the divestment decision is unrelated to stock market reactions to pullout disclosures. Last, the negative relationship between market reactions to wait-and-see disclosures and firms' divestment decisions is more pronounced among firms with lower public visibility, heightened information asymmetry at the time of disclosure, greater informed trading, or lower levels of insider trading. Collectively, my findings suggest that firms and managers may rely on stock market reactions to make their disclosure and investment decisions when facing significant geopolitical uncertainty.

Leixing Jiang

Does Patent Disclosure Dissemination Facilitate Corporate Innovation?

15-minute Presentation

This study examines whether improved patent dissemination increases corporate innovation. I take advantage of a natural experiment, the 2013 adoption of the Cooperative Patent Classifications (CPC) by the U.S. and European patent authorities. This patent classification harmonization keeps patent disclosure unchanged, but helps disseminate patents in a language-neutral way, making it easier for U.S. firms to find related nonEnglish European patents. After the adoption of CPC, I find that U.S. firms with high exposure to non-English European patents increase their innovation, compared with those with low non-English European patent exposure. Overall, the findings suggest that improved patent dissemination leads to greater innovation.

Alireza Tariverdi

Boardroom Blame Games: How Ambiguity and Self-Serving Motives Drive Scapegoating After Financial Restatements?

Poster

Using motivated reasoning theory, in this study I investigate whether ambiguity about the true initiator of a restatement and potential reputational costs to directors may guide the boardroom's decisions toward scapegoating C-suite executives to form a symbolic accountability. This study will experimentally show how directional goals can systematically bias the information processing in blame attribution.

Qingning (Nancy) Wang

Contingent Convertible Bond design choice

Poster

Little is known about why banks choose to design CoCos the way they do or what CoCo investors might learn about risk from the way the contract is written. Although the CoCo design is an endogenous choice, we lack a solid foundation in our understanding of what motivates this choice or in what the consequences of different alternatives are. I find that the Weibull distributions for issuing amount are different across three conversion mechanisms.

Xin Yang

Securities litigation and consumer behavior

3MT

Securities litigation can cause significant damage to sued firms. Prior research yields mixed evidence on whether dismissed securities class actions—typically deemed frivolous—harm corporate reputation, with some studies finding significant reputational damage while others report none. Although some studies track stock market reactions after case filings, scholars have not yet shown whether any reputation loss from either frivolous or meritorious securities class action suits actually depresses consumer visits. This study investigates the effect of securities litigation on consumers' reactions to the alleged company. Linking 2018–2024 class action lawsuits to SafeGraph's store-level foot traffic data, I find that consumer visits to stores decline after meritorious class actions (i.e., those that later result in material settlements) but remain statistically unchanged after frivolous securities class actions. These findings are consistent with securities litigation damaging a firm's reputation when the allegations are validated, whereas to date I cannot reject the null hypothesis that frivolous cases leave consumer perceptions unharmed.

Finance Abstracts

Bowen Lin

The Hidden Engine of FoF Performance: Unlocking Excess Returns through Network-Driven Co-Investment

Poster

Prevailing literature on Funds of Funds (FoFs) often highlights the performance drag imposed by layered fee structures, raising questions about their value proposition. This paper challenges this cost-centric view by proposing and testing a strategic rationale for the FoF business model. We argue that FoFs invest in a portfolio of funds not only for diversification but, more critically, to embed themselves within a network that grants privileged access to high-potential co-investment opportunities. The majority of capital anchors the portfolio, while a smaller, strategic portion is deployed directly into late-stage deals (e.g., Pre-IPO) sourced through these GP relationships. Employing a knowledge-graph framework to map the network of FoFs, general partners, and portfolio companies, we empirically trace how a FoF's structural position predicts its co-investment activity. Methodologically, we employ a propensity score matching (PSM) design to address endogeneity. This quasi-experimental approach, inspired by research on status (e.g., Malmendier and Tate, 2009), allows us to isolate the causal effect of network embeddedness on co-investment performance. Our findings redefine FoFs from passive diversifiers to active value creators, demonstrating that their primary economic function is to leverage network access—a insight that reshapes the understanding of intermediation in private markets.

Usama Malik

Skewed Labor Income and Asset Prices

Poster

I study how skewed labor income risk affects the cross-section of equilibrium stock prices and expected returns. Using a static model, I show that expected utility maximizers do not hedge labor income risk if a stock exhibits both coskewness and covariance with their labor income. This lack of hedging, in turn, leads to a stock's equilibrium price and expected return being unaffected by its comovement (covariance, coskewness, etc.) with labor income. I then extend the model to the case where investors have reference dependent preferences, and use their labor income as the reference point (i.e., investors treat portfolio gains and losses differently depending on their labor income), and show that a stock's equilibrium price and expected return is unaffected by its comovement with labor income even in this scenario.

Golnoush Omidali

The Structure and Drivers of Base and Carry Exposures in Bilateral Currency Risk

Poster

This study examines the structure of systematic risk in bilateral exchange rates by decomposing currency exposures into two key components: a base factor and a carry factor. Using monthly data for major currencies from 1983 to 2020, we estimate currency-specific base and carry factors and compute bilateral factor loadings from bivariate regressions of exchange rate changes. The results reveal a clear distinction between the two dimensions of risk. Base factor loadings are highly persistent and strongly related to geographic proximity and trade linkages, while carry factor loadings vary more across time and exhibit weaker connections to observable fundamentals. Distance and legal similarity emerge as significant predictors of base betas, whereas financial variables play a minor role. A simple two-factor stochastic discount factor (SDF) model, featuring one structural (base) and one financial (carry) shock, rationalizes these findings. By linking bilateral exchange-rate dynamics to both real and financial linkages, the study bridges portfolio-based asset-pricing evidence with the structural determinants of global currency risk.

Linfeng Tian

Patent Litigation Risk and Innovation Strategy

15-minute Presentation

This study examines how patent litigation risk affects corporate innovation strategy. Using a Supreme Court decision that exogenously increased expected litigation risk and costs, I analyze the change in innovation across firms with varying exposure to patent litigation. I find that firms with higher ex-ante litigation exposure file more exploratory patents but fewer exploitative patents after the decision. They focus more on fields with lower litigation risk and reduce innovation in riskier ones. However, this strategic shift occurs at the cost of lower patent value and reduced market valuation. The evidence suggests that exploratory innovation serves as a precautionary response to mitigate expected patent litigation risk in one's own industry. Overall, this paper sheds new light on how patent litigation risk reshapes firms' allocation of innovative efforts.

Wenqi Wan

ESG Performance Gap and the Cost of Debt

Poster

This study examines whether firms' ESG performance relative to a benchmark based on their historical trajectory and industry peers is reflected in subsequent borrowing outcomes. Using data on Chinese listed companies from 2010 to 2023, we analyze whether this relative ESG measure contains information that creditors consider after accounting for firm fundamentals and absolute ESG levels. We estimate panel regressions with firm and industry-year fixed effects and conduct supplementary robustness exercises to mitigate concerns about cross-firm comparability. Overall, the analysis provides evidence on how relative ESG performance is associated with firms' debt-related outcomes in an environment where ESG disclosure practices and credit markets are evolving.

Janice Yan

The Effect of Steel Plant Upgrades on Local Housing Markets

Poster

Ultra-low emission upgrades at steel plants have significantly reduced pollutant emissions but less is known about how residents respond to these upgrades in neighborhoods near steel plants. We study the impact of ultra-low emission upgrades at steel plants on nearby housing prices. Our results show that the completion of these upgrades increases property values by 2-3%, driven by an information shock that alters buyers' perceptions and enhances their confidence in the policy's implementation.

Marketing Abstracts

Natalie Bolen

Shared Experiences, Shared Online: The Consequences of Others' Posting

Poster

Shared experiences do not just live in memory; they also live online. These posts frequently include friends, strangers, or bystanders who were a part of the experience, also known as the subject of the post. In three experiments (to date), this research explores how a poster's unilateral sharing of joint experiences impacts how the subject appraises the post (recognition vs. exposure) and how each of these mechanisms leads to the subject's reaction to the post as feeling special or vulnerable.

Tim Derksen

Bad Moods, Good Designs: How Affective State Influences Co-Creation with Generative AI and Product Preferences

3MT

Generative AI (genAI) and other new technologies enhance consumers' ability to participate in product co-creation. This opportunity also allows consumers to customize products with greater depth than previously considered. We study how consumers' affective state influences their co-creation and preferences for co-created products. Through five experiments we find that consumers in a negative affective state design products to evoke more negative affect and have more positive attitudes to that product design. Consumers' preferences are driven by the emotional fluency—reduced emotion regulation effort in processing the product design information—that they feel. Yet, having a lower level of subjective control can attenuate these effects. These results generalize between aesthetic experiences and physical products. Our findings offer context for how affective state influences different consumer contexts and the behavioral impacts of design.

Ardalan Eyni

"You are 100!" vs. "You are excellent!" Are they interchangeable? No!

Poster

Exposure to a positive number (e.g., +25) from an unknown numeric range of outcomes leads the viewer to perceive zero, or a positive number, to be the origin of the focal range. However, exposure to a positive descriptor (e.g., 'very good') from an unknown descriptive range of outcomes leads the viewer to perceive a point below zero to be the origin of the focal range. A two-question experiment on Prolific strongly documents the phenomenon. Merely 80% of participants, who were framed with a positive descriptive point (vs. only 38% of those who were framed with a positive numeric point) - as the high endpoint of an unknown range of outcomes - determined a negative value for the origin of that range ($\chi^2(1, N = 323) = 56.839, p = .000, \varphi = .42$). This phenomenon may have important consequences. For example, it can potentially influence the perceived magnitude of achievements. When one is told "your performance is very good," their progress toward the state of being 'very good' may be perceived greater than when they are told "your performance is 75." Because, in the descriptive scenario the mental journey began from a point below zero, while in the numeric scenario the mental journey began from zero. This inconsistency can in turn influence behaviour; for example, perseverance, and response to rating scales. In short, this effort discovers an undocumented mental anomaly: "100 is excellent, but excellent is better."

Amirreza Faghihinia

Cautious Tellers, Curious Listeners: Sender-Receiver Differences in Word-of-Mouth about Multiple Experiences

3MT

Often, consumers use the same product or service multiple times (e.g., visiting a local coffee shop), and share details of these multiple experiences with others. But what products do senders (who share) want to tell receivers (who listen) about? And are these the products receivers want to hear about? Five preregistered studies show that senders' and receivers' preferences diverge. In particular, senders prefer to share about consistent experiences, such as two visits in which a coffee shop's quality remained the same. However, receivers prefer to hear about inconsistent experiences, such as two visits in which a coffee shop's quality differed.

Bijit Ghosh

The Gift Gradient: Unveiling Emotional Trajectories and Backfire Risks in Multi-Gift Scenarios

3MT

Both givers and receivers intuitively believe that "more is better." Receivers, in particular, claim to love the unwrapping experience and expect multiple gifts to be more enjoyable than one. Yet this belief is misguided. Across multiple studies, we show that receivers' enjoyment collapses once the unwrapping begins. Before unwrapping, receivers imagine the perfect gift, which makes any real gift feel disappointing. As a result, each additional gift introduces another opportunity for that expectation to be unmet, producing multiple disappointments rather than cumulative joy. Therefore, receivers report more positive affect and attitudes toward a single gift than toward multiple gifts, even when the total value of the multiple gifts is three times higher. A consequential study further shows that receivers are more likely to return multiple gifts than single ones. The effect can be mitigated, however: when the sequence or number of gifts resets expectations—such as by ordering gifts thoughtfully or varying the number unexpectedly—the negative "unwrap effect" is reduced. Together, these findings reveal how anticipation, expectation, and temporal contrast shape the psychology of receiving and challenge the pervasive belief that more gifts mean more happiness.

Arjang Nikbakht

Who Leads? A Stackelberg Leadership Refinement

15-minute Presentation

There are many sequential-move duopoly game theoretic models in marketing and other business research where firms are assigned Stackelberg leadership and followership roles without detailed justification. Furthermore, typically one role assignment is assumed for the whole parameter space. To address these issues, we propose an equilibrium refinement that provides a justification for the role assignment decisions and rules out implausible leadership structures when both firms prefer the same Stackelberg role (either leadership or followership). Our refinement applies a criterion, which is adapted by the analyst for their context, that assures a form of congruence between the equilibrium outcomes and the assumed players' roles: a firm with a very weak (strong) equilibrium performance on a preselected measure cannot assume the preferred leader (follower) role. We then categorize the refinement outcomes into five cases, some of which may not be present for some models. We also apply our approach to extended models and show that their refinement outcomes are categorized into seven cases. We apply our refinement to four commonly used models in business and economic research: two models where both firms prefer leadership (Cournot and vertical channel) and two models where both firms prefer followership (market-base demand and consumer utility).

Erika Polishchuk

Consumer Responses to DEI and Activism Rollbacks

3MT

As sociopolitical issues and support for underrepresented groups become increasingly controversial, businesses who have historically demonstrated support for marginalized groups must decide whether to change their strategy or stay the course. This research focuses on four strategies a currently vocal business may pursue regarding DEI and brand activism. It explores the emotional and behavioural outcomes of these strategies for members of marginalized groups at the heart of sociopolitical debates. Additionally, it aims to determine how allies' responses may differ from those of group members.

Roghi Teimourfamian

Too Much Talk? The Status Effect of Brand Reply Frequency on Social Media

3MT

This research examines how the frequency with which brands respond to customer comments under social media posts shapes consumer perceptions. Two pilot studies validate the practical relevance of response frequency: social media managers reported lacking formal guidelines and showed high default responsiveness, while consumers reported noticing and forming impressions based on how often brands reply. Across two experiments, we found that brands responding to fewer comments are perceived as having higher status, which improves brand attitudes and influences downstream outcomes. Mediation analyses across both studies confirm that perceived brand status accounts for these effects. These findings challenge the common assumption that a higher reply rate is always beneficial, suggesting that, in promotional contexts, responding less can signal prestige and enhance consumer evaluations.

Yi Wei

The Social Context of Goal Sharing:
How Tie Strength Influences Motivation

3MT

People often share their personal goals with others, announcing a fitness challenge to friends, posting a language-learning milestone on social media, or casually mentioning an upcoming project in conversation. Social media and online communities have created various opportunities for individuals to make their intentions public. People can not only share their plans with close friends and family, but also with some distant acquaintances or even strangers in online forums and social networks. While goal sharing has become more prevalent and more socially diverse, little is known about whether who the goal is shared with matters for subsequent motivation. Drawing on social network theory, we argue that the strength of the tie between the goal sharer and the recipient can influence the psychological experience of goal pursuit. In this research, we distinguish between strong ties (such as close friends or family members) and weak ties (such as acquaintances, distant contacts, or broad social media audiences), and investigate whether these different social contexts shape the motivational consequences of goal sharing. This work highlights social tie strength as a critical dimension of goal-sharing contexts. By identifying when sharing goals can undermine rather than enhance motivation, this research offers practical implications for individuals, organizations, and digital platforms that encourage public goal disclosure.

Operations & Information Systems Abstracts

Roham Bahri
Data-Driven Surgery Scheduling
Poster

Hospitals must set surgery schedules in advance, even though individual case durations are uncertain. This uncertainty creates three kinds of losses: overtime, which raises labor costs and strains staff when days run long; idle time, which leaves rooms and personnel unused when days run short; and deferrals, where overestimated durations push some surgeries to later dates, lengthening patient waits. Surgeons also provide booked times—duration estimates based on experience that are important to respect—yet in practice, these estimates are noisy and typically conservative, often substantially overestimating actual durations. This work asks: How can we build schedules that minimize losses under uncertain durations while respecting surgeons' booked times? We propose a decision-aware predictor that uses the scheduling cost as its training loss and minimizes regret—the extra cost relative to a schedule that has perfect information about the future case durations—and we pair it with a single, transparent control that lets managers choose how closely to follow surgeons' booked times versus accept data-driven adjustments.

Mehrnaz Behrooz
Optimal Retirement Timing: A Data-Driven Decision-Making Model for Retirement Planning
Poster

We study the problem of optimal retirement timing using a discrete-time Markov decision process to capture the dynamic trade-off between continued work and retirement. We first analyze a stylized model and establish structural properties of the optimal retirement policy with respect to age, savings horizon, and life expectancy. We then develop a comprehensive model that incorporates institutional rules of the Canada Pension Plan and data-driven insights from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging. Our results show how financial decisions and individual preferences jointly shape optimal retirement timing. A key finding is that the policy cap of retiring by age 70, consistent with current CPP deferral rules, can distort optimal decisions: with increasing life expectancy, this concern is amplified, implying that individuals may need to accelerate their savings behavior under current policies. These findings underscore the central role of health and financial planning in retirement preparedness and provide insights for both individuals and policymakers navigating the realities of longer life spans and evolving retirement norms.

Bo Han
Structural inequalities in multilayer transportation networks for people with limited mobility
3MT

People with limited mobility often face significant challenges when attempting to travel independently within public transportation systems. These challenges include a limited number of accessible stations, limited availability of accessible transfer points, and incomplete or inaccurate accessibility information. When reliable transportation is unavailable, people with limited mobility may be unable to reach workplaces, medical appointments, education, or essential services. They may be forced to rely on costly door to door transportation, experience reduced participation in social and community activities, and feel isolated or experience a loss of autonomy. These conditions can lead to psychological stress and further restrict daily opportunities. This study collects accessibility related transportation data from multiple sources for public transportation systems in ten cities and examines the structural differences between general multilayer transportation networks and those available to people with limited mobility. By comparing the constructed multilayer networks, we identify substantial disparities in transportation service between the general population and people with limited mobility. The results show that public transportation constraints strongly affect people with limited mobility by limiting both the number of accessible stations and the set of feasible transfer opportunities. These findings illustrate how accessibility conditions influence their ability to benefit from the public transportation network. The study concludes by identifying critical accessibility gaps and outlining implications for more equitable transit planning.

Chunzhen Huang
Impact of Natural Disasters on Inventor Innovation
Poster

Natural disasters are exogenous shocks that alter inventors' incentives and capacities — shifting attention toward pragmatic mitigation inventions in some cases (property damage) or toward risk-aversion and reduced exploratory search in others (fatalities). Besides examining first time natural disaster shock influence on inventors' individuals, we expand our scope from micro-level to the co-inventor networks: communities that include a first-time exposed inventor and corresponding spillover inventors will adjust their capability and output. The direction and magnitude of these community-level responses depend on pre-shock community structure — in particular knowledge diversity and the network centrality of the exposed inventor.

Erfan Rafieikia

Learning–Augmented Benders Decomposition for Large–Scale Linear Decomposable Optimization Problems

3MT

We propose a learning-augmented Benders decomposition for solving large-scale block-separable optimization problems. While classical Benders requires solving every sub-problem to optimality in each iteration, our two-phase scheme predicts dual solutions for noncritical sub-problems, enforcing feasibility to guarantee valid cuts. We provide worst-case optimality-gap bounds. Experiments on stochastic capacitated facility location instances show less than 1% optimality gap and 1.5–2× speedups compared to the standard Benders method.

Soroush Sadeghi

Operating Room Scheduling with Downstream Effects: Balancing Post-Surgery Workload

3MT

When hospitals schedule surgeries without considering downstream impacts, nurses in recovery units face severe workload imbalances. These imbalances create periods of overwhelming demand followed by underutilization, affecting both patient care quality and staff burnout. We studied a Surgical Short Stay Unit (SSSU) where same-day surgery patients recover before discharge. We measure workload using actual nursing service time rather than just counting patients. This gives a true picture of nursing work in outpatient settings because two patients may spend similar time in the unit, but one requires 120 minutes of nursing care while another needs only 30 minutes. Current operating room (OR) scheduling ignores these differences, creating chaotic workload patterns throughout the day. We developed an integrated prediction-optimization framework that coordinates OR scheduling with downstream nursing capacity in order to balance total workload in the downstream unit. Traditional approaches minimize prediction error by trying to accurately forecast each patient's workload. We instead train our models to minimize decision error, which is the workload imbalance in SSSU. Our method predicts workloads in ways that enable better scheduling decisions, even if those predictions are not numerically perfect. We directly incorporate the scheduling optimization problem into the prediction model training process. Results on real surgical data show our approach achieves approximately 39% lower decision error compared to traditional methods that first predict then use the predictions in optimization. This work demonstrates how upstream operational decisions (OR scheduling) can be leveraged to smooth workload distribution in downstream units.

Masoum Talebi

One for All: Centralized Destination Decision-Making for Emergency Medical Services

Poster

Prolonged ambulance offload time (i.e., the time between ambulance arrival at the hospital and the assumption of care by emergency department (ED) staff) is a persistent bottleneck in emergency medical services (EMS) that reduces ambulance availability and delays patients' access to care. Current ambulance destination decisions are mainly proximity-based and overlook offload time, even though offload time is a key performance indicator used by many health authorities. We develop a centralized destination decision-making framework that uses distributional forecasts of a novel measure, time-to-care (transport time plus offload time), constructed from routinely collected EMS, ED, and inpatient data. We argue that time-to-care-based routing improves ambulance availability and enhances timely access to care, and that centralization unlocks system-wide resource pooling benefits that proximity-based routing cannot capture. These expected results would suggest that implementing time-to-care-based routing in practice can improve system performance in a scalable manner through standard data pipelines and existing information systems.

Yasser Zeinali

Data-driven Optimization for Wildfire Suppression Resource Deployment: A Case Study of Alberta Wildfires

15-minute presentation

Wildfires pose a severe global threat, with North America experiencing increasing wildfire activity. Canada reports over 8,000 wildfires annually, burning millions of hectares, with a record-breaking 18.5 million hectares affected in 2023. This escalating crisis places intense pressure on wildfire management agencies to develop effective suppression resource allocation strategies. In collaboration with the Alberta government, we present a data-driven framework for optimizing wildfire resource deployment. Our approach integrates predictive modeling, queueing theory, and robust optimization. We predict daily resource-hour requirements and the number of wildfires requiring specific resources. These forecasts inform a queueing model that estimates transient waiting times within a robust optimization framework, ensuring efficient resource allocation. Although our case study focuses on Alberta, the methodology is adaptable and can be tailored to address wildfire management challenges in other regions.

Cindy Zhang

High-Ability vs. Functionally Diverse Candidates in AI-Assisted Hiring: Evidence from LLM Resume-Screening Experiments

Poster

With the rapid development of AI technologies, a growing number of companies are adopting large language models (LLMs) to assist in recruitment, particularly for early-stage resume screening. Compared with traditional human-led hiring, AI-assisted recruitment can yield substantial gains in efficiency and cost effectiveness. Yet it remains unclear whether such models exhibit implicit preferences when evaluating candidates with different profiles. This study examines whether LLMs display systematic preferences for either high-ability candidates (e.g., elite academic credentials with limited work experience) or functionally diverse candidates (e.g., extensive experience but less prestigious academic backgrounds). We evaluate this question in a controlled 2×2 factorial design (education × experience breadth) implemented through synthetic input data, including GPT-4o, Gemini 1.5 Pro, LLaMA 3, Claude 3 Sonnet, and DeepSeek-V2. Input stimuli consist of synthetic resumes generated via LLM-assisted writing based on predefined templates, systematically varying along two controlled dimensions, education level and experience breadth, while ensuring consistency in structure, tone, and content across conditions. All stimuli are synthetic and contain no personal data. Our design comprises four stages: (1) models rate resumes varying along academic and professional dimensions; (2) we test robustness by incorporating industry-specific job descriptions; (3) models provide rationales for assigned scores; and (4) models select the best applicant(s) from a mixed pool, simulating shortlisting. We also run a parallel human study on Prolific using identical materials to benchmark model outputs against human judgments and examine alignment or divergence. Finally, We also evaluate prompt-engineering interventions (e.g., structured rubrics and explicit criteria) to assess whether such preferences can be attenuated and to outline a more robust workflow for AI-assisted recruitment. Our findings illuminate LLM preferences between high-ability and functionally diverse candidates and inform the use of LLMs in AI-driven recruitment.

Strategy, Entrepreneurship & Management Abstracts

Mehri Baloochi

This Body Will Not Obey: The Five-Decade Struggle for Legitimacy in Iranian Women's Resistance

Poster

Legitimacy scholarship treats evaluation as a neutral cognitive process, overlooking how power fundamentally shapes what counts as legitimate. However, attending to power relations reveals a co-constitutive, self-reinforcing cycle. Power determines the very criteria by which legitimacy is judged and shapes the perceptions through which appropriateness is evaluated, all while suppressing alternative possibilities. Legitimacy, in turn, justifies and reproduces this power when actors accept these imposed definitions and comply with the prescribed social order. The result is a self-reinforcing system where power and legitimacy mutually constitute one another. This raises a pressing question: how can oppressed actors escape this cycle when power controls both the standards of legitimacy and the mechanisms of judgment?

I examine women's contestation of compulsory veiling in Iran (1979-2025), where the state staked its legitimacy on women's visible compliance, deploying comprehensive legal, surveillance, educational, workplace regulation, and cultural apparatuses to enforce this order. Using historical analysis and critical discourse analysis across textual, visual, and embodied modes, I trace how women progressively challenged state-imposed legitimacy criteria despite systematic repression.

Preliminary findings reveal three legitimacy practices through which oppressed actors contest power-laden legitimacy systems. Disrupting delegitimization destabilizes prescribed realities without confronting power directly. Demanding legitimacy asserts alternative criteria while still seeking power's validation. Enacting legitimacy performs alternative realities that render both power's criteria and evaluative authority irrelevant. These findings contribute to legitimacy theory by revealing legitimacy as ongoing contestation over evaluative authority itself, to social movement literature by foregrounding embodied discourse under repression, and to institutional theory by demonstrating institutions as performative achievements requiring continuous enactment rather than stable cognitive schemas.

Chelsea Dufresne

Is Organizational Inclusion Ever Inclusive?
Tracing Inclusion Enactment Over Time

Poster

Inclusion has become ubiquitous in contemporary organizations, yet questions remain about whose interests it truly serves and what mechanisms enable its persistence despite contestation. While inclusion discourse invokes human rights and well-being, in practice it may paradoxically constitute and reinforce the very structures it claims to challenge. Through archival and digital ethnography, this research explores the history and discourse that gave rise to how inclusion is embedded and enacted in everyday organizing, what it transforms, what persists, and what remains obscured. This early-stage work seeks to provoke conversations that critically examine inclusion without dismissing its potential value, by looking to the past to better understand current organizational manifestations.

Natalie Eng

When 'Who We Are" Becomes 'What We Do:" How Collective Orchestrators Become Stuck in Organizational Identity Rumination

Poster

Research increasingly highlights the importance of ecosystem orchestrators in advancing ecosystem development and success. Prior research suggests that these organizations need a strong organizational identity to unite diverse actors around a shared goal, yet it has largely assumed that identity construction ultimately produces at least a provisional sense of what is core, distinctive, and enduring. We show that, like individuals, organizations can become stuck in identity construction. Drawing on an inductive study of a Canadian collective ecosystem orchestrator, we introduce the process of organizational identity rumination—recursive cycles of identity work and identity play that remain unresolved. We unpack this process by identifying three mechanisms—soliciting voice, sedimenting identity possibilities, and sustaining emotional energy—that perpetuate rumination, and we examine the effects of rumination: a loss of strategic focus and reactive decision making which we refer to as organizational quicksand. In doing so, we make important contributions to the literature on ecosystems and organizational identity.

Julian Faid

Institutional Maintenance as Disruption: Evidence from the Alberta Separatist Movement

3MT

Institutional maintenance work is typically understood as reflecting actors' commitment to preserving existing institutional arrangements. This study examines a paradoxical form of institutional work in which actors engage in maintenance practices with the explicit intent of disrupting the institutional order. Drawing on a study of the Alberta independence movement, I explore how separatists must work within existing institutional rules to establish the credibility necessary to challenge those institutions. This work suggests institutional maintenance may be strategic rather than normative, in which actors preserve the form and procedures of institutions while rejecting their underlying authority and working toward dismantling those institutional arrangements. This study contributes to the theory of institutional work by examining how maintenance work can be temporally bounded, strategically motivated, and compatible with fundamental institutional disruption, complicating our understanding of what constitutes institutional maintenance.

Yufei Ren

How the emergence of governance shapes and elaborates an online community

3MT

Communities have been studied not only as institutional environments that influence organizational behavior but also as resources that organizations actively shape and draw upon to advance their economic and social activities. However, we know surprisingly little about how communities, with the intention of being commercialized from the start, are built and established de novo. This study addresses this question through a unique case: the creation of an online community built around a metaversal game, Second Life, which was initiated and mediated by game developers (Linden Lab) seeking to advance its commercial release together with their Beta players in various formal and informal governance processes.

Wenqiang Yin

The Family Firm Disadvantage:
Are Stakeholders Harsher on ESG Violations?

Poster

Family firms are often perceived as bastions of trust and long-term orientation, yet they are not immune to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) failures. This study investigates whether the very "family" identity that typically generates stakeholder goodwill creates a "liability of affect" when that trust is violated. Using experimental methodology, we analyze societal reactions to ESG violations across a matched sample of family and non-family firms. Our results reveal a significant "family firm disadvantage": following an ESG violation, family firms experience a more negative stock market penalty than their non-family counterparts. This suggests that stakeholders penalize family firms more severely, potentially due to higher expectations and a greater sense of betrayal. These findings challenge the uniformly positive view of the family firm identity and highlight the strategic imperative for family-controlled businesses to proactively safeguard their ESG reputation.

Shuo Yuan

The Rise of the Chief Wellbeing Officer: The Co-Constitution of a New Way of Feeling and Doing Wellbeing at Work

3MT

New practice emergence is a critical but underexplored topic in institutional research (Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007; Smets et al., 2017). Existing studies have primarily emphasized cognitive mechanisms (Helms et al., 2012), drawing criticism for overlooking the affective and emotional processes involved in the emergence of novel practice (Friedland, 2013; Reckwitz, 2001; Schatzki, 2001; Voronov & Weber, 2016). This study examines the role of emotions in new practice emergence by exploring the rise of a new wellbeing practice in large American organizations—the creation and adoption of the Chief Wellbeing Officer (CWO) role. Using an institutional logics approach to emotions, this study investigates how the CWO practice co-evolves with a new way of feeling that renders this practice sensible and meaningful. It shows how this position emerges from particular assemblages of community, practice, and the meanings of wellbeing and emotions underlying these enactments of wellbeing within the professional Human Resource field.

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