UNICAF®

4TH ANNUAL MASTER'S CONFERENCE 2026

16th - 20th November

Abstract Booklet

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Welcome



Dear Esteemed Colleagues, Students, and Participants,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the fourth Unicaf Master's Conference (UMC 2026), an event that celebrates the research, academic engagement, and intellectual curiosity of our master's students. The conference provides an opportunity for students to share their work with the wider academic community, exchange ideas, and contribute to ongoing discussions across a range of disciplines.

This year's conference brings together 67 presentations by master's students, reflecting the breadth of research undertaken across our academic community. The abstracts in this booklet offer an overview of the topics explored, the questions investigated, and the findings emerging from students' research. Together, they demonstrate the value of postgraduate research in developing critical thinking, addressing real-world challenges, and advancing knowledge across different fields of study.

The programme is further enriched by seven plenary discussions, offering participants the opportunity to engage with experienced panellists and explore current issues and developments in research and practice. We encourage all participants to take an active part in the sessions, contribute to the discussions, and make the most of the opportunity to learn from one another.

The successful preparation of this conference and its abstract booklet reflects the collective efforts of many colleagues. I would like to thank all students and authors for sharing their research, the reviewers for their time and valuable contributions, and the organising committee for its dedication and work in bringing this publication and event together.

We hope that UMC 2026 will be a rewarding experience for everyone involved, encouraging new perspectives, meaningful academic exchanges, and opportunities for future research collaboration.

On behalf of all colleagues involved in the preparation and delivery of the conference, I wish you an engaging, productive, and enjoyable UMC 2026.

Best regards,

Dr Elena Papadopoulou
Pro Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning, Federal
Unicaf Online Journal, Principal Editor

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Information

Access to the conference

In order to attend the conference, follow the link:

Zoom link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_eLwZhytVTICXEIOV4Yp98w

We are looking forward to meeting you at the Fourth Annual Online Unicaf Master's Conference!

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Programme of the
Fourth Annual Online Unicaf Master's Conference (UMC)
November 16th- 20th, 2026

Day 1: School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences Monday, November 16th, 2026		
08:50*	**Session Opens**	
9:00 – 09:20	**Opening Ceremony** **Dr Margarita Olympiou, Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor Teaching & Learning, Unicaf, Federal** **Chair: Dr Athanasia – Eleni Kavadia, Research Manager, Unicaf, Federal**	
9:20 – 09:30	**Opening Remarks: School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences** **Dr Anastasia Datsogianni, Dean, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Unicaf, Federal**	
09:30 – 11:10	**Session 1: Mental Health, Behaviour and Wellbeing** **Chair: Dr Robert McQuade, Programme Leader, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Unicaf, Federal**	
09:30 – 09:50	Bruce Sibanda	The dark side of wellbeing applications
09:50 – 10:10	May Hassan Abo-Ziadah	Rewriting the trauma script: A configurative systematic review of meaning-based interventions for resilience and post-traumatic growth building and its impact on post-traumatic stress disorder epigenetics
10:10 – 10:30	Deborah Bowyer	Digital performance monitoring and work performance in a debt management call centre
10:30 – 10:50	Joy Ntombizodwa Twala	Emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behaviours in South African organisations: Secondary systematic review research
10:50 – 11:10	Tolutope Daramola	The influence of depression on social environmental factors promoting juvenile delinquency: A qualitative research

11:10 - 11:50	**Plenary Presentation 1**	**Speaker: Dr Kezia Njoroge, Senior Lecturer, Health Systems Management, School of Nursing and Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University** **Title: Mental health across the menopause transition among minoritised women in the UK: a scoping review** **Chair: Dr Anastasia Datsogianni, Dean, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Unicaf, Federal & Dr Ioanna Koliandri, Associate Dean, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Unicaf, Federal**
11:50 – 13:10	**Session 2: Education, Equity and Cultural Perspectives** **Chair: Dr Zoe Magou, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Unicaf, Federal**	
11:50 – 12:10	Geronimo Tuzo	Re-engaging the marginalised: Second chance education and urban inequality in Jamaica
12:10 – 12:30	Cassandra Jones	Digital diets in international classrooms: Implications for educational leadership, policy
12:30 – 12:50	Aya Gamal Abolnour	Student-centred learning in secondary mathematics education
12:50 – 13:10	Esraa Ali Bashar Mohamed	Influence of socioeconomic background on postgraduate pharmacy education
13:10 -13:30	**Break**	
13:30 - 15:50	**Session 3: Educational Leadership and Digital Transformation** **Chair: Dr Robert McQuade, Programme Leader, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Unicaf, Federal & Dr Viliza Silwamba, Programme Leader, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Unicaf University Zambia**	
13:30 – 13:50	Vincent Peter Kyagaba	Leadership strategies for ICT integration in post-COVID secondary education: A literature-based study with reference to Lesotho
13:50 – 14:10	Niyonkuru Jean Felix	Integrating extracurricular TVET demonstrations into primary STEM education in Rwanda: Evidence from a desktop review
14:10 – 14:30	Magi Awny	From bans to capacity-building: A culturally-responsive leadership framework for digital distraction in Saudi Arabia
14:30 – 14:50	Eman Sayed	Impact of online learning on academic performance in Higher Education

14:50 – 15:10	David K. Allison	The impact of a school principal's leadership & management practices on student academic achievement in Liberian primary schools.
15:10 – 15:30	Mohamed Taalat	Exploring Adaptive and Visionary Leadership as a Framework for Sustainability and Cultural Responsiveness in Educational Leadership
15:30 – 15:50	Tanycia Fritz	Faith in verse: The intersection of religion and literature in Maya Angelou’s poetry

Day 2: School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences and School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering Tuesday, November 17th, 2026		
08:50*	**Session Opens**	
09:00 – 10:20	**Session 4: Conflict, Crime, Gender and Social Justice** **Chair: Ms Ayesha Jawad, Programme Leader, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Unicaf, Federal**	
09:00 – 09:20	Bayan Aloqdeh	Women at the negotiating table: Yemeni women's political participation in the peace process (2013–present)
09:20 – 09:40	Zanele Mazibuko	The influence of South Africa's truth and reconciliation commission on transitional justice processes in Rwanda and Sierra Leone: A comparative analysis
09:40 – 10:00	Idorenyen Ukpai	Stigma and silence: A study of the underreporting of rape in Nigeria (2015–2025)
10:00 – 10:20	Lukman Adewale Amusa	Youth unemployment and cybercrime in Nigeria: A criminological analysis of online fraud among young people
10:20 – 10:40	**Break**	
10:40 – 12:20	**Session 5: Law, Governance and Emerging Global Challenges** **Chair: Ms Ayesha Jawad, Programme Leader, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Unicaf, Federal**	
10:40 – 11:00	Ahmed Salah Omar	International legal role of a developing state on integrating space (lunar) investment dimensions into urbanization activities: Egypt as an African-Arabian case study
11:00 – 11:20	Kenneth Tumusiime	Judicial innovation in the digital age: Constitutional and regulatory challenges of artificial intelligence and blockchain in Sub-Saharan African judiciaries — Lessons from Uganda
11:20 – 11:40	Mohamed El-Sebaey	Examining the influence of company constitutions and shareholders' agreements on corporate governance practices in the UK, US and Egypt
11:40 – 12:00	Raphael Gideon Masaba	Board independence and corporate governance law: A comparative analysis of regulatory frameworks

12:00 – 12:20	Talifhani Khubana	State responsibility and multinational corporate liability for human rights violations and developmental harm: A comparative analysis of the United Kingdom, United States and selected global south jurisdictions
12:20 – 12:30	**Closing Remarks: School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences** **Dr Anastasia Datsogianni, Dean, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Unicaf, Federal**	
12:30 – 12:50	**Break**	
12:50 – 13:00	**Opening Remarks: School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering** **Dr Yiota Apostolou Christou, Dean, School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering, Unicaf, Federal**	
13:00 – 15:20	**Session 6: Health and Medicine** **Chair: Dr Daphne Kleopa & Dr Romana Novakovic, Programme Leaders, School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering, Unicaf, Federal**	
13:00 – 13:20	Fisayo Mayowa Aderinola	A scoping review mapping the antimicrobial stewardships (AMS) strategies for antimicrobial resistance in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)
13:20 – 13:40	EL Tahir Abdelrahman	A global scoping review of routine childhood immunisation for non-camp migrants barriers and facilitators
13:40 – 14:00	Griffins Omondi	Perinatal depression in Lower- and Middle-Income Countries: a scoping review
14:00 – 14:20	Nenani Hilda Kamtuwanje	Exploring influencing factors of postpartum family planning uptake in Africa: A Scoping Review
14:20 – 14:40	Rasheedat Adeola Ige	Cervical cancer screening uptake among women living with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa: A scoping review
14:40 – 15:00	Faithful IyeOluwa Adegbile	Perceptions and pedagogical implications of blended learning in nursing education in low and middle-income countries (LMICS): a systematic review
15:00 – 15:20	Bonani Mbalenhle Dlamini	Structural maternal health inequalities and cross-border mobility in Southern Africa: Implications for NHI planning
15:20 – 16:00	**Plenary Presentation 2**	**Speaker: Dr Racheal Frost, Senior Lecturer, Health and Social Care, Liverpool John Moores University** **Title: Understanding healthcare professionals' educational needs in basic principles of older people's care across Europe**

		Chair: Dr Romana Novakovic, Programme Leader, School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering, Unicaf, Federal

Day 3: School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering Wednesday, November 18th, 2026		
08:50*	**Session Opens**	
09:00 – 10:40	**Session 7: Governance, Policy & Infrastructure** **Chair: Dr Stephania Herodotou, Programme Leader, School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering, Unicaf, Federal**	
09:00 – 09:20	Nicholas Wasamba Mwambazi	Development of an early warning and decision support system for sustainable management of fall armyworm (pest) in Zambia
09:20 – 09:40	Napoleon Akoto	A machine learning framework for detecting social engineering fraud in Ghanaian mobile money ecosystem
09:40 – 10:00	Samuel Besweri Sentongo	Utilisation of predictive analytics in higher education to predict student outcomes
10:00 – 10:20	Stephanie Bridget Lang	Developing neural network nowcasting of South Africa's unemployment rate
10:20 – 10:40	Augustine Muturi Kinuthia	Predictive analytics of health care seeking behaviour for childhood fever in Busia County, Kenya
10:40 – 11:00	**Break**	
11:00 – 11:40	**Plenary Presentation 3**	**Speaker: Dr Stephania Herodotou, School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering, Unicaf, Federal** **Title: Bespoke materials in construction engineering: From material design to performance** **Chair: Dr Stephania Herodotou, Programme Leader, School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering, Unicaf, Federal**
11:40 – 12:20	**Plenary Presentation 4**	**Speaker: Dr Oghenethoja Monday Umuteme, Programme Leader, School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering, Unicaf, Federal** **Title: The future of global energy: From fuel systems to integrated energy systems** **Chair: Dr Stephania Herodotou, Programme Leader, School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering, Unicaf, Federal**

12:20 – 13:00	**Break**	
13:00 – 14:20	**Session 8: Technology, AI & Data Science** **Chair: Benjamin Juma Nkowane, Programme Leader, School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering, Unicaf, Federal**	
13:00 – 13:20	Mubanga Nsofu	Towards sustainable 5G networks: a dual-engine framework using offline reinforcement learning and surrogate-based optimisation
13:20 – 13:40	Nadreen Nader Mohamad Elgalaly	Explainable machine learning for heart disease prediction
13:40 – 14:00	Mutuku Andrew Kyalo	Towards safer heart sound classification: A metric for clinical risk-aware deep learning evaluation
14:00 – 14:20	Taher Aly Aly koura	The impact of digital transformation on Banque Misr: operational efficiency, customer experience, and competitiveness in Egypt's banking sector
14:20 – 15:00	**Plenary Presentation 5**	**Speaker: Reginald Dennis Gwisai, Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic, Unicaf** **Title: Elevated socio – ecological vulnerability: Evaluating landfill proximity and community health risks in Gaborone and Lobatse, Botswana** **Chair: Benjamin Juma Nkowane, Programme Leader, School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering, Unicaf, Federal**
15:00 – 15:10	**Closing Remarks: School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering** **Dr Yiota Apostolou Christou, Dean, School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering, Unicaf, Federal**	

Day 4: School of Business Thursday, November 19th, 2026		
08:50*	**Session Opens**	
09:00 – 09:10	**Opening Remarks: School of Business** **Dr Narayanasamy Siddaiyan Santhi, Associate Dean, School of Business, Unicaf, Federal** **Chair: Mrs Malwina Janik, Academic Coordinator and Programme Leader, Business School, Unicaf, Federal**	
09:10 – 10:30	**Session 9: Project and operations management** **Chair: Dr Konstantinos Vrachimis, Programme Leader, School of Business, Unicaf, Federal**	
09:10 – 09:30	Mohammad Khaleefah Mohammad Talafha	Major reasons for construction delays caused by poor project management practices: a systematic literature review 2010–2025
09:30 – 09:50	Evann Lloyd R. Asencio	Facilities management in higher education body of knowledge (FMHEBoK): A proposed governance framework for facilities projects
09:50 – 10:10	Edwin Omurumba Mkabane	Blockchain-based project monitoring for donor-funded initiatives: Opportunities and challenges in Kenya
10:10 – 10:30	Doreen Sera	The impact of AI adoption on young professionals in the real estate industry within Uganda
10:30 – 11:50	**Session 10: HRM and organisational behaviour** **Chair: Mrs Christina Nizamidou, Programme Leader, School of Business, Unicaf, Federal**	
10:30 – 10:50	Ezinne Ursula Okafor	The impact of emotional intelligence on employee engagement in hybrid work environments
10:50 – 11:10	Danielle Laurel Haylock-Roberts	The strategic role of HR in Caribbean organisations: Benefits, barriers, and executive influence
11:10 – 11:30	Behakanira Katebarirwe Mathias	Employee training and development as a tool for enhancing employee performance
11:30 – 11:50	Namsey Sussan Okung	Examining HR challenges in implementing localisation in multinational oil firms in Nigeria

11:50 – 12:00	**Break**	
12:00 – 12:40	**Plenary Presentation 6**	**Speaker: Dr Martin Selby, Principal Lecturer - International Collaborative Programmes, Liverpool Business School, Liverpool John Moores University** **Title: From Intercultural Competence to Global Leadership** **Chair: Mrs Malwina Janik, Academic Coordinator and Programme Leader, Business School, Unicaf, Federal**
12:40 – 14:00	**Session 11: Finance, economic and revenue mobilisation** **Chair: Dr Mary Mandiringana, Dean / Programme Leader, School of Business, Unicaf University Zambia**	
12:40 – 13:00	Jessica Afia Obenewaa Asante	Assessing the impact of mobile money and Fintech Innovation on traditional banking operations in Ghana: A case study of GCB Bank and MTN Ghana
13:00 – 13:20	Ciniso Mndzebele	The impact of presumptive tax systems on domestic revenue mobilization: A review of Eswatini's Informal sector
13:20 – 13:40	Yonamu Nyirenda	Credit risk management practices and load performance of commercial banks in Malawi: A case study of Commercial Banks in Blantyre City
13:40 – 14:00	Musandipamba Mabamba	From donor dependence to financial resilience: Pathways for NGO sustainability (a case of Scope Zimbabwe)
14:00 – 14:10	**Break**	
14:10 – 15:30	**Session 12: Management** **Chair: Mrs Angela Chitamya, Programme Leader, School of Business, Unicaf, Federal**	
14:10 – 14:30	Dominique Randrianirina	Impact of management practices on the economic performance of companies in the clove value chain in Fenerive-Est, Madagascar
14:30 – 14:50	Richmond Ekhosuehi Idaeho	The impacts of organisational leadership and management on human capital development in the world of work: A focus on the service industry
14:50 – 15:10	Jennifer Chinecherem Adeniyi	Impact of remote work on the work productivity among employed mothers: A case of Lagos Island, Nigeria
15:10 – 15:30	Ookeditse Bashen Tokolo	Breaking down silos through strategic partnerships: a management framework for advancing SMME autonomy in Botswana

Day 5: School of Business Friday, November 20th, 2026		
08:50*	**Session Opens**	
09:00 – 10:20	**Session 13: Ethics, CSR, sustainability** **Chair: Dr Shylet Chigwende, Programme Leader, School of Business, Unicaf, Federal**	
09:00 – 09:20	Johanna Elina Iipinge	Strategic planning in Namibia's oil and gas sector amid the global energy transition: Challenges and opportunities
09:20 – 09:40	Eva Njoki Waweru	Exploring how mission-driven organisations maintain financial sustainability: Balancing impact and resilience in evolving funding environments
09:40 – 10:00	Lonah Jepkirui	Project governance and sustainable benefit realisation in ESG-driven projects
10:00 – 10:20	Daniel December	Examining the impact of international organisations in promoting gender diversity and inclusion in rural Zambia
10:20 – 11:00	**Plenary Presentation 7**	**Presenter: Dr Dimitrios Paraskevadakis, Link Tutor of MSc International Transport, Trade and Logistics, Liverpool John Moores University, School of Engineering and Built Environment** **Title: Translating Industry-Integrated, Experiential Learning From Campus To Online Delivery In Transport, Logistics And Supply Chain Management Education** **Chair: Mrs Malwina Janik, Academic Coordinator and Programme Leader, Business School, Unicaf, Federal**
11:00 – 11:10	**Break**	
11:10 – 12:30	**Session 14: Technology, innovation and digital transformation** **Chair: Dr Wellington Binali, Programme Leader, School of Business, Unicaf University Malawi**	
11:10 – 11:30	Sibusisiwe Lwandle	Remote newsrooms in the AI era: Balancing flexibility, collaboration and journalistic quality
11:30 – 11:50	Joalane Makaka	Leveraging management information systems to strengthen tuberculosis case detection in Lesotho: An evaluation of health information systems and innovative outreach models

11:50 – 12:10	Baintlafatsi Thomas	The role of organisational culture in employee adoption of digital transformation: A case study of Debswana Diamond Company
12:10 – 12:30	Theresa Wonder Sosu	Impact of the integrated customs management system on import clearance efficiency at the port of Tema, Ghana
12:30 – 13:30	**Session 15: French session - students of Master en Administration des Affaires, Unicaf Université** **Chair: Mrs Lamia Loubany, Programme Leader, School of Business, Unicaf, Federal**	
12:30 – 12:50	Deanea Yves Laurent	Design organisationnel et intelligence artificielle : une approche de data-drive pour optimiser le recouvrement des cotisations sociales auprès des travailleurs indépendants ivoiriens (Cas de la CNPS)
12:50 – 13:10	Dago Saint Jean-Pavel Atcho	Faisabilité d'un réseau hybride (hydro-solaire) pour la gestion efficace des barrages hydroélectriques d'ayame en côte-d'ivoire face au changement climatique
13:10 – 13:30	Kahemba Pezo Julia	Évaluation et optimisation du cadre de performance opérationnelle: cas de MMG Kinsevere
13:30 – 13:40	**Break**	
13:40 – 13:50	**Closing Remarks: School of Business** **Mrs Malwina Janik, Academic Coordinator and Programme Leader, Business School, Unicaf, Federal**	
13:50 – 14:50	**How to become a doctoral student (with Q&A)** **Speakers: Dr Nathan Musonda, Associate Dean, School of Doctoral Studies, Unicaf, Federal &** **Dr Clement Ndifor Ndindah, Head of Business, School of Doctoral Studies, Unicaf, Federal**	
14:50 – 15:00	**Closing Ceremony** **Dr Elena Papadopoulou, Pro-Vice Chancellor Teaching & Learning, Unicaf, Federal** **Chair: Dr Athanasia – Eleni Kavadia, Research Manager, Unicaf, Federal**	

Abstracts

Plenary Presentations

Mental health across the menopause transition among minoritised women in the UK: A scoping review

Dr Kezia Njoroge
Senior Lecturer
School of Nursing and Public Health
Liverpool John Moores University

Background: Menopause can affect women's mental health, but experiences are shaped by wider cultural, social and structural factors. Minoritised ethnic women may encounter additional barriers to menopause information, support and healthcare. However, evidence concerning mental health disparities among minoritised women experiencing menopause in the UK remains fragmented.

Objective: To map the existing qualitative evidence on mental health experiences among minoritised ethnic women across the menopause transition in the UK, and to identify gaps in the evidence base.

Methods: A scoping review was conducted using the Joanna Briggs Institute methodology and reported in accordance with PRISMA-ScR. The review was preregistered on the Open Science Framework. CINAHL, MEDLINE, Cochrane Library, Web of Science, Scopus and PsycINFO were searched in May 2026. Grey literature was searched through Overton, the British Menopause Society, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, NICE and MedRxiv, with forward and backward citation searching also undertaken. Eligible sources included published and unpublished research and UK reports involving women from minoritised ethnic groups experiencing any stage of menopause, where mental health outcomes or mental health disparities, including barriers or facilitators to healthcare, were reported.

Results: Ten sources published between 2007 and 2026 were included. Studies were conducted across different UK regions and included Black African, Black Caribbean, Black British, South Asian, Indian, Chinese and other minoritised ethnic groups, although ethnic groups were not consistently or precisely defined. The literature primarily examined women's experiences of menopause, help-seeking and healthcare access rather than mental health outcomes directly. Reported experiences included anxiety, irritability, mood changes, emotional distress, uncertainty and social isolation. Cultural beliefs, stigma and limited discussion of menopause affected knowledge and preparedness, while perceived stereotyping, inadequate cultural understanding, communication barriers and limited representation shaped healthcare experiences. Community, peer, family, religious and spiritual support were identified as important sources of coping and support.

Conclusion: Despite a growing UK evidence base, no included study directly examined mental health outcomes among minoritised women during the menopause transition. Important gaps remain regarding underrepresented ethnic groups, non-English speakers and intersectional experiences. Future research should directly investigate mental health using culturally responsive and intersectional approaches.

Understanding healthcare professionals' educational needs in basic principles of older people's care across Europe

Dr Racheal Frost
Senior Lecturer
Health and Social Care
Liverpool John Moores University

Background: We are living in a demographic shift, where the world's population is ageing at pace, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. However, in many countries the care of older people (geriatrics) is still emerging as a speciality, with limited training options for healthcare professionals (HCPs) working with older people. This international qualitative study aimed to explore the geriatric educational needs of HCPs, focusing on countries where geriatric medicine (GM) is emerging or underdeveloped.

Methods: We carried out fourteen focus groups (*n* = 125 participants, 82% female, mean age 41.6 years) representing ten European countries and a range of HCPs and settings. Focus group discussions were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and inductively coded in the original language. Codes were aggregated into a shared English codebook applied to all transcripts. Descriptive and subsequently analytical themes were then developed.

Results: Three themes were identified. (1) Current experiences of geriatric care: caring for older adults was described as medically and socially complex, requiring strong communication skills and interprofessional collaboration. (2) Structural and contextual challenges: effective healthcare delivery was hindered by limited staffing, fragmented care pathways, and geriatric medicine's emerging status. (3) Uncertainties and unmet training needs: key uncertainties included distinguishing ageing from disease, applying assessment tools, recognising red flags, and safe medication management. Participants emphasised the need for practical training during undergraduate studies, standardised interprofessional courses for non-specialists, and structural support (e.g. accessible programmes, protected time for training).

Conclusion: Currently, geriatrics training is limited and there are multiple contextual challenges, especially in countries with emerging geriatric medicine. There is significant unmet need for HCP basic training in the care of older people. Further work will build on this study to develop core competencies and relevant and feasible training content for HCPs in older people's care. Structural support is needed for these initiatives.

Bespoke Materials in Construction Engineering: From Material Design to Performance

Dr Stephania Herodotou
Programme Leader
School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering
Unicaf, Federal

Bespoke materials represent an emerging approach in engineering in which material composition, structure, microstructure and processing are deliberately tailored to achieve specific performance requirements. Unlike conventional approaches that select materials based primarily on their existing properties, bespoke material design enables engineers to modify or combine materials to address particular structural, environmental and functional challenges. This presentation explores the relationship between material structure and performance and considers how manipulating properties at different scales, from chemical composition and particle characteristics to microstructural and crystalline arrangements, can produce targeted material behaviours. Within construction, these principles can enable materials with enhanced strength, durability, reduced permeability, self-healing capabilities and improved environmental performance. Through selected construction applications, the presentation demonstrates how advances in materials engineering are enabling a shift from adapting designs to available materials towards designing or tailoring materials to meet the specific requirements of an application. The concept highlights the growing importance of materials science and engineering in developing more resilient, functional and sustainable construction solutions.

The future of global energy: From fuel systems to integrated energy systems

Dr Oghenethoja Monday Umuteme
Programme Leader
School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering
Unicaf, Federal

Global energy stands at a historic crossroads defined by a profound contradiction: low-emission technologies are scaling at record velocity, yet absolute fossil fuel consumption continues to reach unprecedented highs. This plenary presentation addresses this central paradox through the lens of the Energy Transition Framework, mapping how modern civilisation can successfully shift from legacy, isolated fuel commodities to a highly digitised, integrated energy matrix.

Historically, structural transitions have been processes of “energy addition," where new resources merely layer upon the old. Achieving true "energy substitution" requires balancing the competing pressures of the Energy Trilemma: advancing environmental sustainability while safeguarding economic development, national energy security, and social equity. Utilising the Multi-Level Perspective, this session examines the systemic bottlenecks currently stalling clean-tech niches—specifically acute grid connection queues, supply chain disruptions, and infrastructure lag.

Furthermore, the presentation confronts the hidden economic vulnerabilities of the transition, notably Jevons’ Paradox. As engineering efficiencies improve, they risk triggering massive behavioural rebounds in consumption, exemplified by the exponential electricity demand from artificial intelligence, next-generation data centers, and the comprehensive electrification of global transport across land, sea, air, and space.

Ultimately, the discussion outlines the architectural blueprint for the Energy System of Tomorrow. By fusing advanced baseloads like small modular reactors and hybrid offshore platforms with intelligent, bidirectional digital data layers, we can navigate these future frontiers. The presentation issues a definitive call to action, challenging leaders to abandon outdated, siloed fuel paradigms in favour of holistic, socio-technical systems design.

Elevated socio – ecological vulnerability: Evaluating landfill proximity and community health risks in Gaborone and Lobatse, Botswana

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Solid waste management, a growing phenomenon in developing nations, has created health risks to communities residing close to landfill sites. Limited attention has been given to human health concerns of communities residing in the neighborhoods of landfills, hence the Gaborone and Lobatse landfill sites have been criticized for poor operations and laxity in management. The paper shares insights on environmental health hazards/risks to which nearby residents get exposed to while considering the common risks that affect them. On the other hand, there is consideration of how the nearby residents prevent or manage the landfill related ailments that commonly affect them. The study was conducted at two sites, a closed (Gaborone – 156 respondents from exposed population of Extension 8 and 14) and operational landfill (Lobatse – 57 respondents from unexposed population of Peleng). Investigations carried out focused on offsite aspects that is a social (household questionnaire) survey on communities around the landfill sites. Also, the collection of records from health institutions on disease cases associated with landfill site pollution. The ailments affecting respondents in the communities around the landfill sites were respiratory ailments (i.e. common colds, coughing, chest pains, spitting and shortness of breath) headaches, skin rash, narcotic symptoms (lethargy and dizziness), cardiac angina, skin problems (skin rash, unusual acne), tremors, cramps, spasms, depression, insomnia, anxiety and general body weakness. Diarrhea was a leading notifiable disease signifying poor hygiene in the communities around landfills. Mal – odors (frequency, intensity and times of occurrence) were a major complaint among most respondents. Mood symptoms, tremors, spasms, cramps, heart problems and shortness of breath were the leading problems affecting the respondents' lifestyles. Furthermore, cramps affected the highest proportion of respondents as compared to tremors and spasms. The longer individuals were exposed to landfill sites the higher the risk of experiencing their negative impacts. Residents around landfills were significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) affected by more diseases, mal – odors (i.e. that are normally intense during summer) with increasing length of stay as the prevailing wind direction was towards the residential areas. Residents closer to landfills [Gaborone (≤ 3.0 km)] were more affected by the landfill emissions leading to higher disease incidence than those further away [Lobatse (> 3.0 km)]. Gaborone respondents had higher ailment occurrences than those living in Lobatse, due to distance from the landfill. Gaborone respondents (i.e. with 6 – 15 years length of stay) were most affected and had the highest recorded hospital visitations as compared to Lobatse (< 5 years). There was a significant decline in cardiac angina (r (156) = - 0.161, p = 0.044) incidence with increasing length of stay around landfill sites. There was a statistically significant decline in unusual acne, skin rash, common colds, and arthritis and rheumatism incidence with increasing distance from the landfills ($p \leq 0.05$). There was a statistically significant decline in landfill mal – odor experience, landfill odor occurrence and reports of odor complaints with increasing distance ($p \leq 0.05$).

From intercultural competence to global leadership

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Much has been written about intercultural competence – the ability to communicate and interact effectively with others in intercultural contexts - and there are various models conceptualising how intercultural competence is developed. There is also a large industry of consultancy and training organisations, with some large organisations even employing their own intercultural competence specialists. The importance of having employees with intercultural competence is clear for organisations that operate across international and cultural borders. However, many of the skills and behaviours of intercultural competence also form the foundations of global leadership, to which many business and management graduates aspire. This presentation aims to explore the principles of intercultural competence, how it might be developed within organisations, and the overlap with global leadership. The presentation includes an opportunity to interact and apply concepts and ideas to delegates' own organisations. It is hoped that the presentation will inspire participants to develop their intercultural competence, enhancing their professional practice.

Translating industry-integrated, experiential learning from campus to online delivery in transport, logistics and supply chain management education

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International online delivery has widened access to UK postgraduate education in transport, logistics and supply chain management (TLSCM), particularly for working professionals in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. It also creates a specific pedagogic challenge. On campus, TLSCM programmes rely heavily on experiential learning: site visits to ports, factories and distribution centres, ship bridge and engine room simulators, practitioner-led teaching and employer-set projects. These activities connect students with industry practice and current policy priorities. Online learners, spread across many countries and time zones, cannot be taken on a site visit, and the risk is that online provision becomes content-heavy and detached from operational reality.

This presentation draws on the author's experience as Programme Leader of the MSc International Transport, Trade and Logistics at Liverpool John Moores University, delivered on campus and online in partnership with Unicaf. Using a Triple Helix perspective linking academia, industry and policy, it compares how experiential learning operates in each mode and identifies practical online equivalents: virtual port and terminal tours, digital simulation and serious games, live and recorded practitioner sessions, and applied assessments built around learners' own workplaces and national logistics systems.

The central argument is that online international learners are not a disadvantaged version of campus students. Most already work in logistics, shipping, trade or public administration, so their workplaces can become the site visit. Structured correctly, this turns experiential learning from something delivered to students into something students bring to the programme, producing a diverse, multinational body of practice-based insight that campus cohorts rarely generate. The presentation concludes with practical recommendations for programme teams and tutors on designing industry-integrated, experiential learning in international online programmes, and on maintaining consistent standards between campus and transnational delivery.

Abstracts are presented in the running order of the programme.

Day 1: School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences
Monday, November 16th, 2026

Session 1: Mental Health, Behaviour and Wellbeing

The dark side of wellbeing applications

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Workplace wellbeing applications have become increasingly popular as organisations seek scalable and cost-effective solutions to improve employee wellbeing and address the challenges associated with workplace stress and hybrid working. Although these digital tools have been associated with short-term improvements in stress management and emotional wellbeing, concerns remain regarding their potential unintended consequences, including technostress, workplace surveillance, privacy risks, and the transfer of responsibility for wellbeing from organisations to individual employees.

This dissertation systematically reviews the existing empirical literature to evaluate whether workplace wellbeing applications enhance employee wellbeing and performance or inadvertently undermine these outcomes. A systematic review was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Six electronic databases and relevant grey literature were searched to identify peer-reviewed studies published between 2015 and 2025. Studies involving adult employees using employer-sponsored wellbeing applications and reporting outcomes related to wellbeing, stress, performance, engagement, privacy, or technostress were eligible for inclusion. From 312 records identified, 12 studies met the inclusion criteria.

The findings indicate that workplace wellbeing applications can provide short-term benefits, particularly in reducing perceived stress and improving emotional awareness. However, there is limited evidence that these improvements are sustained over time or translate into measurable improvements in job performance. The review also identified four recurring concerns: technostress and digital overload, perceived workplace surveillance, reduced employee autonomy, and the individualisation of wellbeing responsibility. These findings suggest that, when implemented without broader organisational support, wellbeing applications may reinforce rather than resolve workplace stressors.

The review concludes that workplace wellbeing applications should be viewed as complementary tools rather than standalone wellbeing solutions. Organisations should combine digital interventions with structural changes that address workload, leadership, organisational culture, and psychological safety to achieve meaningful and sustainable improvements in employee wellbeing.

Rewriting the trauma script: A configurative systematic review of meaning-based interventions for resilience and post-traumatic growth building and its impact on post-traumatic stress disorder epigenetics

May Hassan Abo-Ziadah
Unicaf in collaboration with Liverpool John Moores University

Background: Global crises have led to a documented rise in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, while not everyone develops PTSD following trauma, research is still focused on pathology, and less exploring the positive aspects of trauma exposure (Cameron et al., 2026). However; recent research identifies epigenetics as a critical biological mechanism underlying this diversity of resilience and vulnerability.

Objective: This systematic review aims to fill a significant research gap by investigating the impact of building resilience and/or post-traumatic growth (PTG) through meaning-based interventions on PTSD epigenetic markers to determine if "rewriting" the trauma narrative can lead to molecular shifts toward resilience.

Methodology: A dual-strand systematic search was conducted across PubMed, Scopus, and PsycINFO for studies published between 2010 and 2026. Strand A focused on meaning-based interventions, while Strand B examined epigenetic modifications associated with PTSD and resilience.

Results: Twenty-six high-quality studies were included (14 in Strand A; 12 in Strand B). Findings indicate that meaning-based interventions, particularly family-centered models like FOCUS, significantly improve resilience and post-traumatic growth (PTG). Epigenetic data revealed that successful recovery is associated with dynamic shifts in markers such as FKBP5 and BDNF-mediated pathways, which facilitate neuroplasticity and narrative reconstruction.

Conclusion: The synthesis suggests that meaning-making acts as a catalyst for biological transformation. By addressing the psychological "script" of trauma, these interventions may effectively rewrite the molecular signature of PTSD, potentially breaking the cycle of transgenerational trauma transmission through imprinting genes like ZFP57.

Digital performance monitoring and work performance in a debt management call centre

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This study examines the impact of Digital Performance Monitoring (DPM) on job stress and work performance in a South African Collections Call Centre (CCC), applying the Job Demands–Control–Support (JD-CS) model to structure the relationships between monitoring, stress, and performance outcomes. The study focuses on whether DPM produces distress or eustress, and how leadership control and support shape these dynamics within a high-pressure, technology-enabled environment (Kalischko & Riedl, 2023).

A cross-sectional mixed-methods design was adopted. Quantitative data were collected via a structured survey administered to Collections Consultants and Team Leaders (N ≈ 100), incorporating Likert scales and validated measures of work engagement and burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Maslach et al., 2001). Qualitative data were obtained through focus groups with managerial and support roles operating within the DPM ecosystem. Data were analyzed using regression-based conditional process modelling (Hayes, 2022) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The findings indicate that awareness of DPM is not significantly associated with increased distress or reduced eustress, contrary to expectations that monitoring intensifies negative job stress. Instead, monitoring awareness demonstrated a strong positive direct relationship with perceived monitoring system performance support. Eustress showed a significant positive association with performance support, while distress was not significantly related. Mediation effects were not supported, suggesting that psychological states do not explain the relationship between DPM and performance outcomes. Qualitative results reinforced these findings, indicating that job stress is central to the CCC environment but is shaped more by system stability, workload cycles, and leadership conduct than by DPM itself.

The study demonstrates that DPM is not inherently detrimental to employee wellbeing or performance. Its effects are context-dependent, influenced by system functionality, employee competence, and leadership practice. Eustress emerges as a key driver of positive performance, while leadership support operates as a contextual meaning-making mechanism rather than a traditional buffering resource. The findings suggest that DPM is interpreted cognitively as a performance-enabling tool, with effective system design, skill development, and adaptive leadership practices being critical to sustaining productivity and managing stress within digitally monitored work environments.

Emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behaviours in South African organisations: Secondary systematic review research

Joy Ntombizodwa Twala
Unicaf in collaboration with Liverpool John Moores University

Counterproductive work behaviours (CWB) are a global organisational challenge that negatively affect employee well-being, productivity, and organisational performance. In South Africa, these behaviours may be intensified by contextual factors such as socio-economic inequality, workplace stress, organisational transformation, and diverse workplace environments. Despite growing evidence linking emotional intelligence (EI) to positive workplace outcomes, limited research has synthesised its role in reducing CWB within African organisational contexts. This systematic review therefore examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behaviours, with particular attention to evidence from South African and broader African workplaces.

This study employed a systematic review design guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework and structured using the PICO model. A total of 120 studies were identified through database searches, of which 10 met the inclusion criteria following screening and eligibility assessment. The included studies represented approximately 903 participants across African organisational settings. Data were analysed using quantitative synthesis and narrative analysis.

The findings revealed a consistent negative relationship between emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behaviours. Emotional regulation and impulse control emerged as the strongest predictors of reduced workplace deviance. Furthermore, emotional intelligence demonstrated a stronger influence on interpersonal deviance than organisational deviance, suggesting that emotionally intelligent employees are better equipped to manage interpersonal conflict and regulate behaviours that undermine workplace relationships.

The review concludes that emotional intelligence functions as a key psychological resource that mitigates counterproductive work behaviours. However, its effectiveness is influenced by organisational and socio-cultural contexts, highlighting the need for integrative organisational interventions and emotional intelligence development programmes tailored to African workplaces.

The influence of depression on social environmental factors promoting juvenile delinquency: A qualitative research

Tolutope Daramola
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Depression and delinquency are prevalent global problems among youths Anderson et al. (2015) Depression is as an internalised disorder, while delinquency is externalised. Both disorders maintain complex interconnection, associated with growing health crisis and unproductivity among youths. Quantitative studies posited pathological approach without considering lived experiences and root causes as represented in qualitative research Makiyi et al. (2025). The qualitative study engaged Psychosocial analysis to investigate various meanings behind phenomenon, associated with lived experiences of affected individuals as discussed literatures. This was necessary to shift focus from pathological submissions to comprehensive analysis, using appropriate methodologies within associated domains such as; family, school, community and peers. Thematic analysis and coding are justified due to proven sensitivity to investigate various lived experiences and personal interpretations within social-environmental domains. Additionally, coding highlights hidden meanings within small data units, further scrutinised for observable common themes. Secondary data and final data sets addressed delinquency and depression among youths, and obtainable from web sources across the globe as listed in tables 1A and 1B. Findings are as follows; Family: Family dysfunction associated with depression may influence delinquency Zakaria et al. (2022). Neighbourhood: Community violence with depression pathways contributes to delinquency Feoli et al. (2021). Peers: contagion and homophily linked with depression is associated with delinquency Hardie et al. (2021). School: Academic stress contributes to depression which may influence delinquency Zheng et al. (2025). Conclusively, discussions showed non pathological approach enhanced contextualised treatment and interventions, promoting better health policies, besides medicalised treatment which defied lasting solutions.

Session 2: Education, Equity and Cultural Perspectives

Re-engaging the marginalised: Second chance education and urban inequality in Jamaica

Geronimo Tuzo
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Educational exclusion in Jamaica is frequently framed through the lens of individual failure or workforce deficiency (Keshinro, Tissot and Foley, 2024). However, these deficit-oriented narratives often obscure the structural conditions shaping disengagement within marginalised urban communities. This paper examines how second chance education (SCE) functions as a mechanism of social reintegration within Jamaica's stratified urban landscape. It argues that SCE should be understood not merely as remedial instruction, but as a mechanism of social reintegration operating within a postcolonial landscape of deep educational stratification (Miller, 1990).

Methodologically, the paper employs a conceptual analysis informed by sociological theory and a critical review of relevant literature and policy documents. Drawing on the 2021 Jamaica Education Transformation Commission (Patterson Report), the analysis examines how the "dual system" of secondary schooling reproduces a hierarchy of educational prestige that disproportionately marginalises urban youth. It situates SCE within broader sociological debates on territorial stigma (Wacquant, 2007) and social reproduction, challenging the notion that academic trajectories are determined solely by individual effort. Instead, it argues that educational "failure" is often a systemic consequence of spatial and economic inequality.

The paper synthesises literature on urban poverty alongside an examination of institutions such as the HEART/NSTA Trust. While these programmes provide important pathways for skills development, they remain constrained by policy frameworks that prioritise employability over broader processes of social reintegration (McGrath, 2012). Consequently, SCE risks functioning as a mechanism for managing marginalised populations rather than addressing the structural conditions that produce educational exclusion.

The paper concludes by proposing a social justice-oriented conceptualisation of SCE. Meaningful reintegration requires moving beyond credential recovery to address the interconnected realities of urban exclusion, violence, and unequal access to opportunity. By bringing urban studies into dialogue with the sociology of education, the paper contributes to a growing body of Caribbean scholarship on educational inequality and offers a broader framework for understanding second chance education as a vehicle for social reintegration.

Digital diets in international classrooms: Implications for educational leadership, policy

Cassandra Jones
Unicaf in collaboration with Liverpool John Moores University

Children's exposure to digital media, particularly short-form and algorithmically curated content, has increased significantly in recent years, raising concerns regarding its implications for motivation, executive functioning, emotional regulation, and classroom engagement in primary education. While existing research documents associations between screen time and developmental outcomes, limited synthesis has examined how these patterns manifest within classroom contexts, particularly in international school contexts characterised by culturally diverse, multilingual, and globally mobile student populations. This integrative desktop literature review synthesised 92 empirical, theoretical, and policy-oriented sources examining digital media exposure among primary-aged children (5–11 years). Guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Self-Determination Theory, the study conceptualises problematic social media use (PSMU) and problematic digital media use (PDMU) as relational and systems-level phenomena shaped by interactions between home, school, and broader sociocultural environments. Findings indicate consistent associations between excessive and unregulated short-form media exposure and diminished intrinsic motivation, reduced attentional control, executive functioning challenges, emotional dysregulation, and shifts in peer interaction patterns. Parental mediation emerged as an important influence on children's digital media use, although approaches varied across cultural and family contexts, alongside the influence of caregiver co-regulation and school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) practices. These findings suggest that cultural and family contexts may shape how parental mediation and children's digital engagement are experienced and managed, highlighting the importance of avoiding universal assumptions about digital media practices across diverse populations. While causal conclusions remain limited by the predominance of cross-sectional designs, converging evidence suggests potential changes in students' regulatory and motivational profiles prior to classroom entry. The review argues that these emerging patterns constitute not solely an individual behavioural concern but a strategic leadership and policy issue for international schools serving culturally diverse and globally mobile communities. By integrating developmental theory with educational leadership perspectives, the study offers theoretical clarification, methodological synthesis, and policy-relevant insights for designing culturally responsive, relationally grounded digital literacy frameworks and developmentally responsive classroom practices within digitally saturated learning environments.

Student-centred learning in secondary mathematics education

Aya Gamal Abolnour
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Traditional mathematics instruction is often characterized by teacher-centered methods that prioritize drilling and exam performance, frequently leading to student anxiety and disengagement. While the theoretical benefits of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) are well-established, its practical application within the high-stakes environment of secondary mathematics remains under-researched. This study aims to go beyond simply proving the efficacy of SCL by critically evaluating the specific conditions and systemic barriers that influence its success in high school mathematics.

Utilizing a systematic literature review design, this study applied structured inclusion criteria to select and synthesize peer-reviewed empirical studies (n=42). Through this synthesis, the research investigates the impact of SCL on academic achievement, 21st-century skill development, and student motivation. The findings reveal a "High-Stakes Dilemma," where the pressure of national examinations often forces a reversion to traditional "teaching by telling," despite evidence that constructivist approaches foster deeper conceptual understanding. Furthermore, the study identifies critical barriers, including student resistance to non-immediate feedback and the prevalence of private tutoring as a shortcut to exam success.

The study concludes that a binary choice between traditional and student-centered methods is insufficient for the complexities of the modern classroom. Instead, it proposes a strategic hybrid framework that integrates SCL with diverse assessment models, such as performance tasks. This research contributes to the field by providing a contextualized roadmap for educators and policymakers to bridge the gap between academic achievement and meaningful mathematical proficiency.

Influence of socioeconomic background on postgraduate pharmacy education

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A sequential exploratory mixed method was applied for exploration and describing the effect of SEB on Sudanese pharmacy graduate academic achievement between 2000 and 2020.

Academic Achievement for this study includes enrolling or completing a postgraduate programme or preparing for or holding a professional certificate. Qualitative interviews were utilised as a preliminary step to explore and understand factors that are not covered in previous literature for research that was carried out mainly in developed countries. Interview question was approved by the Unicaf Committee. The result from the qualitative phase was used to prepare the quantitative questionnaire. Then a survey in the form of a Google document was used to collect data.

Qualitative data was analysed by Taguette, while quantitative data and descriptive statistics were obtained by PSPP. The main socioeconomic background factors that appear to influence postgraduate study are: family financial situation, and area of living. Also, parent education and occupation have a role in postgraduate pharmacy education as they influence family income. While most postgraduate programs are located on campus in Khartoum state, this adds to the cost of rent for pharmacists who are from low SEB or living in another state or abroad. Another factor that shaped the choice and type of postgraduate programme, either patient-oriented or drug-oriented programme, is pharmacist aspiration at previous educational stages, especially secondary school years. In comparison to literature, it seems that demographic characteristics, socioeconomic status factors, and pharmacist background have an impact on postgraduate academic achievement. Also, there are disparities in different specialties of pharmacy according to socioeconomic backgrounds.

Meanwhile, another variable that has an effect is birth order and the presence of a mentor, but not discussed in detail in this study as it is outside the scope of this study.

Based on findings from the study, parent occupation and education influence family income; as a consequence, this impacts postgraduate education. Also, it seems pharmacists prioritise improving their families' financial situation and participate in parents' home pills over enrolling in postgraduate pharmacy programmes for many reasons; first, the high cost of the postgraduate programmes. Second, the unavailability of online or blended programmes or part-time postgraduate pharmacy programmes in the country.

Session 3: Educational Leadership and Digital Transformation

Leadership strategies for ICT integration in post-COVID secondary education: A literature-based study with reference to Lesotho

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Unicaf University Zambia

Introduction: This desk-based study synthesises literature on leadership strategies and teacher perceptions relating to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) integration in Lesotho's secondary schools. Prompted by persistent post-COVID implementation challenges and inequalities, the study examines how published evidence explains how school leadership practices, teacher readiness and contextual resource availability shape ICT adoption and implementation in secondary education.

Methods: The study employed a qualitative secondary research design using a systematic literature review methodology (Boland et al., 2017; Booth et al., 2016; Page et al., 2021). Searches across databases and policy repositories used search terms, with sources screened against inclusion and exclusion criteria and appraised for methodological relevance and credibility before thematic synthesis. A total of 111 eligible sources informed the synthesis. Evidence was triangulated and synthesised using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic framework, guided by four complementary frameworks: Transformational Leadership, Learner-Centred Leadership, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and the Capability Approach. These frameworks interpreted leadership practice, learner-centred pedagogy, teacher technology adoption, and educational equity.

Results: Four overarching themes emerged: 1. Transformational leadership acts as a critical institutional enabler of ICT integration; 2. Positive teacher perceptions and digital competence influence technology adoption; 3. Persistent socioeconomic and digital inequalities limit equitable ICT integration; and 4. Learner-centred ICT pedagogy depends on sustained professional development (CPD) and instructional support.

Discussion and Conclusion: The synthesis demonstrates that successful ICT integration in Lesotho depends on the interaction of leadership, teacher readiness, pedagogical support and educational equity rather than technological provision alone. Infrastructure limitations, competence gaps and persistent inequalities constrain progress, although supportive leadership and CPD help mitigate these barriers. The findings suggest that policies promoting transformational leadership, sustained CPD and equitable resource allocation will strengthen long-term ICT integration in Lesotho and similar developing contexts.

Integrating extracurricular TVET demonstrations into primary STEM education in Rwanda: Evidence from a desktop review

Niyonkuru Jean Felix
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Introduction: Rwanda's Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) emphasizes learner-centred and practical approaches to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education to support the country's Vision 2050 and socio-economic transformation (Rwanda Education Board [REB], 2015; Ministry of Education [MINEDUC], 2024). Despite these reforms, evidence indicates that many primary schools continue to face challenges in implementing practical STEM learning because of limited instructional resources, inadequate teacher preparedness, and weak collaboration with Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions (Ndihokubwayo, 2020; Nsengimana et al., 2021). This study reviews existing literature to examine how extracurricular TVET demonstrations may contribute to strengthening primary STEM education in Rwanda.

Methods: The study adopted a qualitative desktop review design. A structured search of peer-reviewed journal articles, government policy documents, and international reports published between 2015 and 2025 was undertaken using academic databases, including zlibrary, ProQuest, ERIC, and Google Scholar, together with official education policy documents. Sources were selected based on their relevance to STEM education, TVET, competence-based learning, educational leadership, and school TVET collaboration. Irrelevant or duplicate publications were excluded. The selected literature was analysed through thematic analysis involving coding, categorisation, and the identification of recurring themes.

Results: The review identified four key themes. First, extracurricular TVET demonstrations provide age-appropriate, hands-on learning experiences that enhance learner engagement and understanding of STEM concepts. Second, effective implementation depends on supportive school leadership, teacher commitment, and collaboration between primary schools and TVET institutions. Third, the Rwandan literature consistently highlights challenges related to limited practical resources, uneven teacher capacity for learner-centred pedagogy, and the absence of structured frameworks for sustained school–TVET partnerships. Finally, the review found limited empirical evidence specifically examining leadership perspectives on integrating extracurricular TVET demonstrations into primary STEM education in Rwanda, revealing an important gap in the existing literature.

Conclusion: The reviewed evidence indicates that extracurricular TVET demonstrations can strengthen practical STEM learning in Rwanda when supported by effective school leadership, continuous teacher professional development, and formal collaboration between primary schools and TVET institutions. The study also identifies a need for future empirical research to investigate the perspectives and experiences of head teachers and other education stakeholders in order to inform policy and practice.

From bans to capacity-building: A culturally-responsive leadership framework for digital distraction in Saudi Arabia

Magi Awny
Unicaf in collaboration with Liverpool John Moores University

Student digital distraction has become a pervasive challenge in secondary schools worldwide. In Saudi Arabia, school leaders lack evidence-based, culturally-responsive guidance to address this issue. This study critically analyses how school leaders in Saudi secondary schools can develop culturally-responsive strategies to address student digital distraction, drawing on insights from international policy models. The study employs a qualitative desktop analysis of secondary sources, synthesising evidence from peer-reviewed articles, policy documents, and research reports published between 2012 and 2026. A systematic search strategy was applied across academic databases (ERIC, SAGE Journals, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, ProQuest), with purposive sampling used to select approximately forty sources relevant to the Saudi context, Chinese and European policy models, and educational leadership. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework, to identify patterns and synthesise findings. The theoretical framework integrates Self-Regulation Theory as contextual background and Transformational Leadership Theory as the primary analytical lens. The findings reveal that Saudi stakeholders recognise digital distraction as a priority, yet recognition has not translated into systematic action. New Saudi evidence confirms that excessive screen time is associated with ADHD symptoms in children. No study has systematically documented leadership responses to digital distraction in Saudi secondary schools. International evidence indicates that guided use within structured access is more effective than either unrestricted use or complete bans. The study contributes a four-domain culturally-responsive leadership framework: Contextual Diagnosis, Structured Autonomy with Replacement Activities, Capacity-Building Leadership with Awareness Campaigns, and Iterative Evaluation. The framework is offered as a theoretical synthesis requiring empirical testing.

Impact of online learning on academic performance in Higher Education

Eman Sayed
Unicaf in collaboration with Liverpool John Moores University

The rapid expansion of online learning has transformed higher education and intensified debate regarding its effectiveness relative to traditional face-to-face instruction. This study investigates the relationship between online learning and academic performance among undergraduate and postgraduate students from diverse higher-education disciplines, while also examining whether disciplinary context influences students' perceptions of online learning.

The research aims to evaluate the impact of online learning on academic outcomes, assess students' attitudes toward online instruction, identify key factors associated with success in digital learning environments, and compare academic performance across online and conventional classroom settings. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected through validated survey instruments administered to students engaged in both learning modes. The reliability and validity of the instruments were rigorously established prior to analysis.

The findings indicate that online learning can generate academic outcomes comparable to those achieved in traditional classrooms when critical conditions—such as digital literacy, high-quality course design, effective technological support, and strong student motivation—are present. Although students consistently valued the flexibility, accessibility, and convenience afforded by online learning, challenges related to engagement, self-regulation, and sustained participation remained evident. While students from different disciplines expressed varying preferences regarding learning environments, disciplinary differences did not substantially affect overall academic performance outcomes within the sample.

This study contributes to the growing body of scholarship on online education by providing empirically grounded insights for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers. It offers practical recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of online learning and highlights the importance of future research into discipline-specific preferences, support mechanisms, and instructional strategies that can further optimise student success in higher education.

The impact of a school principal's leadership & management practices on student academic achievement in Liberian primary schools.

David K. Allison
Unicaf University Zambia

This dissertation examines how school principals' leadership and management practices influence instructional quality and student achievement in Liberian primary schools. The research problem arises from systemic fragility, limited resources, and centralised governance in post-conflict Liberia, which constrain effective teaching and learning. The study's objectives are to (i) explore the relationship between leadership practices and instructional outcomes, (ii) identify gaps in accountability and resource allocation, and (iii) assess the role of stakeholder engagement in strengthening school governance.

A qualitative desktop review was conducted, synthesising secondary evidence from approximately 60-70 policy documents, international development reports, and scholarly studies published between 2000 and 2025. Inclusion criteria focused on literature addressing leadership and student achievement in Sub-Saharan Africa and comparable developing regions. Thematic analysis was guided by Transformational Leadership Theory and Systems Theory, enabling the identification of recurring patterns across four dimensions: instructional leadership, accountability, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement.

Findings suggest that instructional leadership, particularly when principals act as mentors and facilitators of classroom practice, is strongly associated with teacher motivation and professional growth. However, compliance-driven structures restrict creativity and reduce opportunities for developmental coaching. Accountability mechanisms remain largely procedural, emphasising administrative reporting rather than formative evaluation, which creates a "feedback gap." Resource allocation is constrained by chronic underfunding and centralised decision-making, though schools leveraging Parent-Teacher Associations and community partnerships demonstrate resilience through localised resource mobilisation. Stakeholder engagement is uneven but shows promise in faith-based and NGO-supported schools, where participatory governance fosters transparency and collaboration.

The study concludes that while leadership practices are associated with improved instructional quality, the evidence reviewed does not permit direct measurement of their impact on student achievement. Instead, the findings highlight systemic bottlenecks and underscore the need for leadership development, decentralisation, and participatory accountability as foundations for sustainable educational transformation.

Exploring Adaptive and Visionary Leadership as a Framework for Sustainability and Cultural Responsiveness in Educational Leadership

Mohamed Taalat
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School leadership is becoming increasingly complex, and the reasons are readily identifiable. Societal change often occurs more rapidly than institutions can comfortably accommodate. Classrooms continue to diversify, while accountability expectations intensify. The challenge is not a lack of theory; an extensive body of scholarship already exists. The trouble is how much of it operates in conceptual silos, treating each pressure as a separate challenge requiring a separate response. The aim of this review is to consider two approaches together, adaptive leadership and visionary leadership, and ask whether they offer more together than they do apart. Heifetz (1994), Kotter (1996) and Khalifa et al. (2019) anchor the analysis, which centres on one persistent issue: How do leaders navigate uncertainty while maintaining a clear sense of long-term direction?

This is a systematic literature review. Searches were conducted across five databases: ERIC, ProQuest Education, JSTOR, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, under a structured protocol with fixed inclusion and exclusion criteria. The primary review period was 2018–2024, with foundational works published between 1978 and 2017 selectively retained for theoretical grounding. Using the Boolean operators AND and OR, the principal search terms included "adaptive leadership" AND "education," "visionary leadership" OR "strategic leadership," "culturally responsive leadership" OR "equity-driven leadership," and "sustainable leadership" AND "K–12 schools." Included sources comprised English-language peer-reviewed articles, academic books, and recognised policy reports addressing K–12 leadership or offering transferable insights into adaptability, vision, cultural responsiveness, or sustainability; non-scholarly or methodologically insufficient sources, duplicates, and studies without clear educational relevance were excluded. Source quality was appraised according to publication credibility, methodological transparency, analytical depth, and relevance to the research questions, with the selection process documented through PRISMA 2020 and source characteristics recorded in a structured data-extraction matrix. Eighty-seven sources were retained following the screening process. The retained sources were analysed through structured thematic synthesis using Braun and Clarke's (2021) reflexive thematic analysis framework, combining inductive and deductive coding to identify recurring patterns, tensions, and complementarities across the literature.

The synthesis of the 87 sources revealed four interdependent themes. Adaptive leadership was repeatedly associated with resilience and the ability to respond effectively to complex and changing conditions, although the literature indicated that adaptability risks fragmentation without long-term direction. Visionary leadership provided direction, the long-range coherence that keeps a school focused even as its underlying conditions change, but its effectiveness depended on cultural grounding and equity-focused legitimacy. Cultural responsiveness consistently appeared as a foundational element that strengthens trust, relationships, and inclusivity across diverse educational communities and provides an ethical foundation for leadership legitimacy. Sustainability emerged as a distinct but related theme. Rather than representing a fixed endpoint, it emerged as an ongoing negotiation between immediate priorities and longer-term institutional needs, requiring adaptability, foresight, and equity to be embedded within school culture.

The findings indicate a clear conclusion: No single model adequately addresses the range of pressures confronting contemporary schools. What matters is the interaction: how adaptability, vision, cultural responsiveness, and sustainability influence and, under appropriate conditions, reinforce one another. The synthesis therefore supports leadership frameworks built to reflect the conditions leaders actually face, instead of models that treat those conditions as separate or peripheral. The findings also point toward future doctoral research exploring how these dimensions might be integrated within broader leadership frameworks capable of responding to the complexity that has become increasingly common across contemporary schools.

Faith in verse: The intersection of religion and literature in Maya Angelou's poetry

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This research analyses the religious and literary lenses in Maya Angelou's poetry. This research aimed to find out if these two disciplines can coexist and if Maya Angelou's poems provided a space for them to do so harmoniously. As such, it was guided by the research questions "Can poetry be used as a bridge for Literature and Religion?" and "To what extent does Maya Angelou bridge both disciplines in her work?" The researcher analysed the poems "Still I Rise", "Touched by an Angel", and "Phenomenal Woman". The study includes the use of the theopoetics theory created by Stanley Hopper and David Leroy Miller and later developed by Amos Wilde to conduct a close reading and draw insights into the mentioned research questions. It also employed the use of interviews and thematic reader response analysis from two sample groups, namely a poetry and Bible study group, to draw further insight. Based on the data collected, it can be concluded that Maya Angelou's poems provide a space for religion and literature to coexist harmoniously.

**Day 2: School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences &
School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering
Tuesday, November 17th, 2026**

Session 4: Conflict, Crime, Gender and Social Justice

Women at the negotiating table: Yemeni women's political participation in the peace process (2013–present)

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This dissertation critically analyses the political involvement of Yemeni women in formal peace processes from 2013 onwards, through the theoretical perspectives of international relations. The key argument put forward is that the participation of women in Yemeni peace efforts has been mostly symbolic, as opposed to having a substantive or significant impact. Although women achieved around 29-30% participation in the 2013–2014 National Dialogue Conference through using gender quotas and the establishment of advisory mechanisms, structural power relations based on patriarchal norms, male domination at the elite level, and ineffective international enforcement mechanisms have systematically denied women substantive decision-making power.

The study adopts a qualitative desk-based research design and uses secondary sources such as reports by UN Women, Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative, Sana'a Centre for Strategic Studies, International Crisis Group, Oxfam, and peer-reviewed academic literature. The analysis of the evidence is conducted using a feminist approach of international relations theory, constructivist theorizing of norm diffusion, and critical engagement with realist perspectives on elite bargaining. The findings reveals that there is a consistent trend of inclusion with no influence in the key peace processes in Yemen. The dissertation thus contributes to the current literature on gender, peacebuilding, and international relations by providing a theoretical account of the failure of formal inclusion to generate substantive political influence in the Yemeni peace process while demonstrating a strong relationship between women's formal presence and the general structural obstacles facing the political empowerment of women.

The influence of South Africa's truth and reconciliation commission on transitional justice processes in Rwanda and Sierra Leone: A comparative analysis

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South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) remains one of the most influential transitional justice mechanisms in the post-Cold War era and is frequently cited as a model for societies emerging from conflict, authoritarianism, and large-scale human rights violations (Hayner, 2011; Teitel, 2000). Despite its international prominence, questions remain regarding the extent to which its principles can be transferred to different political, cultural, and institutional contexts. This study examines the influence of South Africa's TRC on transitional justice processes in Rwanda and Sierra Leone, focusing on the diffusion and adaptation of norms related to truth-telling, accountability, victim participation, reconciliation, and post-conflict governance.

The study employs a comparative desktop research design using a convergent mixed methods approach that integrates qualitative and quantitative evidence from official reports, legislation, academic literature, statistical data, and publications produced by international organisations and civil society actors. The analysis is informed by Constructivism, Realism, Liberal Institutionalism, Postcolonial Theory, Restorative Justice Theory, Retributive Justice Theory, and Peacebuilding Theory. Constructivist perspectives on norm diffusion provide a framework for understanding how transitional justice norms travel across borders and become embedded within domestic institutions (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Acharya, 2004). Realist and postcolonial perspectives highlight how political interests, state-building imperatives, and local contexts shape the adaptation of these norms (Mamdani, 2001; Chandler, 2010).

The findings indicate that South Africa's TRC exerted significant normative and symbolic influence on both Rwanda and Sierra Leone. However, this influence did not result in direct institutional replication. Instead, both countries selectively adapted key principles associated with the South African experience to address their own post-conflict realities. In Rwanda, the Gacaca court system incorporated elements of public participation, community engagement, and truth-telling that reflected aspects of the TRC's restorative approach. Yet Rwanda diverged significantly from the South African model by prioritising accountability, punishment, and state-building over amnesty and forgiveness (Clark, 2010; Burnet, 2012). The findings suggest that while Gacaca contributed substantially to truth recovery and the adjudication of genocide related crimes, concerns regarding due process, selective justice, and the treatment of gender-based violence limited its effectiveness (Human Rights Watch, 2011; Amnesty International, 2012).

In Sierra Leone, the influence of South Africa's TRC was more explicit. The Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission adopted public hearings, victim-centred testimony, and reconciliation-oriented processes that closely resembled the South African model (Shaw, 2007; Kelsall, 2005). However, Sierra Leone simultaneously established the Special Court for Sierra Leone, creating a hybrid framework that combined restorative and retributive approaches to justice. This institutional arrangement reflected growing recognition that reconciliation and criminal accountability need not be mutually exclusive (Lambourne, 2009). While this approach broadened opportunities for accountability and victim recognition, overlapping institutional mandates and limited implementation of commission recommendations constrained its long-term impact on reconciliation and governance.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that transitional justice norms are not simply transferred from one context to another but are localised and transformed in response to domestic political, social, and historical conditions. These findings support constructivist arguments that norm diffusion involves adaptation rather than straightforward adoption (Acharya, 2004). The evidence also supports realist interpretations by illustrating how transitional justice mechanisms can serve broader objectives of political legitimacy, state consolidation, and governance reconstruction. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of local ownership and cultural legitimacy, reinforcing postcolonial critiques of universal transitional justice models (Mamdani, 2001; Mac Ginty, 2011).

The study further finds that neither purely restorative nor purely retributive justice approaches are sufficient for sustainable peace. South Africa's emphasis on reconciliation, Rwanda's prioritisation of accountability, and Sierra Leone's hybrid model each achieved important successes while revealing significant limitations. Consistent with peacebuilding scholarship, the findings suggest that effective transitional justice requires a context-sensitive balance between truth recovery, accountability, reconciliation, institutional reform, and social transformation (Lederach, 1997; Galtung, 1969). The research also demonstrates that long-term peace is influenced not only by mechanisms addressing past abuses but also by the capacity of post-conflict societies to confront structural inequalities, strengthen governance institutions, and promote social inclusion.

This study contributes to scholarship on transitional justice, peacebuilding, and post conflict governance by demonstrating that the influence of South Africa's TRC is best understood as a process of normative inspiration rather than institutional emulation. It advances debates on norm diffusion by showing how globally recognised transitional justice models are selectively adapted to local realities and governance priorities. The findings further suggest that sustainable reconciliation depends on integrating justice mechanisms with broader efforts aimed at democratic consolidation, socio-economic transformation, gender justice, and community rebuilding. By illustrating the complex interaction between international norms and domestic agency, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of transitional justice in Africa and beyond.

Stigma and silence: A study of the underreporting of rape in Nigeria (2015–2025)

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Rape constitutes one of the most devastating violations of human rights and dignity, yet it remains one of the least reported crimes globally (WHO, 2021). The gap between actual incidence and the cases recorded in criminal justice systems is not incidental but structural, culturally enforced, and, in the Nigerian context, existentially wide, threatening the welfare of families and societies. This study investigates the underreporting of rape in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025, a decade defined by the enactment of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 and its failure to translate into meaningful improvement in survivors' disclosure rates (Amnesty International, 2021). The study employs a qualitative research methodology, utilising a systematic review of secondary literature, articles, journals, and government and NGO reports on the issue under review, without involving human participants (Yin, 2018).

The theoretical framework of this study draws on four complementary perspectives. Feminist criminology, as developed by Smart (1989) and extended by Hester (2012), provides the foundational argument that underreporting is never a random outcome but a structurally produced outcome, which is a direct consequence of legal and cultural systems that have historically minimised sexual violence and displaced responsibility onto victims rather than perpetrators. In Nigeria, this manifests in victim-blaming practices that are widely documented and in operation across class, educational, and geographical boundaries (Aborisade, 2016).

Labelling theory, rooted in the foundational work of Becker (1963) and developed further by Link and Phelan (2001), illuminates the stigmatising consequences of disclosure. As observed, survivors who come forward risk incurring permanent social labels, such as being dishonoured or damaged, especially within communities where collective identity and communal reputation carry significant weight (Izugbara, 2015; Nwosu and Nwosu, 2020).

Social learning theory, as applied to sexual violence by Bandura (1977) and elaborated by Jewkes (2002) in the African context, explains how silence becomes normalised across communities. Fearing the consequences of disclosure by victims of other communities. Routine activity theory, associated with Cohen and Felson (1979), contextualises survivor vulnerability by mapping the situational conditions under which rape occurs and how those conditions shape subsequent reporting decisions.

The empirical literature on sexual violence reporting in Sub-Saharan Africa consistently identifies stigma, fear of retaliation, and institutional distrust as the dominant barriers to disclosure (Jewkes, Sen and Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Stern and Heise, 2016). Within Nigeria specifically, this culture of silence is sustained by family demands for privacy, unresponsiveness from law enforcement, inadequate forensic infrastructure, and a lack of trained officers in trauma-informed practice (Aborisade, 2016; Amnesty International, 2021).

This study argues and concludes that underreporting in Nigeria is not primarily a product of legal inadequacy or public ignorance but of an interconnected system of stigma, family sanction, and institutional failure. Addressing this requires interventions at the individual, institutional, and structural levels. The study provides actionable recommendations for legislators, criminal justice institutions, civil society organisations, and families to create conditions in which survivors can speak up without fear.

Youth unemployment and cybercrime in Nigeria: A criminological analysis of online fraud among young people

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Introduction

Youth unemployment remains one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges in Nigeria, with significant implications for crime and social policy. At the same time, the increasing prevalence of cybercrime, particularly online fraud commonly referred to as "Yahoo Yahoo," has generated concern among policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and researchers. Studies suggest that unemployment, poverty, and limited economic opportunities may contribute to the involvement of some young people in cyber-enabled crimes (Adebayo, 2020; Ojedokun and Eraye, 2012). This study examines the relationship between youth unemployment and cybercrime in Nigeria, focusing on the factors that drive young people into online fraud.

Methods

The study adopts a qualitative research design based on secondary data analysis. Academic journal articles, government reports, policy documents, and existing literature on youth unemployment, cybercrime, and social exclusion in Nigeria were critically reviewed. The research is informed by Strain Theory and Social Learning Theory, which provide a framework for understanding how economic pressures and social influences may encourage criminal behaviour (Merton, 1938; Akers, 1998).

Results

The findings indicate that high levels of youth unemployment, economic inequality, peer influence, and the perceived financial rewards of cybercrime contribute to the involvement of some young people in online fraud. The study also identifies weaknesses in employment policies, digital regulation, and crime prevention strategies as factors that may indirectly sustain cybercriminal activities.

Discussion

The study concludes that youth unemployment is a significant contributing factor to cybercrime in Nigeria, although it interacts with broader social, economic, and cultural influences. Addressing online fraud therefore requires a multidimensional approach that combines job creation, skills development, digital awareness, and effective law enforcement. The research contributes to criminological debates on crime, inequality, and social policy while providing recommendations for reducing youth involvement in cybercrime in Nigeria.

Session 5: Law, Governance and Emerging Global Challenges

International legal role of a developing state on integrating space (lunar) investment dimensions into urbanisation activities: Egypt as an African-Arabian case study

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As a reflection of current millennium innovations and UN initiatives, this dissertation comes to contribute on finding a sufficient regulation framework in front of increasing actions which have been emerged over the globe on both urbanisation and space investment. Consequently, the study assesses the legal context of Lunar extent as an independent factor on regulation of modern urban progression. Therefore, a developing state in its endeavor for growth is moderating Urban-Space activities which extend to fulfill not just international conventions, but also general principles of law which are "recognised by civilised nations". In particular, developing state foreign cooperation went beyond its classical sovereignty principle to concern private parties influence and borderless activities. As a result, discussed activities are yielded whereby "domestic systems become sufficiently generalised" in a transformative public-private international legal system scaled with foreign states, organisations, non-state actors, and even investors.

The study is not on the field of space law, but the concentration is on the legitimacy and application of urban space business activities such as smart cities magnitudes. accordingly, among public private partnerships (PPP) mega activities is urbanisation projects which are developed from basic utilities to nonstop sustainable cities requirements as information communication technology (ICT) and crucially virtual cyber facilities. This study achieves the narrowing of the gap between developing countries and capabilities nations on both constructure and moderation of urban vertical phases throughout adapting FIDIC model contracts and drawing a guide to an ex-ante archetypal urban legislation.

In addition, the case of Egypt is examined from a legal perspective base of fundamental review to its recent role in regulation and execution to both urbanisation and space investment dynamic activities. For accomplishment between theory and empirically, the study is led by system analysis methodology and SWOT approach.

Judicial innovation in the digital age: Constitutional and regulatory challenges of artificial intelligence and blockchain in Sub-Saharan African judiciaries — Lessons from Uganda

Kenneth Tumusiime
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Across Sub-Saharan Africa, many judiciaries are digitising court processes through electronic filing, virtual hearings and digital case management systems. As discussions evolve towards the potential adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain technologies, important constitutional and regulatory questions arise concerning their responsible deployment within judicial systems (Susskind, 2019; Kiryabwire, 2024). Using Uganda as a case study, this research examines whether existing legal and institutional frameworks are sufficiently prepared to support the responsible adoption of these emerging technologies.

The study employs a doctrinal legal research methodology based on a critical analysis of the Constitution of Uganda, legislation governing electronic transactions and digital technologies, judicial policies, procedural rules and selected comparative literature. Particular attention is given to Uganda's judicial digitalisation initiatives, including the Electronic Court Case Management Information System (ECCMIS), as indicators of institutional readiness.

The findings indicate that Uganda has established an important legal and technological foundation for judicial digitalisation. However, significant regulatory gaps remain concerning AI-assisted judicial decision-making, algorithmic transparency, explainability, accountability, data governance and institutional oversight. Comparable governance concerns also arise in relation to blockchain-based judicial records, particularly regarding evidential integrity, legal accountability and administrative control.

The study argues that the successful integration of AI and blockchain within African judiciaries will require more than technological capability. Rather, it requires constitutional and regulatory safeguards that preserve judicial independence, procedural fairness, transparency and public confidence in the administration of justice. Sustainable judicial innovation requires constitutional legitimacy, appropriate regulatory safeguards and institutional governance capable of ensuring that emerging technologies strengthen rather than undermine the rule of law. Uganda's experience offers valuable lessons for other Sub-Saharan African jurisdictions pursuing similar digital transformation initiatives.

Examining the influence of company constitutions and shareholders' agreements on corporate governance practices in the UK, US and Egypt

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This thesis is located at the field of corporate governance and international business law. A key question in this field is how companies and investors reconcile domestic governance rules across various legal regimes. There are two such specific instruments in the context of cross-border investment or business transactions, namely the company's constitution and the shareholders' agreement.[1] But not all of these documents have equivalent legal effect everywhere. The differences in statutory priority, contractual freedom, and approval formalities may cause uncertainty, disputes and undermine the protection of minority shareholders.[2]

In this perspective, the thesis explores how these two instruments are affecting corporate governance in the UK, Delaware and Egypt. The study utilizes a qualitative doctrinal and comparative methodological approach to establish a critical review of legislation, case law and leading academic and policy literature.

Through comparative analysis, the study demonstrates that while the UK model focuses on constitutional certainty,[3] Delaware pertains to contractual ease[4]and Egypt is underpinned by formal legality and administrative supervision.[5] The Thesis proposes that in order for cross-border governance to be effective it must involve a greater degree of tailoring between the constitution and shareholders' agreement, as well as jurisdiction customized drafting. These findings add the context of international business.

Board independence and corporate governance law: A comparative analysis of regulatory frameworks

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Introduction: Board independence is widely recognized as a cornerstone of effective corporate governance because it promotes accountability, transparency, objective oversight, and responsible corporate decision-making. Although the concept has gained broad international acceptance, jurisdictions differ significantly in the way board independence is defined, regulated, and enforced, reflecting variations in legal traditions, institutional structures, and market environments. This dissertation examines and compares the legal frameworks governing board independence in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uganda, using the *G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance* as an international benchmark. The study seeks to determine whether existing regulatory approaches effectively promote board effectiveness, strengthen corporate accountability, and protect stakeholder interests.

Methods: The research adopts a doctrinal and comparative legal methodology. It analyses primary legal materials, including company legislation, corporate governance codes, securities regulations, and stock exchange listing requirements applicable in the selected jurisdictions. The study further undertakes a critical review of corporate governance literature to examine the theoretical foundations, purposes, and practical challenges associated with board independence. A comparative approach is employed to identify areas of convergence and divergence among the three jurisdictions and to evaluate the extent to which their regulatory frameworks correspond with internationally recognised corporate governance standards, particularly the OECD Principles of Corporate Governance.

Results: The findings demonstrate that the regulation of board independence varies considerably across the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uganda, with each jurisdiction reflecting different approaches to achieving effective corporate oversight. The United Kingdom follows a principles-based model through the UK Corporate Governance Code, relying on the "comply or explain" approach to encourage transparency, flexibility, and accountability while allowing companies to adopt governance practices suited to their circumstances. In contrast, the United States applies a more prescriptive rules-based framework, where statutory requirements, securities regulations, and stock exchange standards establish detailed independence criteria and mandatory obligations for listed companies.

The study finds that Uganda has made significant progress in incorporating international corporate governance principles into its legal framework through regulatory reforms and governance standards. However, the effectiveness of these reforms remains constrained by challenges relating to enforcement capacity, institutional effectiveness, regulatory monitoring, director expertise, and the persistence of formal rather than substantive compliance. The comparative analysis reveals that the existence of legal requirements alone does not guarantee meaningful board independence. Instead, effective independence depends on the interaction between legal rules, enforcement mechanisms, director competence, shareholder engagement, and the broader corporate governance culture.

The study further finds that while the OECD Principles provide a valuable international framework for promoting independent boards, their successful implementation requires adaptation to specific national institutional contexts rather than direct transplantation of foreign governance models. The findings indicate that both principles-based and rules-based approaches have strengths and limitations: principles-based systems encourage flexibility and responsiveness, whereas rules-based systems provide greater certainty and enforceability. However, neither approach is sufficient without effective institutions capable of ensuring compliance and accountability.

Discussion: The study concludes that board independence is an essential mechanism for improving corporate governance, but its effectiveness depends on strong supporting institutions, competent directors, and a governance culture that promotes genuine independent judgement rather than symbolic compliance. The research demonstrates that differences in governance outcomes across the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uganda cannot be explained solely by differences in legal frameworks;

they are also shaped by regulatory capacity, enforcement practices, market maturity, and institutional environments.

A key contribution of this dissertation is its demonstration that board independence should be understood as both a legal and institutional concept. While existing scholarship has extensively examined governance models in developed economies, this study contributes by highlighting the challenges of implementing international governance standards within an emerging economy context such as Uganda. It argues that strengthening board independence requires more than legislative reform and should include enhanced regulatory enforcement, improved director training, stronger oversight institutions, and mechanisms that encourage ethical and accountable corporate behaviour.

The dissertation contributes to comparative corporate governance scholarship by providing a context-sensitive analysis of how different regulatory approaches influence the effectiveness of board independence. It offers practical recommendations for policymakers and regulators seeking to strengthen corporate governance frameworks in Uganda and other emerging economies by balancing international best practices with local institutional realities.

State responsibility and multinational corporate liability for human rights violations and developmental harm: A comparative analysis of the United Kingdom, United States and selected global south jurisdictions

Talifhani Khubana
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The increasing economic influence of multinational corporations has intensified scrutiny of the capacity of existing international legal frameworks to address corporate-related human rights violations and developmental harm. This paper examines the extent to which international law allocates and enforces responsibility between states and multinational corporations through a doctrinal and comparative analysis of the United Kingdom, the United States, and selected Global South jurisdictions, namely South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, India, China, and Brazil.

The research critically evaluates the law of state responsibility, parent company liability, mandatory human rights due diligence, and transnational civil litigation to assess the effectiveness of contemporary accountability frameworks. It demonstrates that, notwithstanding significant judicial and legislative developments, existing accountability frameworks remain constrained by jurisdictional fragmentation, uneven regulatory capacity, and structural inequalities that disproportionately disadvantage Global South jurisdictions.

The paper advances the Structural Asymmetry Framework (SAF) to explain the persistent misalignment between the transnational organisation of multinational corporations and territorially bounded systems of legal responsibility. Building on this analysis, it develops the Integrated and Shared Accountability Framework (ISAF) as a normative model that allocates functionally differentiated but complementary responsibilities among home states, host states, and multinational corporations. The paper contends that effective corporate accountability requires an integrated, development-sensitive legal framework capable of aligning transnational corporate activity with coherent systems of regulation, responsibility, and access to effective remedies, thereby strengthening international legal accountability while contributing to sustainable development.

Session 6: Health and Medicine

A scoping review mapping the Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) strategies for antimicrobial resistance in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)

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Background: Prevalence rates of antimicrobial resistance in LMICs remains high. The AMS implementation strategy's context to compact the issue remains unknown. This study mapped the AMS strategies utilised in LMICs.

Methods: A scoping review was conducted of the grey literature. Peer-reviewed journals were explored through ProQuest and Google Scholar databases.

Results: A total of twenty-two studies were included after application of inclusion and exclusion criteria. The majority of studies reported on communication, education and training strategies(n=14) which was closely followed by antimicrobial stewardship activities(n=14). Many studies reported the combination of strategies in implementation of programmes. Studies that reported on the combination of strategies were 11. The geographical distribution of studies was in Africa(n=5) and Asia(n=5). Specifically, Nigeria(n=3), Ghana(n=2), Liberia(n=1), Sierra Leone(n=1) Egypt(n=1) and India(n=4), Bangladesh(n=2), Nepal(n=2), Vietnam(n=2), Lebanon(n=1). 3 of the studies were done in multiple countries. Number of studies implemented within the hospital setting (n=9), national laboratory/health system(n=6), the community(n=4) and school (n= 3). The studies were very heterogeneous in terms of their context and targeted outcomes. AMS programmes in LMICs focused on communication strategies and capacity building through education. A variety of implementation challenges have been observed.

Conclusions: The evidence for AMS effective implementation strategies for addressing AMR in LMICs remain inconclusive. More research is needed in terms of effective communication strategies and targeted capacity building training within the hospital and community settings.

A global scoping review of routine childhood immunisation for non-camp migrants barriers and facilitators

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Background: Global immunisation coverage has shown partial recovery following pandemic disruptions, yet significant inequities persist. Over 123 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide now live predominantly in non-camp settings, including urban areas and host communities, where they remain underserved by health systems. Understanding barriers and facilitators to routine immunisation in these contexts is critical for advancing immunisation equity. This scoping review aimed to map the extent, range, and nature of policy, programmatic, and socio-cultural determinants influencing routine childhood immunisation among migrants in non-camp settings globally.

Methodology: This scoping review followed the JBI Manual for Evidence Synthesis and PRISMA-ScR reporting guidelines. A comprehensive search of PubMed, Embase, Web of Science, Scopus, ProQuest, and Google Scholar were conducted in January 2026, supplemented by grey literature from organisational websites. Eligible studies were published in English between January 2015 and December 2025, addressed routine immunisation among migrants in non-camp settings, and reported barriers or facilitators. A three-stage screening process was used, and data were extracted and synthesised thematically across policy, programmatic, and socio-cultural domains.

Results: Twenty-two studies met inclusion criteria (n=22), comprising observational studies (68.2%), technical reports (13.6%), systematic reviews (9.1%), and policy analyses (9.1%). Geographically, Europe accounted for 45.5% of studies, followed by Asia 27.3%. Programmatic barriers were the most frequently cited obstacles (n=15), with mobility and tracking challenges predominating. Programmatic facilitators were the most commonly reported enablers (n=14), highlighting the role of mobile outreach and integrated service delivery. Policy determinants exhibited imbalance (barriers n=12; facilitators n=9), indicating insufficient inclusive immunisation policies. Socio-cultural facilitators (n=13) underscored the importance of community engagement and culturally tailored communication.

Perinatal depression in lower- and middle-income countries: a scoping review

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Background: Perinatal depression prevalence has been steadily rising over the last two decades and has been a matter of public health significance in lower- and middle-income Countries. It influences the maternal and child health outcomes significantly. This review evaluated the prevalence of perinatal depression, associated risk factors, gaps in the available evidence, and maternal and child health outcomes in the lower- and middle-income countries.

Methodology: A multi-pronged approach was employed in the literature screening conducted in five stages. Both peer-reviewed studies and grey literature were screened using the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Research questions and relevant publications were identified using predetermined Boolean operators and the PRISMA ScR guidelines. Data were charted in separate tables according to the research objectives.

Results: The prevalence of perinatal depression ranged from 15 to 40% in the study setting. Most risk factors identified were setting-specific or worse in the developing countries. Risk factors found were poverty, obstetric risk factors, and intimate partner violence, among others. (Fisher et al., 2012). Adverse outcomes were very high, and many gaps were identified in the scope of evidence. Cognitive behavioral therapy, alleviation of poverty, good social and family support, and improving health system efficiency were found to be effective in improving outcomes of perinatal depression. There was significant regional variability in the lower- and middle-income countries. Latin America had the lowest, then sub-Saharan Africa, followed by Southeast Asia

Conclusions: The burden of perinatal depression is higher in lower- and middle-income countries, and this confers a significant comparative disadvantage to developed countries. Task shifting, social support, and involvement of many cadres in the management of perinatal depression are of greater significance in developing countries. This study recommends the integration of perinatal depression screening in the antenatal clinics. Further research needs to be carried out in the setting for clearer evidence.

Exploring influencing factors of postpartum family planning uptake in Africa: A Scoping Review

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Background: Pregnancies that occur within the first year after childbirth are associated with adverse maternal and neonatal outcomes. Meeting family planning (FP) needs during the postpartum period is an effective strategy for reducing maternal and child morbidity and mortality. Studies have examined postpartum family planning (PPFP) uptake and identified factors associated with its utilisation. However, there is insufficient evidence on use and determinants of PPFP. Therefore, this scoping review aimed to examine PPFP uptake and identify factors associated with its utilisation. The findings are intended to identify research gaps and inform future research, policy revision, and strategies to improve PPFP uptake.

Methods: Steps in the review included: formulating the research questions, identifying relevant studies, selecting eligible studies, charting the data, and collating, summarising, and reporting the findings. The electronic databases searched were PubMed, CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature), SAGE Journals, and Google Scholar. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines were used to guide the study selection process. Data extracted included the author, publication year, study location, study objectives, and methods of data analysis.

Results: A total of 91 records were identified through database and reference searches. After removing duplicates, 56 studies remained. Twenty-one studies were excluded because they did not focus on PPFP or did not meet the study setting criteria. The remaining 35 studies were assessed for eligibility, and 20 full-text articles met the inclusion criteria and were included in the scoping review.

Conclusion: Most of the included studies were observational, with limited interventional research available to provide evidence-based strategies for improving PPFP uptake. Further interventional and qualitative studies are needed to strengthen the evidence base and support interventions aimed at reducing maternal and child morbidity and mortality.

Cervical cancer screening uptake among women living with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa: A scoping review

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Introduction: Cervical cancer rates remain a high public health burden globally. Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) carry the highest burden. Women living with human immunodeficiency virus (WLHIV) is at even higher risk because of their immune compromised state leading to persistent infection with human Papilloma virus (HPV), a major causal factor for the development of cervical cancer. This scoping review therefore, aims to explore the barriers to cervical cancer screening faced by WLHIV in sub- Sahara Africa.

Methods: This review adopted the Arksey and O'Malley five-step methodological framework. A comprehensive search of seven databases was done. (Google scholar, PubMed, MEDLINE, Embase, Scopus, AJOL, CINAHL).

Result: A total of 22 articles were identified, all conducted in healthcare facilities, primarily in the urban areas, with significant referrals from rural facilities. Barriers to cervical cancer screening was categorised into five levels:

1. Individual Level: Lack of knowledge and low perceived risk, highlighted in 11 of the articles.

2. Provider Level: Inadequate training of healthcare providers, well discussed in 5 articles.

3. Healthcare System Level: Poor infrastructure and lack of integration with HIV care, emphasised in all the articles.

4. Sociocultural barriers: Religious and cultural misconceptions, reported in 11 articles

5. Economic Barrier: High costs associated with screening also noted in all the articles.

Conclusion: This scoping review notably identified lack of research focusing on barriers to cervical cancer screening among WLHIV, specifically in the rural and under-served population. This was found to be largely due to lack integration of cervical cancer screening with HIV care in the rural areas. Future studies should address these gaps to improve screening accessibility and effectiveness for WLHIV in sub-Sahara Africa.

Perceptions and pedagogical implications of blended learning in nursing education in Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs): a systematic review

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Introduction: Nursing education in Nigeria and other low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) faces increasing demand for professional advancement, shortages of nurse educators, inadequate infrastructure, and the need for flexible learning opportunities. Blended learning (BL), combining online and face-to-face instruction, may expand access while accommodating nurses' professional and personal responsibilities. This review synthesised evidence on perceptions, enablers, barriers, and pedagogical factors influencing BL implementation in distance nursing education.

Methods: The review followed Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Following systematic searching, screening, and eligibility assessment, approximately 12 studies from Nigeria and other LMICs were included. Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods evidence was synthesized using narrative and thematic approaches. The review examined learner and educator perceptions, implementation enablers and barriers, and institutional readiness.

Results: Nursing students and educators generally perceived BL as flexible, accessible, and valuable for academic progression, professional development, and balancing education with employment. Key enablers included learner motivation, flexibility, digital resources, institutional support, educator engagement, and self-directed learning. Major barriers included poor internet connectivity, unreliable electricity, high data costs, limited access to digital devices, inadequate digital literacy, competing responsibilities, and insufficient technical support. Educators reported challenges involving instructional design, student engagement, workload, assessment, and clinical skills training. Online learning was considered suitable for theoretical content, whereas clinical, laboratory, psychomotor, and affective competencies required structured, supervised face-to-face instruction.

Conclusion: BL is a promising strategy for expanding distance nursing education in Nigeria and LMICs. Sustainable implementation requires reliable infrastructure, digital competency development, institutional support, educator training, and contextually appropriate instructional design. A balanced model integrating online theoretical learning with supervised clinical and practical instruction is essential.

Structural Maternal Health Inequalities and Cross-Border Mobility in Southern Africa: Implications for NHI Planning

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Introduction**:** Cross-border maternal healthcare-seeking in the Southern African region exposes underlying structural inequalities in the health system. South Africa's stronger health system has made the country a regional destination for patients from neighbouring countries. This study explores how health system factors influence cross-border healthcare-seeking and how these insights can help enhance strategies within the framework of the National Health Insurance (NHI).

Methods: A qualitative comparative design was employed, utilising secondary data from peer-reviewed literature, policy reports, and international health databases, with a PRISMA-informed approach guiding the study selection. Data were analysed using cross-case comparison and inductive thematic synthesis, based on the World Health Organisation Health System Building Blocks framework.

Results: The findings show that cross-border maternal healthcare-seeking is affected by structural disparities aligned with the WHO Health Systems Building Blocks framework. The performance of South Africa health system in these areas makes it a preferred regional provider of maternal healthcare services; in contrast, health system constraints in Zimbabwe and Mozambique restrict access to reliable services. Perceived quality of care, workforce shortages, and limitations in health system financing were identified as key factors influencing cross-border healthcare utilisation, alongside limited regional policy coordination.

Conclusion: Enhancing maternal healthcare services under the NHI requires tackling system-level barriers while recognising regional differences in healthcare-seeking behaviour. Incorporating cross-border considerations into health system planning will be vital for ensuring equitable and sustainable maternal healthcare under the NHI.

Day 3: School of Sciences, Health Sciences, Technology and Engineering
Wednesday, November 19th, 2025

Session 7: Governance, Policy & Infrastructure

Development of an Early Warning and Decision Support System for Sustainable Management of Fall Armyworm (Pest) in Zambia

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The Fall Armyworm (FAW), *Spodoptera frugiperda*, has been identified as one of the most destructive transboundary crop pests affecting maize production in Zambia since its first reported outbreak in 2016. Studies indicate that FAW infestations have caused significant yield losses among smallholder farmers, thereby threatening household food security and national agricultural productivity. The pest's high reproductive rate, migratory behavior, and resistance to some control measures have intensified the need for timely monitoring, surveillance, and coordinated intervention systems. Consequently, the implementation of Early Warning Systems (EWS) has become increasingly important for enabling real-time pest reporting, rapid response, and evidence-based decision-making in agricultural management.

This study presents the design, implementation, and evaluation of an Early Warning Decision Support System (EW-DSS) for Fall Armyworm monitoring and management in Zambia. The research was guided by a pragmatic philosophical worldview and employed a mixed method research design based on the framework proposed by John W. Creswell in 2014. The pragmatic approach facilitated the integration of quantitative system performance data with qualitative user experiences and perceptions, thereby enabling a comprehensive evaluation of the proposed system.

The EW-DSS was developed using Web Engineering principles and comprises a mobile-based data collection application for FAW scouting and pheromone trap monitoring, a RESTful Application Programming Interface (API) for data transmission and processing, a centralised database for data synchronisation and storage, and a web-based dashboard for visualisation, analytics, and reporting. System evaluation demonstrated that the EW-DSS improved the timeliness and accuracy of FAW field reporting, enhanced real-time data accessibility for agricultural officers, and supported faster evidence-based decision-making for pest surveillance and response. User feedback further indicated high levels of usability, acceptability, and satisfaction with the system, highlighting its potential to strengthen national FAW surveillance and contribute to sustainable pest management and improved food security in Zambia.

A machine learning framework for detecting social engineering fraud in Ghanaian mobile money ecosystem

Napoleon Akoto
Unicaf in partnership with University of East London

Mobile Money Fraud Detection is a crucial operating model within the Fintech industry, providing insight into evolving fraudulent transactions and implementing appropriate mitigation measures. Leveraging AI, adopting the hybrid ML approach has shown potent in effectively detecting fraud by combining supervised and unsupervised learning models. Fraud detection using this model has shown results with low false positives, further boosting the potential of ML in combating mobile money crimes.

The scarcity of real-world dataset as a limitation, due to the sensitivity of such transactions and the prevailing data protection laws was a challenge in training the model with real-world dataset. This however was mitigated using synthetically generated dataset, mimicking real-world scenarios for model training and has tremendously resulted in successful fraud detection with low false positives.

Despite the efficacy of the model, a concept drift demonstration further highlighted the need for continues fine-tuning of the learning mechanics to avert the evasion of evolving fraud trends as underscored by the application of confusion matrix at 85% threshold of the model's performance.

Utilisation of predictive analytics in higher education to predict student outcomes

Samuel Besweri Sentongo
Unicaf in partnership with University of East London

Higher education is normally the last stage before the job market; therefore, negative student outcomes in higher education affect the development of highly skilled work force required to meet the demands of today's workplace. With 15% to 51% of enrolled students in higher education having negative student outcomes and not completing higher education, it is important to tackle the problem of negative student outcomes in higher education given the implications it has, for educational institutions but also for nation states. Educational data mining can be used to explore and analyse the unique data that comes from education environments and integrated with predictive analytics to forecast future student outcomes based on historical data and help to identify students at risk of negative student outcomes, so that necessary interventions can be triggered.

This study used data from the open university learning analytics dataset, that had an enrolment of over 32,000 students from different backgrounds over a two-year period from 2013 and 2014 studying 7 courses with 22 modules in total. The primary aim of the study was to study how predictive analytics can be used to predict student outcomes in higher education and identify the important factors can be used to identify students at risk of negative student outcomes with the intention of developing a generalized model that can be applied to any higher education institution with a similar data set help reduce to reduce the negative student outcomes and improve positive student outcomes.

The study showed that data science algorithms like random forest, logistic regression and gradient boosting can indeed play an effective role in predicting student outcomes with over 85% accuracy and opens the door for further studies to utilise data science techniques to further improve the model performance and reduce negative student outcomes in higher education.

Developing neural network nowcasting of South Africa's unemployment rate

Stephanie Bridget Lang
Unicaf in partnership with University of East London

This research study addresses the lack of an on-demand unemployment rate in South Africa. A deep learning neural network is developed from the Google Trends index (GTi) with its dataset of keyword searches from ongoing Google searches internationally. The need for unemployment situational awareness is highlighted by the UN Statistics Division's forecasts of 1.8 and 1.5 percent real GDP growth rate per capita in 2024 and 2025 respectively – tied to UN SDG 8 – promoting at least 7 percent economic growth per annum in least developed countries (LDCs). Furthermore, Okun's law connects employment fluctuation to country growth.

A major challenge in South Africa is the reliance on the quarterly release of official labour statistics or the decennial census statistics. Hence, the turn towards higher frequency alt data for research in socio-economic disciplines, government programs, and industry planning. While classical approaches in labour economics involve vector autoregressive model (VAR), Phillips Curve, and Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA), modern approaches pursue high-density, high-dimensional data.

This study comprises a literature review and quantitative methodologies to develop unemployment rate nowcasting, and evaluation using Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) and spatial analysis. The result is a deep learning recurrent neural network (RNN) with long short-term memory layers. It employs mean squared error loss function and Adam optimiser. In addition, disaggregation and interpolation is applied using Chow Lin max log and generalised least squares (GLS) regression. Performance evaluation resulted in an r-squared value of 0.86 indicating good model performance on explained variance. However, inconsistencies were found in the search index, which is neither strongly positive nor negative over time.

In addition, low p-values are observed in the disaggregation regression and the Phillips-Perron Unit Root Test – whereas output data are non-linear and non-stationary. A further finding is that the data distributions are inconclusive in respect of similarity and direction varying at different time or spatial resolutions. This research contributes to a dearth of applied ML research in South African macroeconomics, particularly labour economics, government legislation, and industry planning, effecting job creation and employment. Future areas of research include optimisation of alt data ML model performance and spatio-temporal modelling.

Predictive analytics of health care seeking behaviour for childhood fever in Busia County, Kenya

Augustine Muturi Kinuthia
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Fever is the most common symptom of childhood diseases and the leading cause of pediatric consultations and hospitalizations among under five children. Despite being a major cause of morbidity and mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa, care seeking for febrile children often occurs too late. The aim of this study was to apply predictive analytics and machine learning techniques in health care seeking behavior for febrile illness among care givers of children under five in Butula Sub-County, Busia County, Kenya. This study employed a quantitative research design grounded in data science principles and guided by the Cross-Industry Standard Process for Data Mining (CRISP-DM). This was a secondary study conducted using data from the Dryad repository. From the results the decision tree model had the best predictive power for health care seeking behavior. Among the ensemble models, XGBoost was the best performing model and identified feature importance using SHAP analysis. Theoretical models of health seeking behavior highlighted the role of need and enabling factors, as well as the specific perceptions influencing caregivers' health related behavior. The finding of this study has clear implication for policy makers in designing targeted interventions to improve appropriate health care seeking behavior for febrile illness in children under five.

Session 8: Technology, AI, & Data Science

Towards sustainable 5G networks: a dual-engine framework using offline reinforcement learning and surrogate-based optimisation

Mubanga Nsofu
Unicaf in partnership with University of East London

5G networks are expensive to run because of network densification, massive MIMO deployments, and the use of higher frequency spectrum bands. As operators prepare for 6G, energy consumption and associated carbon emissions are expected to rise unless more adaptive optimisation strategies are introduced. Traditional approaches based on manual tuning and static heuristics often struggle to deliver consistent energy savings due to the stochastic, highly dynamic nature of wireless network traffic conditions. Although reinforcement learning (RL) has emerged as a promising approach for many optimisation challenges in wireless networks, most conventional RL methods require direct interaction with live networks during training. In practice, this creates operational and safety concerns, making such approaches difficult to deploy in production environments. This dissertation explores whether offline reinforcement learning can be applied effectively to 5G energy optimisation, using historical network datasets from the Huawei/ITU AI for Good challenge. A dual-engine framework is proposed, comprising a high-fidelity surrogate model for approximating the environment and a second optimisation engine that employs three offline RL algorithms. Twin Delayed Deep Deterministic Policy Gradient with Behaviour Cloning (TD3+BC), Implicit Q-Learning (IQL), and Conservative Q-Learning (CQL), are evaluated against an operational baseline with an independent Random Forest based oracle judge supporting the assessment. The results show statistically significant reductions in energy consumption, validated using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test and effect size analysis. Overall, the findings suggest that offline RL could provide a practical and deployment aware approach to energy optimisation in 5G networks without requiring risky online exploration in live production systems.

Explainable machine learning for heart disease prediction

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Cardiovascular disease is one of the leading causes of deaths worldwide, making early and accurate diagnosis crucial for improving patient outcomes. While machine learning models can support healthcare professionals by providing fast, data-driven predictions, their clinical adoption is often limited by the "black-box" nature of the machine learning algorithms. This study investigates the application of machine learning and Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) to build a reliable clinical decision-support system for heart disease prediction.

The study implemented three machine learning algorithms: Logistic Regression, Random Forest, and Extreme Gradient Boosting (XGBoost), using the clinical UCI Heart Disease dataset. Preprocessing included missing value imputation, feature scaling, and stratified train-test splitting. Model performance was evaluated using accuracy, F1-score, and ROC-AUC metrics alongside confusion matrices. Model interpretability was achieved through SHapley Additive exPlanations (SHAP), which provided both global feature importance and local explanations for False Negative predictions. Recursive Feature Elimination (RFE) was further applied to identify an optimal subset of predictive features.

The results demonstrated that the XGBoost model achieved the highest predictive performance. The baseline 13-feature model achieved an AUC-ROC of 0.903 and 17 False Negatives. Although RFE identified a reduced seven-feature subset, the simplified model produced a 29.4% increase in False Negatives. SHAP dependency analysis revealed that removing demographic features like age and cholesterol reduced contextual calibration, limiting the model's ability to interpret diagnostic indicators effectively.

The findings demonstrate that while feature reduction may improve statistical efficiency, clinical safety depends on preserving sufficient risk-factor context. The study highlights the importance of integrating explainability with predictive performance to support reliable, transparent, and human-centered AI-driven clinical decision-support systems.

Towards Safer Heart Sound Classification: A Metric for Clinical Risk-Aware Deep Learning Evaluation

Mutuku Andrew Kyalo
Unicaf in partnership with University of East London

Heart diseases remain the leading cause of global mortality, underscoring the need for early, accurate and accessible diagnostic tools. While heart sound auscultation is non-invasive and a cost-effective, it highly depends on the physician's experience and judgement. This study evaluates a pre-trained Audio Neural Network (PANN) for heart sound classification and introduces Clinical Risk Misclassification Index (CRMI) a risk aware evaluation metric. CRMI is calculated by applying predefined severity weights to confusion matrix errors then summing the resulting penalties and finally normalising the total by the number of predictions were the lower values indicate lower severity misclassification. The data set used in the experiments we PhysioNet/CinC Challenge 2016 a heart sound dataset publicly available obtained through Kaggle, the audio recordings were resampled and processed using noise reduction, normalisation and peak-level alignment. Then they were converted into log-Mel spectrograms using the Short-Time Fourier Transform, Mel-scale filtering and logarithmic compression. Including injection of background noise, pitch shifting and time stretching for data augmentation. The PANNs were compared with KNN, SVC, Naive Bayes, logistics regression, CNN, LSTM and CNN-LSTM models using conventional classification metrics and CRMI. PANNs achieved an accuracy of 97.67%, F1-score of 97.67% and CRMI score of 0.0498. This represented the strongest non-zero risk-aware result among the evaluated models. Naive Bayes produced comparatively low conventional performance and the highest CRMI, while CNN, LSTM and CNN-LSTM performance was less effective under the experimental configuration. On the other hand, the logistic regression achieved a score of 100% across the reported conventional metrics and resulting CRMI of zero. However, the result was interpreted cautiously as potentially reflecting dataset-specific overfitting and requires confirmation using independent data. In overall, the CRMI metric provided additional differentiation between the evaluated models by accounting for the different severity levels of the various misclassification errors. The findings support further investigation of PANNs and CRMI for risk-aware heart sound classification, while external and clinical validation remains necessary before real world deployment.

The impact of digital transformation on Banque Misr: operational efficiency, customer experience, and competitiveness in Egypt's banking sector

Taher Aly Aly koura
Unicaf in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University

Introduction: Digital transformation has become a strategic imperative for banks worldwide, accelerated by shifting consumer preferences and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, research on digital transformation in the Egyptian banking sector remains limited, despite distinctive challenges including legacy systems, regulatory constraints, and varying levels of digital literacy. This study examines the impact of digital transformation on the operational efficiency, customer experience, and competitiveness of Banque Misr, one of Egypt's oldest and largest commercial banks.

Methods: A qualitative single-case study methodology was adopted, drawing on multi-faceted secondary data including a literature review, Banque Misr's strategic reports, industry reports from consulting firms, and news coverage. Thematic analysis was applied to identify key patterns, complemented by comparative analysis benchmarking Banque Misr against domestic and global peers, including the National Bank of Egypt and DBS Bank.

Results: Digital transformation delivered measurable gains across all three dimensions. Operationally, an integrated digital banking platform and robotic process automation reduced transaction processing time by 30% and report generation time by 50%, while cloud adoption cut IT operational costs by 40%. Customer experience improved through the mobile banking application (85% satisfaction) and CRM-driven personalisation (15% increase in satisfaction scores). Competitively, the bank ranked among Egypt's top three in mobile banking adoption with a 15% market share, supported by initiatives such as BM Online (3 million users by 2025) and the establishment of Misr Digital Innovation, Egypt's first fully digital bank.

Discussion: The findings demonstrate that a holistic, integrated approach to digital transformation can strengthen the position of state-owned banks in emerging markets, while highlighting cybersecurity, digital inclusivity, and regulatory compliance as ongoing challenges. The study offers practical insights for policymakers and banking professionals pursuing digital transformation in comparable emerging-market contexts.

Day 4: School of Business
Thursday, November 19th, 2026

Session 9: Project & Operations Management

Major reasons for construction delays caused by poor project management practices: a systematic literature review 2010–2025

Mohammad Khaleefah Mohammad Talafha
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Construction delays remain one of the most persistent causes of cost overrun, contractual conflict, and reduced project value in the construction industry. While many studies identify delay factors, fewer examine how these factors reflect weaknesses in project management practice. This study aims to identify and classify the major causes of construction project delays associated with poor project management practices and to interpret them through the performance domains of the PMBOK® Guide (Project Management Institute, 2021).

A systematic literature review was conducted using peer-reviewed studies published between 2010 and 2025. The review followed a structured identification, screening, and synthesis process informed by PRISMA principles (Page et al., 2021). Delay causes reported in the selected studies were extracted, standardised, and grouped into comparable categories. The causes were then analysed using frequency and weighted-ranking approaches to determine both recurrence and relative importance. Finally, the causes were mapped against relevant project management performance domains, including planning, team, stakeholders, delivery, uncertainty, and measurement.

The results show that construction delays are strongly linked to recurring management weaknesses rather than isolated technical events. The most significant causes include inadequate planning and scheduling, poor site coordination, ineffective communication, delayed decision-making, weak contractor performance, financial constraints, change and variation management issues, and insufficient monitoring and control. These causes frequently interact across the project lifecycle, creating cumulative delay effects.

The study concludes that reducing construction delays requires stronger project management systems, not only reactive recovery measures. Practical improvements should focus on realistic baseline planning, disciplined progress monitoring, early risk identification, timely stakeholder decisions, and clearer responsibility allocation. The findings provide a structured basis for project managers, planners, contractors, consultants, and clients to improve delay prevention and project control.

Facilities management in higher education body of knowledge (FMHEBoK): A proposed governance framework for facilities projects

Evann Lloyd R. Asencio
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Higher education institutions (HEIs) increasingly face governance challenges in facilities planning. The capital investments are often driven by prestige ambitions and symbolic aesthetics rather than defensible strategic aims. The strategies include academic priorities, enrollment relevance, and sustainability initiatives. This misalignment exposes universities to possible accreditation risks. Over time, it also creates reputational erosion and long-term operational burdens.

The case of the University of Technology Bahrain (UTB) illustrates governance failure in facilities planning. They prioritized architectural renovations over essential computer upgrades and smart learning technologies. Similar cases in Nordic, United States (US), and Asian HEIs which indicates that symbolic prioritization occurs across diverse regions. Accreditation bodies now demand evidence-based justification for facilities planning, yet HEIs continue to prioritize symbolic capital projects. This might create risks that extend beyond resource misallocation to reputational decline and student dissatisfaction.

To address this governance gap, the research introduces the Facilities Management in Higher Education Body of Knowledge (FMHEBoK). The author's framework was developed in response to recurring project approval failures, especially where academic justification is weak. FMHEBoK provides clause-based governance criteria that filter projects to ensure alignment with strategic objectives. Methodologically, FMHEBoK was validated through a structured synthesis of thirty-nine peer-reviewed studies. It was mapped into three doctrinal categories which include clause affirmation, expansion, and contradiction.

Findings demonstrate that governance failures in HEIs manifest through different factors. This includes prioritization of symbolic projects. FMHEBoK responds by proposing enforceable clauses that prevent symbolic bypass. The proposed framework suggests lifecycle defensibility and aligns facilities with pedagogical and stakeholder rhythms. In conclusion, FMHEBoK proposes a novel doctrinal framework that provides a structured mechanism to guide HEIs project approvals that might contribute to accreditation and institutional reputation.

Blockchain-based project monitoring for donor-funded initiatives: Opportunities and challenges in Kenya

Edwin Omurumba Mkabane
Unicaf in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University

Donor-funded initiatives remain central to development financing in Kenya, particularly in sectors such as health, education, climate resilience, and community development. However, traditional monitoring systems continue to face persistent challenges, including delayed reporting, limited real-time access to project data, fragmented accountability structures, and vulnerability to manipulation or misappropriation of funds.

This study examined the opportunities and challenges of using blockchain technology to strengthen the monitoring of donor-funded initiatives in Kenya. The study adopted a quantitative research design and used secondary data from blockchain-enabled donor and community initiatives, including Community Inclusion Currency records, World Food Programme Building Blocks reports, Mercy Corps pilot data, and related open development datasets.

The analysis found that blockchain-based monitoring can improve transparency, traceability, accountability, and real-time verification by creating auditable records of transactions, fund flows, and project activities. The findings also showed that blockchain can reduce information asymmetry between donors, implementing agencies, and beneficiaries, thereby strengthening trust and supporting more evidence-based disbursement decisions. However, the study found that successful adoption is constrained by limited institutional readiness, weak digital infrastructure, regulatory uncertainty, technical complexity, and stakeholder acceptance challenges.

The study concludes that blockchain is not a standalone solution to donor project accountability problems, but a potentially valuable monitoring tool when integrated with participatory governance, clear regulatory frameworks, data protection safeguards, and capacity-building measures. The findings contribute to debates on digital governance, project monitoring, and accountability in development finance, and are relevant to donors, policymakers, project managers, and technology innovators seeking more transparent oversight mechanisms in Kenya.

The impact of AI adoption on young professionals in the real estate industry within Uganda

Doreen Sera
Unicaf University of Zambia

AI is growing rapidly in the professional service space demonstrated by the increased demand for faster delivery in the professional services spaces and resulting in continual increase in AI software to solve problems. This is greatly impacting the way young professionals work in Uganda, especially those who are just entering the job market. Job requirements and tasks of young professionals in the valuation profession are quickly evolving to less manual and more tech-assisted and AI-supported roles to improve speed and accuracy. Young professionals currently entering into the valuation surveys field, are required to have basic AI skills to match the ever-evolving job description of valuers otherwise they become less relevant.

This research is a secondary approach in nature utilising already qualitative data from scholarly articles, journal articles institutional and government documents relating to AI adoption from valuation survey perspective. The research is exploratory design to capture knowledge, trends, challenges and opportunities of AI adoption in valuation surveys as part of the real estate sector in Uganda.

The advancement of AI into the roles of young professionals makes the creation of training programs on AI skills in schools and universities crucial. The government of Uganda is crucial to the intervention in universities to incorporate AI education programs for the anticipated advancement within work environments.

AI is essential and young professionals should have the right mindset that is open to learning, ethical, and adaptable towards AI integration to sustain their jobs. Looking back at how technology changed jobs in the first Industrial Revolution and in this current Fourth Industrial Revolution, AI is more of a better enhancement to systems more than ever before. AI is not necessarily a hinderance in job maintenance, but a creator of more evolved jobs for young valuers and young professional managers and therefore should not characterised as a catalyst for job loss but more like a driver to occupational evolution that enhances work delivery among youth in Uganda.

Session 10: Human Resource Management & Organisational Behaviour

The impact of emotional intelligence on employee engagement in hybrid work environments

Ezinne Ursula Okafor
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This study examines the impact of emotional intelligence on employee engagement within hybrid work environments. As organisations increasingly adopt flexible work models, maintaining effective communication, collaboration, and sustained employee engagement has become a critical challenge (Allen et al., 2015). Emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions (Goleman, 1995; Mayer et al., 2008), is increasingly recognised as a key competency in navigating these complexities. The study adopts a qualitative research approach based on secondary data analysis, drawing on peer- reviewed academic literature and organisational reports. A thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and relationships between emotional intelligence and employee engagement in hybrid work settings.

The findings reveal that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in enhancing communication effectiveness, fostering trust, and supporting employee wellbeing, all of which contribute significantly to higher levels of engagement (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Employees and leaders with high emotional intelligence demonstrate stronger interpersonal skills, enabling them to interpret emotional cues, manage virtual interactions effectively, and maintain relational cohesion in digitally mediated environments. This is particularly important in hybrid contexts where reduced physical interaction may otherwise weaken team dynamics. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that emotional intelligence alone is not sufficient; its impact is amplified when supported by organisational factors such as inclusive leadership practices, effective communication systems, and a positive workplace culture (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

The study concludes that emotional intelligence is a critical driver in addressing the behavioural and relational challenges of hybrid work environments. It recommends that organisations integrate emotional intelligence into leadership development programmes and employee engagement strategies to enhance organisational performance, adaptability, and long-term sustainability. By embedding emotional intelligence within organisational practices, firms can better navigate the evolving demands of hybrid work while maintaining a motivated and engaged workforce.

The strategic role of HR in Caribbean organisations: Benefits, barriers, and executive influence

Danielle Laurel Haylock-Roberts
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Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) is widely recognised as a contributor to organisational performance, leadership effectiveness, and long-term sustainability. However, despite the increasing emphasis on HR as a strategic partner, HR professionals in many organisations continue to experience limited influence in executive-level decision-making. This study examines the benefits of SHRM and critically analyses the structural, capability, and institutional barriers that restrict HR's strategic influence within Belize and the wider Caribbean, including Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana.

The study adopted a secondary qualitative research design using thematic analysis of peer-reviewed academic literature, policy documents, and institutional reports. Sources included academic research on SHRM and regional publications from organisations such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), CARICOM, CARICAD, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The interpretivist approach allowed for the examination of relationships between organisational structures, governance systems, and HR's strategic positioning.

The findings reveal that SHRM contributes positively to organisational performance when HR is actively integrated into strategic decision-making processes. However, the study found that centralised governance structures, hierarchical decision-making systems, and compliance-oriented organisational cultures consistently limit HR's executive-level influence across many Caribbean organisations. While capability gaps are frequently cited within the literature, the findings suggest that structural and institutional barriers play a more decisive role in restricting HR's strategic contribution.

The study concludes that the effectiveness of SHRM is conditional upon organisational and institutional environments that support HR participation in leadership and strategic governance. It further argues that existing SHRM frameworks, largely developed within larger economies, may not fully reflect the realities of Caribbean organisations and developing small-state environments. The research contributes to the growing discussion on strategic HR by providing a Caribbean-focused perspective and highlighting the need for organisational reform, leadership support, and stronger strategic integration of HR functions.

Employee training and development as a tool for enhancing employee performance

Behakanira Katebarirwe Mathias
Unicaf University Zambia

The purpose of the dissertation was to analyse the methods used to identify training needs, evaluate the processes and strategies employed to ensure effective T&D outcomes, and explore the challenges and limitations associated with T&D as a performance improvement tool. Although organisations allocate substantial resources to employee T&D, many training programmes lack measurable improvements in employee performance. Employee T&D strategically enhances employee performance, organisational competitiveness, and long-term sustainability in modern knowledge-driven Microsoft Corporation. Continuous learning fosters innovation, productivity, quality and adaptability.

This study examines employee T&D as a tool for enhancing employee performance. The research design adopted a qualitative descriptive secondary data approach (Creswell, 2018; Saunders, et al. 2019); drawing on academic literature, organisational reports, corporate journals, industry publications, and credible online sources to analyse training practices at Microsoft (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006; 2016; Phillips & Phillips, 2016).

Key findings indicate that Microsoft systematically identifies training needs by employing structured competency frameworks, performance evaluations, 360-degree feedback systems, data-driven learning analytics, skills gap analyses, implements training strategies using blended learning, continuous learning culture (Armstrong, 2020; Garavan et al. 2012), and technology-enabled approaches (Aguinis, 2013; Microsoft, 2023). MSFT ensures training effectiveness through personalised learning platforms, leadership development initiatives, continuous evaluation (Microsoft, 2022; Microsoft, 2025a), and alignment between training objectives and organisational goals. Challenges include high implementation costs, resistance to change, measuring training return on investment or impact, maintaining employee engagement, addressing varied learning needs, adapting training to rapid technological changes (Albrecht et al. 2020) and the complexity of operating across diverse cultural and global contexts.

The significant conclusion is that T&D enhances employee performance, but their effectiveness depends on strategic alignment, organisational culture, and continuous evaluation mechanisms. The research contributes to existing knowledge whereby MSFT uses T&D for maximising individual staff performance; and recommends strengthening employee development practices.

Examining HR challenges in implementing localisation in multinational oil firms in Nigeria

Namsey Sussan Okung
Unicaf in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University

This study examines the human resource challenges associated with implementing localisation in multinational oil firms operating in Nigeria. This is an ongoing work exploring how skill gaps and workforce development constraints affect the achievement of localisation objectives, with the aim of increasing indigenous participation and reducing the dependence on expatriates and foreign suppliers.

Drawing on Institutional Theory and the Resource-Based View, the study will employ a thematic analysis of secondary data from peer-reviewed literature, industry reports, policy documents, and corporate publications from multinational companies. The data will be systematically coded to identify emerging barriers to HR localisation and evaluate firm-level responses.

Preliminary findings suggest that regulatory mandates have intensified pressure on multinational oil companies to recruit and train Nigerian employees for positions historically held by expatriates. Efforts to localise are impeded by skills shortages, inadequate training, underdeveloped leadership and technical expertise, and power asymmetries between parent companies and subsidiaries (Darwish et al., 2023). Consequently, some firms adopt symbolic compliance to maintain legitimacy without substantial workforce investment (Brandl, Keegan and Kozica, 2022). Conversely, organisations that prioritise talent development, structured succession planning and knowledge transfer achieve more substantive localisation outcomes.

The study highlights the tension between symbolic compliance and genuine workforce localisation. It suggests that regulatory compliance alone is insufficient; rather, sustainable localisation relies on building, retaining, and advancing local talent. This work contributes to the localisation and HRM literature by demonstrating that institutional pressures often drive compliance efforts that do not improve workforce development. For policymakers and industry leaders, the study highlights the importance of integrating localisation into strategic corporate HR systems that align with local contexts, and promoting targeted industry-academic partnerships to address skills deficits and strengthen domestic talent pipelines.

Session 11: Finance, Economics & Revenue Mobilisation

Assessing the impact of mobile money and Fintech Innovation on traditional banking operations in Ghana: A case study of GCB Bank and MTN Ghana

Jessica Afia Obenewaa Asante
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This study examines the impact of mobile money and fintech innovation on traditional banking operations in Ghana, using GCB Bank and MTN Ghana as case studies. The research was motivated by the rapid growth of digital financial services and the increasing adoption of mobile money platforms, which have transformed customer behaviour and the delivery of financial services. The study aimed to assess how fintech innovation influences banking operations, customer preferences, financial inclusion, and competitive dynamics within Ghana's financial sector.

A qualitative research approach was adopted, utilising secondary data collected from Bank of Ghana reports, annual reports of GCB Bank and MTN Ghana, academic journals, World Bank publications, IMF reports, fintech industry reports, and other credible online sources. Data were analysed using thematic analysis and descriptive interpretation to identify key trends and patterns related to fintech growth and banking transformation.

The findings reveal that mobile money and fintech innovation have significantly enhanced financial inclusion, transaction convenience, and access to financial services across Ghana. Mobile money adoption has grown rapidly due to its accessibility, affordability, speed, and ease of use. The study also found that traditional banks are increasingly investing in digital banking platforms, mobile applications, cybersecurity systems, and fintech partnerships to remain competitive. However, fintech growth has intensified competition within the banking industry, reduced customer dependence on traditional banking channels, and introduced challenges such as cybersecurity threats, operational costs, and evolving customer expectations.

The study concludes that fintech innovation presents both opportunities and challenges for traditional banking institutions. While it promotes financial inclusion and operational efficiency, it also disrupts conventional banking models and increases competitive pressure. The study recommends that traditional banks strengthen digital transformation initiatives, enhance cybersecurity measures, and pursue strategic collaborations with fintech firms to ensure long-term sustainability and competitiveness within Ghana's evolving financial landscape.

The impact of presumptive tax systems on domestic revenue mobilisation: A review of Eswatini's Informal sector

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This study critically examines the influence of presumptive tax systems on domestic revenue mobilisation in Eswatini. The study focuses on the informal sector and it is driven by the ongoing disparity between the informal sector's economic importance and its meagre contribution to national income. The goal of the study is to determine if presumptive taxation is a useful fiscal tool for correcting this imbalance. The study evaluates how much presumptive taxation affects taxpayer compliance, tax base expansion, and total revenue contribution.

Based on secondary time-series data from national budget reports, government publications, and the Eswatini Revenue Service, the study uses a quantitative research approach and covers the years 2015–2025. Changes prior to and following the introduction of presumptive taxation in 2024 are examined using descriptive statistical methods such as trend analysis, growth rate analysis, and ratio analysis. This method shows the methodological limitation of using administrative data to infer behavioural dynamics, even while it allows for the systematic evaluation of observable trends.

The results show that presumptive taxation has been successful in increasing the tax base by registering more businesses in the unorganised sector and has helped to gradually improve compliance. Its modest contribution to overall domestic revenue, however, calls into question the notion that formalisation inevitably results in significant fiscal gains. These results imply that institutional and behavioural elements, including administrative capability, enforcement credibility, taxpayer awareness, and perceived justice, significantly impact the efficacy of presumptive taxation.

In conclusion, presumptive taxation works better as a formalisation method than as a reliable revenue-generating tool, even if it is conceptually consistent with the best tax design principles in low-capacity situations. It emphasizes the importance of a more comprehensive policy strategy that simultaneously addresses behavioural determinants of compliance and fortifies administrative processes. The study advances a more sophisticated understanding of the potential and constraints of presumptive taxation in small emerging countries by placing its results within both structural and behavioural theoretical frameworks.

Credit risk management practices and load performance of commercial banks in Malawi: A case study of Commercial Banks in Blantyre City

Yonamu Nyirenda
Unicaf University Zambia

Credit risk management remains a critical determinant of loan performance and financial sustainability in the banking sector. This study examined the effect of credit risk management practices on loan performance among commercial banks in Blantyre City, Malawi. The study was motivated by the persistent challenge of non-performing loans and the limited empirical evidence on how credit risk management practices influence loan performance within the Malawian banking sector. Specifically, the study investigated the influence of credit risk identification, credit risk assessment, credit risk monitoring and credit risk control on loan performance.

The study adopted a quantitative approach and employed a correlational research design. Secondary data were collected from annual reports, audited financial statements and Reserve Bank of Malawi (RBM) annual supervision reports of eight selected commercial banks for the period 2021–2025. A total of 64 documents were purposely selected and analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.

The findings revealed that commercial banks in Malawi have implemented strong credit risk management practices, with credit risk assessment and credit risk control being the most widely applied practices. The study further established that loan performance improved during the study period, as evidenced by enhanced loan recovery rates, reduced non-performing loans, increased interest income and sustained growth in loan portfolios.

Correlation analysis indicated significant positive relationships between all dimensions of credit risk management and loan performance. Regression results showed that credit risk monitoring, credit risk assessment and credit risk control had significant positive effects on loan performance, while credit risk identification exhibited a weaker influence. The model explained 65.7% of the variation in loan performance, confirming the substantial role of credit risk management in enhancing lending outcomes.

The study concludes that effective credit risk management is essential for improving loan performance, reducing default risk and strengthening the stability and profitability of commercial banks. The study recommends that commercial banks strengthen borrower monitoring systems, enhance credit appraisal procedures, and enforce robust credit control mechanisms to sustain portfolio quality and improve overall financial performance.

From donor dependence to financial resilience: Pathways for NGO sustainability (a case of Scope Zimbabwe)

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This study examined how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in fragile economies transition from donor dependence to financial resilience, using SCOPE Zimbabwe as a case study. The research sought to understand the mechanisms and trade-offs involved in building sustainable financing models in contexts characterized by economic uncertainty and resource constraints.

A mixed-methods explanatory sequential design (QUAN → qual) was employed. Quantitative data were derived from audited financial statements covering the period 2020–2024, while qualitative insights were obtained from annual narrative reports. The analysis was guided by Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) and the Resource-Based View (RBV), which provided a framework for examining the organization's reliance on external funding and its development of internal capabilities for sustainability.

The findings reveal a significant dependency–resilience paradox. SCOPE Zimbabwe successfully reduced its overall donor dependence from 99.4% to 83.1% and increased internally generated income to 16.9% through initiatives such as social enterprise development and strategic advocacy. These achievements indicate progress toward long-term financial self-sufficiency and enhanced organizational adaptability. However, the transition also produced substantial short-term financial strain. Donor concentration increased to 47.6%, liquidity deteriorated sharply, with the current ratio falling to 0.09, and the operating margin declined to -50.4% in 2024. Consequently, the organization's composite Financial Resilience Index decreased from 3.0 to 1.8.

The study concludes that while efforts to reduce donor dependence can strengthen long-term adaptive and programmatic resilience, they may simultaneously weaken absorptive capacity and increase operational vulnerability. Financial resilience is therefore shaped by the interaction of external shocks, donor behavior, and internal strategic decisions regarding resource allocation. The research contributes to NGO sustainability literature by demonstrating that resilience-building pathways in fragile contexts are non-linear, risky, and characterized by complex trade-offs, challenging conventional assumptions about organizational transition toward financial independence.

Session 12: Management

Impact of management practices on the economic performance of companies in the clove value chain in Fenerive-Est, Madagascar

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Purpose: This research assesses the impact of management practices on the economic performance of companies in the clove value chain in Fénérive-Est, Madagascar. It posits that internal managerial practices are a key determinant of performance, the effectiveness of which is mediated by Global Value Chain (GVC) governance.

Methods: The study is based on a systematic review of secondary data following the PRISMA protocol (Page et al., 2021). The corpus comprises 85 documents (academic articles, institutional reports, and COMTRADE databases). The analysis used a thematic synthesis method with NVivo software, combined with an abductive approach.

Results: The findings reveal a contrasting managerial landscape, dominated by informal practices (70%), but marked by the strategic emergence of hybrid practices (45%). The analysis validates the hypotheses in a differentiated manner: the impact of informational practices is robust and direct (Aker, 2010), while that of formal financial practices is conditional upon captive governance of the sector (Minten et al., 2013). Hybrid practices embody a form of ""contextual dynamic capabilities"" (Teece, 2007).

Conclusions: Performance in this captive value chain depends less on complete formalization than on actors' ability to develop hybrid arrangements. Against deterministic approaches (Gereffi et al., 2005), this study demonstrates that managerial agency can negotiate structural constraints (Ponte & Sturgeon, 2014). These findings offer actionable recommendations for development policies. Rooted in my home region, this research aims to provide concrete solutions for clove producers in Fénérive-Est.

The impacts of organisational leadership and management on human capital development in the world of work: A focus on the service industry

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Organisational leadership and management are pivotal in shaping human capital development, particularly within knowledge-intensive sectors such as the legal industry. In Nigeria's dynamic socio-political environment, effective leadership and management are essential for cultivating the human capital required to drive professional services, strengthen institutional performance, and mitigate inefficiencies (Adebayo & Odukoya, 2019). This study explores the interplay between leadership styles and management practices, examining their influence on employee motivation, morale, and productivity in Nigerian law firms. It highlights how leadership and management jointly contribute to human capital development, organisational growth, and sustainability.

The purpose of this study is to provide a conceptual framework for organisational effectiveness, emphasising the critical role of strong leadership, efficient management, and a motivated workforce in driving sustainable growth (Bass & Riggio, 2006). By situating its analysis within Nigeria's volatile socio-political context and drawing comparative insights from global trends, the research underscores the importance of cultivating resilient, adaptive, and people-oriented organisations. It demonstrates that effective management and investment in human capital are essential for competitive advantage, encompassing career progression, fair appraisal systems, work-life integration, and supportive work environments (Armstrong, 2014).

Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative design suited for exploring complex organisational phenomena. It adopts a library research approach, integrating evaluative and descriptive perspectives, and applies inductive reasoning to synthesise leadership and management theories, particularly those related to human capital and transformational paradigms (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Secondary data from scholarly literature and reports were critically analysed to identify gaps and extract lessons relevant to the service industry.

Findings reveal that human capital development enhances job satisfaction, with leadership style directly impacting morale and productivity (Ngambi, 2011). Strategic leadership aligns business goals with talent development, yet succession planning and human capital strategies remain underdeveloped in Nigerian firms (Okoye & Eze, 2020). Emerging co-managing partnership structures signal a gradual shift toward sustainable leadership frameworks.

In conclusion, organisational leadership and management exert profound influence on human capital development within service industries. Nigerian law firms face structural and cultural constraints, yet opportunities exist for transformation. Recommendations include institutionalising mentorship, formalising leadership development within continuing legal education, implementing deliberate succession planning, amongst others. Human capital should be regarded not as a disposable resource but as an invaluable organisational asset central to sustainability and growth.

Impact of remote work on the work productivity among employed mothers: A case of Lagos Island, Nigeria

Jennifer Chinecherem Adeniyi
Unicaf University Malawi

The increasing adoption of remote work has transformed global organisational practices, positioning the home as the primary workplace. This convergent parallel mixed-methods dissertation investigates the impact of flexible work arrangements on the productivity, work-life balance, and domestic roles of career-active working mothers (N=25) in South Lagos, Nigeria. While flexible work is promoted for female retention, in developing urban contexts, it intersects with deep-seated socio-cultural gender expectations and severe infrastructure deficits (Akanji et al., 2022). Guided by a pragmatist paradigm, this study maps how technical constraints and cultural burdens alter operational efficiency. Quantitative data from digital surveys across the IT, Education, and Finance sectors were integrated with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews, utilising SPSS and NVivo for thematic and statistical triangulation.

The findings reveal a profound ""Productivity Paradox."" While final work volume did not significantly differ between hybrid and remote mothers, hybrid mothers faced significantly higher ""productivity friction,"" including daytime childcare disruptions and missed deadlines. Qualitative data explained that mothers maintain professional output only by adopting ""late-night shifts"" to bypass daytime domestic demands, corroborating prior evidence that traditional patriarchal expectations disproportionately deplete professional women's resources (Akanji et al., 2022). Furthermore, the study identified a ""Shared Utility Trap,"" where larger household sizes accelerate the depletion of private utilities (fuel and bandwidth), creating a strong negative correlation between the number of children and perceived productivity. Sector-wise, IT mothers outperformed those in Education and Finance due to corporate subsidies for power and internet, highlighting how localised infrastructure deficits contour teleworking viability (Omolawal, 2020). The study concludes that remote work in emerging markets is a ""dual-outcome"" practice: it optimises efficiency when supported by institutional subsidies but degrades well-being when technical and domestic burdens shift entirely to the individual. Recommendations include implementing utility stipends, asynchronous productivity metrics, and culturally aligned flexibility models.

Breaking down silos through strategic partnerships: a management framework for advancing SMME autonomy in Botswana

Ookeditse Bashen Tokolo
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Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) play a critical role in Botswana's economic diversification agenda. However, their autonomy and long-term sustainability are often constrained by siloed organisational structures, limited collaboration, and overreliance on government procurement opportunities. This study explores how strategic partnerships can be leveraged to enhance collaboration, promote innovation, and strengthen the autonomy of SMMEs in Botswana contracts (Munodawafa, Naudé, & Govender, 2024; Mutoko, 2014; Guruwo, 2019).

The study was guided by the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Social Capital Theory. An interpretivist research philosophy was adopted, employing a qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory desktop research design. Secondary data were collected from academic literature, policy documents, industry reports, and international case studies. Data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and insights relevant to SMME development and autonomy in Botswana (Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al., 2019).

The findings revealed that organisational silos significantly hinder collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovation among SMMEs. Weak internal communication systems and limited digital adoption further constrain enterprise growth and competitiveness. Additionally, excessive dependence on government procurement restricts market diversification and exposes businesses to fiscal and policy-related risks. Conversely, strategic partnerships supported by trust, resource sharing, and digital collaboration were found to enhance innovation capacity, improve access to resources, and expand market opportunities. The integration of RBV and Social Capital Theory demonstrated that SMME autonomy is strengthened through the effective mobilisation of internal resources, social networks, and digital capabilities (Yoshino & Taghizadeh-Hesary, 2018; OECD, 2020; Modisane, 2009; MITI, 2019; Song, 2020; Cilliers & Greyvenstein, 2012).

The study concludes that strategic partnerships, digital transformation, and capacity building initiatives are critical enablers of SMME autonomy and sustainability in Botswana. A management framework is proposed that integrates these elements to reduce dependency on government procurement, enhance competitiveness, and foster long-term resilience.

Day 5: School of Business
Friday, November 20th, 2026

Session 13: Ethics, CSR & Sustainability

Strategic planning in Namibia's oil and gas sector amid the global energy transition: Challenges and opportunities

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Namibia's recent offshore oil and gas discoveries have positioned the country as a potential major energy producer at a time when the global energy sector is rapidly transitioning toward low-carbon and renewable energy sources. This study critically examines how Namibia can strategically develop its emerging oil and gas industry while aligning with global decarbonisation objectives and advancing its renewable energy ambitions. The study aims to evaluate the challenges and opportunities associated with balancing hydrocarbon development, renewable energy integration, and sustainable economic growth.

A qualitative desktop research methodology was employed, drawing on secondary data from government reports, international institutions, academic literature, policy documents, and industry publications. Content analysis and thematic evaluation were used to assess governance frameworks, investment opportunities, renewable energy initiatives, and strategic planning approaches within Namibia's energy sector.

The findings reveal that Namibia faces a dual-energy trajectory. While oil and gas discoveries in the Orange Basin offer significant short-term fiscal and economic opportunities, they also present risks related to governance weaknesses, institutional capacity constraints, and potential resource dependency. Simultaneously, the country's abundant solar and wind resources, together with large-scale green hydrogen projects, provide a pathway toward long-term sustainability and global competitiveness.

The study concludes that successful navigation of the global energy transition requires strengthened governance, modernised petroleum legislation, transparent revenue management, enhanced institutional capacity, and the integration of renewable energy into national development planning. A balanced dual-energy strategy that combines responsible hydrocarbon development with renewable energy leadership can enable Namibia to achieve sustainable economic growth while meeting international environmental commitments.

Exploring how mission-driven organisations maintain financial sustainability: Balancing impact and resilience in evolving funding environments

Eva Njoki Waweru
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Mission-driven organisations, including non-profits, social enterprises, and civil society entities, face persistent financial vulnerability due to over-reliance on volatile donor funding. Recent external shocks, such as funding cuts by USAID, have disrupted operations in development, health, education, and advocacy sectors across Africa. Such events suggest that grant revenue alone does not guarantee sustainability. Rather, resilience depends on factors including funding diversification, adaptability, and macro-environmental awareness (Dee, 2004). These shifts in international development aid create an urgent need to explore how mission-driven organisations maintain financial sustainability without compromising their impact.

This study will be guided by Stakeholder Theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV). Stakeholder Theory will provide a lens for examining how organisations balance the expectations of donors, employees, partners, and communities (Anheier, 2014). RBV will focus on the internal capabilities and resources that contribute to organisational resilience and sustainability. PESTEL and SWOT analyses will assess the influence of external environmental factors and organisational conditions on sustainability outcomes.

This study aims to explore how mission-driven organisations maintain financial sustainability while balancing impact and resilience in evolving funding environments. The study will address the following research questions: What financial sustainability strategies are adopted by mission-driven organisations? How do mission-driven organisations respond to funding shocks and changes in donor funding? What organisational capabilities contribute to financial resilience while maintaining mission fulfilment? What practices can strengthen long-term financial sustainability in mission-driven organisations?

Through qualitative case analysis, this study will examine how mission-driven organisations balance impact and financial viability. The theoretical insights are expected to contribute to strategic management and sustainability literature while providing practical recommendations for organisational leaders, donors, and policymakers seeking to strengthen long-term resilience and impact.

Project governance and sustainable benefit realisation in ESG-driven projects

Lonah Jepkirui
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Although project governance is linked to delivering sustainable development outcomes, empirical research has yet to clarify how specific governance dimensions (Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) project categories) selectively influence the realisation of sustainable benefits or how these effects propagate throughout the project lifecycle. Without this understanding, there is a limited foundation for implementing governance reforms in multilateral development organisations, which often rely on institutional assumptions rather than systematic empirical evidence. Furthermore, the current governance rating tools, used as indicators of the governance factors most relevant to the sustainability of ESG benefits, have not been critically evaluated, thereby weakening the evidence base. This study examines the relationship between governance and the performance of World Bank-funded development projects, addressing four research questions: governance patterns, governance outcomes, the predictive power of governance indicators, and how governance quality can foster sustainable benefits.

The study used a mixed-methods secondary data analysis, combining quantitative statistical analysis with qualitative thematic analysis. Four thousand two hundred and eighty-one (4281) projects were selected as a stratified sample from the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) ratings database covering 2010-2025. Governance quality was assessed using three IEG evaluation dimensions: Quality at Entry (QaE), Quality of Supervision (QoS), and Quality of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). The project outcome rating indicated the realization of sustainable benefits. Descriptive statistics, Spearman rank-order correlation, and multinomial logistic regression were used for quantitative analysis. An inductive qualitative thematic analysis was applied to Implementation Completion and Results Reports (ICRs) and IEG validation summaries to identify governance process themes statistically related to outcomes.

The results show that the governance rating generally remains within the satisfactory range, with M&E Quality consistently lagging behind QaE and QoS across all ESG project categories. Contrary to theoretical expectations of ESG-specific governance requirements, governance quality was statistically similar across Environmental, Social, and Governance project types (Spearman $\rho = 0.038$, $p = .013$), indicating procedural consistency in the World Bank's established standards that may obscure the diverse needs of environmentally complex projects. This has implications for aligning governance frameworks with ESG principles.

Qualitative analysis identified four recurring governance mechanisms: institutional coordination at project start, adaptive performance monitoring, implementation oversight and supervision, and institutional ownership and sustainability. These mechanisms provide mechanistic insights into the observed statistical trends and highlight the phase-specific influence of governance across the project lifecycle.

This study makes three contributions. First, it presents the first large-scale empirical test of the lifecycle governance model in a diversified ESG-oriented development project, showing that governance dimensions do not produce value uniformly across project stages and that their effects vary across projects and stages (Muller, 2009). Second, it enhances the sustainable benefit realisation theory by outlining the governance conditions required to achieve sustainable benefit outcomes in international projects (Ward and Daniel, 2012; Zwikael and Smyrk, 2012). Third, it advances the ESG project management literature by presenting the first large-scale empirical study to examine whether governance quality varies consistently across ESG project types. Practical guidance is also provided to development organisations on initial investment in governance, supervision intensity, and capacity development in M&E.

Examining the impact of international organisations in promoting gender diversity and inclusion in rural Zambia

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The research examines, highlights and discusses the impact of international organisations in promoting gender diversity and inclusion in rural Zambia. As nations commit to socio-economic development, encompassed in the sustainable development goals, gender diversity and inclusion have become essential topics in the process and have drawn attention not only in project management but also in governance and policy making gaining attention globally, (Papangkorn, Chatjuthamard and Jiraporn, 2021). The study explores how international NGOs have performed over the years as well as how communities have responded to their advocacy. The study also highlights some barriers to gender diversity and inclusion in rural Zambia for example, strong cultural beliefs and values among the rural societies. The research was conducted using a scoping review method and data was collected from various sources within Zambia inclusive of government documents and organisations currently working in the country.

Findings highlight steps taken by the government of Zambia in ensuring implementation of gender diversity and inclusion through its reform of the Gender Equity and Equality Act, No. 22 of 2015 seeking to strengthen the legal framework for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls, (Zambia's National Gender Policy, 2023). In support of this initiative, findings indicate that international organisations in Zambia address gender diversity and inclusion from a socio-economic dimension, tackling areas such as women's personal, economic, political as well as social empowerment, (Takemeyang and Ketuma, 2024). The findings also question the integrity and motives behind organisation's engagement in societies and how their involvement has affected social order within rural communities. While gender diversity and inclusion align with universal human rights, acting as a key driver for inclusive sustainable development (United Nations, 2020), its application in rural Zambia leaves a question on whether diversity and inclusion will be universally the same or be relative to the culture and community. As a result of this, the study also highlights major challenges and conflicting areas between the customary law supporting cultural norms and values which go against gender diversity and inclusion and the constitutional law which also goes against customary laws and inequalities it brings on societies. Despite all the effort by various stakeholders, women remain under-represented in rural areas hence undermining diversity and inclusion at various levels, (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2025).

Recommendation is given to policy makers and the government to clearly define what will govern diversity in their context. Where customary laws and constitutional laws regarding gender clash, the government needs to harmonise the two so they complement each other rather than clash and give different outcomes when matched international guidelines. There is also a need for international organisations to understand cultural norms of communities they are serving and explore ways on how they can address diversity and inclusion within the cultural context they are working to avoid resistance as a result of cultural ignorance on their part. For the government, it is important to note that gender diversity and inclusion at any level requires equal advocacy from both genders hence the inclusion of men in the discussions. Where diversity and inclusion has concentrated on lifting 'women', there is a need to educate men also to avoid resistance. It is also essential for the government and all involved NGOs to note that gender diversity and inclusion goes beyond just creating an inclusive environment at a later stage, but questions the investment the country is willing to make in investing in human capital and building capacity in readiness of the inclusive space to come.

Session 14: Technology, Innovation & Digital Transformation

Remote newsrooms in the AI era: Balancing flexibility, collaboration and journalistic quality

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This study examines the strategic tension between remote working models and rapid AI adoption in digital journalism. Using Legit Media, a pan-African remote digital news organisation, as a practitioner-informed case, the research investigates how the absence of physical co-location affects the effectiveness of the organisation's award-winning in-house AI tool Editorial Eye.

Adopting a pragmatic, desk-based secondary research methodology, the study systematically synthesised high-quality 2024-2026 sources including Reuters Institute reports, WAN-IFRA publications, Press Gazette surveys, ITU/UNESCO State of Broadband in Africa 2025, and Masakhane African Languages Hub outputs. Analysis was grounded in Dynamic Capabilities Theory, Sociotechnical Systems Theory, and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model.

Findings show that 97% of publishers prioritise AI for back-end automation (Reuters Institute, 2026). In fully remote settings, however, AI delivers efficiency gains but constrains spontaneous collaboration and real-time oversight. At Legit Media, heavily AI-assisted content produced via Editorial Eye coincided with measurable readership declines, exacerbated by connectivity variability and linguistic code-switching in pan-African contexts.

The performance gap in AI integration stems from sociotechnical misalignment rather than technology itself. To ensure human oversight remains financially and editorially viable, newsrooms must reconfigure social practices alongside technical tools. The study proposes cultural calibration and human-in-the-loop governance thresholds. These frameworks enable pan-African publishers to maintain competitive differentiation through high-quality, emotionally resonant journalism.

Leveraging management information systems to strengthen tuberculosis case detection in Lesotho: An evaluation of health information systems and innovative outreach models

Joalane Makaka
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Tuberculosis (TB) remains a major public health challenge in Lesotho, which continues to experience one of the highest TB incidence rates globally. Despite the implementation of various TB control strategies, significant gaps remain between estimated TB cases and those detected and reported through routine surveillance systems. Management Information Systems (MIS) have been introduced to improve health data management, surveillance, and decision-making; however, their contribution to TB case detection has not been fully examined. This study investigates the role of Management Information Systems in enhancing tuberculosis case detection in Lesotho using the DeLone and McLean Information Systems Success Model as the guiding theoretical framework.

The study adopted a quantitative research approach based on secondary data analysis. Data were obtained from published literature, policy documents, tuberculosis programme reports, District Health Information System 2 (DHIS2) records, and reports from international health organisations. A comprehensive review of existing evidence was conducted to assess the influence of system quality, information quality, service quality, system use, and user satisfaction on TB surveillance and case detection outcomes.

The findings indicate that MIS contributes significantly to improved tuberculosis surveillance by enhancing data availability, reporting timeliness, monitoring of case detection trends, and evidence-based decision-making. The study also found that digital platforms such as DHIS2 support the integration of TB indicators at district and national levels, while MIS-enabled community outreach models improve case detection among hard-to-reach populations. However, challenges including data quality issues, limited interoperability, inadequate user training, and continued reliance on parallel reporting systems reduce the effectiveness of existing information systems.

The study concludes that Management Information Systems play a critical role in strengthening tuberculosis case detection in Lesotho. Improving system integration, data quality, user capacity, and interoperability between community and facility-based reporting systems will enhance surveillance performance and support national TB control efforts. The findings provide practical recommendations for policymakers and health programme managers seeking to strengthen data-driven decision-making and improve TB detection outcomes.

The role of organisational culture in employee adoption of digital transformation: A case study of Debswana Diamond Company

Baintlafatsi Thomas
Unicaf University Zambia

This study investigates how organisational culture influences employee adoption of digital transformation at Debswana Diamond Company (DDC), Botswana's largest private employer. The mining sector faces growing pressure to integrate digital technologies to improve efficiency, safety, and sustainability, yet cultural factors affecting adoption remain underexplored in African extractive industries.

Using a mixed-method secondary data approach, the research synthesises peer-reviewed journals, industry reports, and DDC-specific documentation from 1990 to 2025. Frameworks such as Schein's culture model and Hofstede's national culture dimensions guided the analysis. Results show that DDC's hierarchical and compliance-driven culture, while ensuring stability, constrains transformation by reinforcing top-down decision making and limiting innovation. Strengths such as teamwork and accountability can support adoption when leadership promotes digital behaviours and articulates a clear vision. Change management frameworks, including Kotter's and ADKAR, are effective only when aligned with cultural realities. Key barriers include employee resistance linked to job security concerns, limited digital literacy among older workers, and entrenched communication patterns.

The study concludes that cultural evolution must accompany technological investment. Recommendations include fostering innovation, enhancing leadership commitment, investing in targeted training, and promoting data-driven decision making to overcome structural barriers (Schein, 2010; Hofstede, 2011; Cameron & Quinn, 2019).

Impact of the integrated customs management system on import clearance efficiency at the port of Tema, Ghana

Theresa Wonder Sosu
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The Integrated Customs Management System (ICUMS) was introduced in Ghana in 2020 to modernise customs administration, enhance trade facilitation, and improve import clearance efficiency. Although the system was expected to reduce delays, lower transaction costs, and strengthen customs compliance, evidence of its actual impact remains limited. This study provides a longitudinal assessment of the effect of ICUMS on import clearance efficiency at the Port of Tema, Ghana's principal maritime trade gateway (Ghana Revenue Authority, 2020; Asiedu & Frempong, 2021).

A quantitative comparative case study design was employed using secondary data from the Ghana Revenue Authority, Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority, the World Bank, UNCTAD, and the World Customs Organization. Customs performance indicators from the pre-ICUMS period (2014–2019) were compared with those from the post-ICUMS period (2020–2023). Descriptive statistics, trend analysis, Ordinary Least Squares regression, and Spearman rank correlation were used to evaluate changes in clearance time, clearance costs, and customs compliance outcomes.

Documentary compliance time decreased by approximately 93%, falling from over 500 hours in 2014 to about 36 hours by 2019. Regression analysis confirmed significant downward trends in documentary compliance time ($\beta = -94.04$, $p < 0.05$) and border compliance time ($\beta = -2.16$, $p < 0.05$), indicating substantial improvements in customs processing efficiency before ICUMS implementation. Post-ICUMS data reported an average cargo release time of approximately 261 hours in 2023. However, differences in measurement methodologies limited direct comparison between pre- and post-implementation indicators. Comparable post-implementation cost data were also limited.

The findings indicate that ICUMS has advanced Ghana's customs digitalisation agenda and strengthened the automation of customs processes. However, available evidence does not conclusively demonstrate that ICUMS alone produced measurable improvements in import clearance efficiency. Improved data transparency, standardised performance indicators, system reliability, and continuous stakeholder training are required to maximise the benefits of customs digitalisation and support evidence-based evaluation of future customs reforms.

Session 15: French session - students of Master en Administration des Affaires, Unicaf Université

Design organisationnel et intelligence artificielle : une approche de data-drive pour optimiser le recouvrement des cotisations sociales auprès des travailleurs indépendants ivoiriens (Cas de la CNPS)

Deanea Yves Laurent
Unicaf Université

Face au faible taux d'affiliation des travailleurs indépendants au Régime Social des Travailleurs Indépendants (RSTI) en Côte d'Ivoire, 457 157 affiliés sur 6,6 millions ciblés en 2024. cette recherche examine comment une approche organisationnelle data-driven intégrant l'intelligence artificielle peut optimiser le recouvrement des cotisations sociales à la Caisse Nationale de Prévoyance Sociale (CNPS).

L'étude s'appuie sur une démarche qualitative combinant analyse documentaire, diagnostic organisationnel fondé sur les théories du design (Mintzberg, Galbraith, Lawrence & Lorsch), analyse statistique descriptive des déterminants socioéconomiques et modélisation prédictive conceptuelle du risque de non-paiement, mobilisant plus de 50 références académiques et institutionnelles.

Le diagnostic révèle une structure bureaucratique mécaniste peu propice à l'innovation, fragilisée par des silos informationnels et une gouvernance des données immature. Trois variables socioéconomiques influencent significativement la régularité de paiement : l'utilisation du mobile money (β=1,52), le niveau d'éducation (β=0,41) et le revenu mensuel (β=0,26). Le modèle prédictif par forêts aléatoires atteint 83,1 % d'exactitude (AUC=0,862), permettant d'identifier les 20 % de contribuables concentrant 60 % du risque cumulé, avec une réduction potentielle des coûts de recouvrement de 30 à 40 %. Le benchmarking international confirme la transférabilité de pratiques éprouvées (mobile money, biométrie, chatbots IA).

L'étude propose une architecture organisationnelle articulée autour d'une structure matricielle hybride, d'un Pôle Data et Innovation, et d'un programme de montée en compétences (149 millions FCFA sur 3 ans). Pour un investissement total d'un milliard FCFA, l'implémentation pourrait porter le taux de recouvrement de 45 % à 65 % en trois ans, pour un retour sur investissement estimé à 12 milliards FCFA. Au-delà de la performance institutionnelle, cette transformation représente un levier d'inclusion sociale pour des millions de travailleurs vulnérables.

Faisabilité d'un réseau hybride (hydro-solaire) pour la gestion efficace des barrages hydroélectriques d'ayame en côte-d'ivoire face au changement climatique

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Ce mémoire de recherche porte sur l'étude de faisabilité multidimensionnelle de l'hybridation du complexe hydroélectrique d'Ayamé 1 et 2 par une centrale solaire photovoltaïque flottante de 30 MWc. Dans un contexte marqué par une croissance de la demande électrique ivoirienne de 8 à 10 % par an et une vulnérabilité accrue des ressources hydrauliques face au changement climatique, la modernisation des infrastructures historiques d'Ayamé est devenue un impératif stratégique. L'objectif central de ce projet est de démontrer que l'intégration du solaire permet non seulement de sécuriser la production en saison sèche, mais aussi d'améliorer la rentabilité globale du secteur de l'énergie en Côte d'Ivoire.

La méthodologie adoptée repose sur une approche mixte combinant modélisation technico-économique et analyse documentaire approfondie. À partir de données pluviométriques/hydrologiques locales (1961-2025/2001-2025) et d'irradiations satellites, une simulation dynamique a été réalisée pour optimiser le couplage entre la force hydraulique et l'énergie solaire. Le projet a été évalué selon des indicateurs de performance financière standards (LCOE, VAN, TRI) et une analyse de sensibilité pour tester sa robustesse face aux variations du marché.

Les résultats de la recherche sont probants. Techniquement, l'installation de 30 MWc génère environ 40 GWh annuels, garantissant un plancher de production de 5,4 GWh durant les mois les plus critiques de la saison sèche. Cette synergie permet une gestion de type « batterie virtuelle », où l'eau économisée durant la journée est turbinée pour répondre aux pointes de consommation du soir. Sur le plan économique, le projet affiche une compétitivité exceptionnelle avec un coût actualisé de l'énergie (LCOE) d'environ 40 FCFA/kWh, soit un coût inférieur de 46 % à celui du thermique à gaz. La performance financière se traduit par une Valeur Actuelle Nette (VAN) de 5,2 milliards de FCFA et un Taux de Rendement Interne (TRI) de 11,8 %, confirmant la viabilité du projet sur une période de 25 ans.

Sur le plan environnemental, l'hybridation permet d'éviter l'émission de 35 000 tonnes de CO2 /an. L'usage de la technologie flottante est particulièrement stratégique, car elle occupe moins de 0,22 % de la surface du lac, évitant ainsi tout conflit foncier avec les activités humaines locales.

En conclusion, ce mémoire démontre que l'hybridation d'Ayamé constitue un modèle pilote robuste, reproductible à l'échelle nationale, offrant une solution durable pour la souveraineté énergétique de la Côte d'Ivoire.

Évaluation et optimisation du cadre de performance opérationnelle: cas de MMG Kinsevere

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Dans un contexte minier marqué par une forte pression sur la production et les coûts, la performance opérationnelle dépend largement de la fiabilité et de la disponibilité des équipements critiques. La maîtrise des défaillances techniques constitue ainsi un levier stratégique essentiel de compétitivité et de création de valeur.

Cette étude analyse l'impact des pannes des équipements critiques sur la performance de MMG Kinsevere et propose des solutions visant à améliorer la disponibilité, réduire les coûts de maintenance et optimiser l'utilisation des actifs. L'approche méthodologique repose sur l'exploitation de données opérationnelles (SAP PM, historiques de maintenance, KPI) combinée à des outils d'analyse tels que Pareto, RCA et l'évaluation de la criticité.

Les résultats révèlent que les arrêts non planifiés et les coûts associés sont concentrés sur un nombre limité d'équipements clés, notamment les pompes, le crusher et les équipements du procédé. Les principales causes de défaillance sont d'ordre électrique, mécanique, instrumentation et organisationnel, avec une forte dépendance à la maintenance corrective.

L'analyse met également en évidence l'impact financier significatif des pannes, pouvant atteindre plusieurs millions de dollars par an, confirmant que la maintenance constitue un levier stratégique de performance et non un simple centre de coûts.

Les recommandations portent sur le renforcement de la maintenance préventive, le déploiement de la maintenance prédictive, l'amélioration du suivi des KPI et le développement des compétences techniques.

En conclusion, la réduction des pannes et l'optimisation des stratégies de maintenance permettent d'améliorer durablement la performance opérationnelle et la rentabilité, faisant de la maintenance un facteur clé de création de valeur dans le secteur minier.

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