

2025 UC Business School

Graduate Research Collective Conference Proceedings

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS



7 November 2025

Conference committee

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Welcome from the Associate Dean Research

Kia ora koutou

Welcome to the 2025 UC Business School Graduate Research Collective (GRC) Conference!

This annual event showcases the diverse and inspiring research undertaken by our graduate research students. It provides a valuable opportunity for our PhD and MCom students to present their work, receive constructive feedback, and engage with peers and academics across disciplines.

We hope this conference fosters collaboration, connection, and confidence among our emerging researchers.

Ngā mihi nui,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Wright', written in a cursive style.

Professor Sarah Wright

Associate Dean Research

UC Business School

Programme overview

Time	Session Title
09:00	Welcome table opens
09:30	Conference starts, welcome from ADR
09:35	Keynote: Path from a PhD to an independent researcher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker: Dr Raja Subramanian
10:00	Morning tea break with poster walk
Student oral presentation block 1	
10:15	Artificial Intelligence in Auditing: Applications, Adoption Challenges, and the Audit profession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alex Liu (MCom in ACIS)
10:22	Wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ Individuals in Service roles: Insights from Bangladesh <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Md H Asibur Rahman (PhD in MMT)
10:39	Food Citizenship of Early Adopting Consumers in Regenerative Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haley Jones (PhD in MMT)
10:56	Beyond Compliance: Exploring Behavioural and Institutional Dimensions of Tax Amnesty in Bangladesh <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nazmun Nahar (PhD in ACIS)
11:03	Progressive Repeat Consumption through Reaction Videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tin Trung Nguyen (PhD in MMT)
11:20	A Review of Indigenous Food Sharing Practices to Inform the Design of a Transformative Service Initiative to Redistribute Surplus Food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salman Yousaf (PhD in MMT)
11:37	Employees' perspectives on management control systems and compensation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krista Chen (MCom in ACIS)
11:45	Lunch break with poster walk
Student oral presentation block 2	
12:15	Integrated Thinking to Embed Sustainable Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kariyawasam Jalathge Dinushika Samanthi (PhD in ACIS)
12:32	Beneath Every Consumer Disposal Decision Lies a Personal Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thejani Wickrama Hewage (PhD in MMT)

12:49	Addressing Income Inequality in Timor-Leste and Fiji through fiscal policy: A qualitative study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jo Monteiro (PhD in ACIS)
13:06	Exploring the Transformative Role of Assistive Technologies in Enhancing Wellbeing and Inclusion for Disabled People: A Systematic Literature Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xinyun Yan (PhD in MMT)
13:30	Panel discussion: AI use in business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel member: A/Prof Elsamari Botha, Brett O'Donnell, Shayne Moore • Facilitator: Salman Yousaf
14:15	Awards & closing

Abstracts of presentations

- **Oral presentation**

Artificial Intelligence in Auditing: Applications, Adoption Challenges, and the Audit profession

Alex Liu, Richard Fisher

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Abstract: Artificial Intelligence (AI) holds great potential to reshape the audit profession. Drawing on recent developments in AI, this study aims to explore how AI is transforming audit practices in New Zealand (NZ) and what enablers/barriers and implications accompany this transformation. An exploratory qualitative approach will be employed, using semi-structured interviews with practitioners across firms to capture perceptions of AI applications, adoption enablers/barriers, and professional impacts. The Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework provides the analytical lens for interpreting interview findings, allowing comparison with prior researches. This study contributes to the emerging literature by contextualizing AI adoption within NZ's audit ecosystem. Practically, the research seeks to inform auditors, regulators, and educators about how AI can be responsibly integrated into audit processes while preserving audit quality and professional judgment. Ultimately, it aims to spark dialogue on how the auditing profession can adapt and thrive in the era of AI.

Keywords: Audit Innovation, Artificial Intelligence, Audit Profession

Integrated Thinking to Embed Sustainable Actions

Kariyawasam Jalathge Dinushika Samanthi

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Abstract: Ongoing global challenges and increasing stakeholder pressure to adopt sustainable practices are impelling organisations to embed processes and practices that create sustainable value. The International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) introduced Integrated Reporting (IR) and its management philosophy, Integrated Thinking (IT), to accelerate long-term value creation and support more sustainable outcomes. While significant research has been conducted on IR, studies on integrated thinking remain limited. Scholars note that the IIRC has not provided a clear definition or sufficient guidance on how to implement integrated thinking in practice. This ambiguity has led organisations to develop their own interpretations, creating a need to explore how integrated thinking is understood and actioned. In addition, limited research explains how integrated thinking contributes to sustainable value creation within organisations. Given these issues, this study aims to explore:

"How and why is integrated thinking embedded to create sustainable value for a business?"

Accordingly, the research objectives are:

- Investigate how different organisations understand and interpret integrated thinking.
- Investigate the motivations for embedding integrated thinking into the business.
- Explore how integrated thinking is actioned to create value and embed sustainable actions in the business.

A qualitative case study methodology will be adopted, using semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. The ter Bogt and Scapens (2019) framework will be applied as the theoretical lens. This study contributes to the literature by explaining how and why integrated thinking can be embedded in business practices to enhance sustainable value. Practically, the findings will help managers understand how integrated thinking supports long-term sustainability and identify areas requiring further attention to strengthen implementation.

Keywords: Integrated Thinking, Sustainable Actions, Value Creation, Sustainable Business, Institutions

Food Citizenship of Early Adopting Consumers in Regenerative Agriculture

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² Plant and Food Research, Auckland

Abstract: As global food systems face ecological and social pressures, the demand for alternative and transformative agri-food models that promote economic, environmental, and societal sustainability is increasing. Regenerative agriculture has emerged as both a farming practice and an agri-food framework which emphasises agroecological goals such as soil health, biodiversity, and sustainable supply chains. However, research on perspectives has primarily focused on regenerative farmers, with limited attention exploring how consumers understand and engage with RA as a market concept. To address this gap, this study explores how early-adopting consumers in Aotearoa New Zealand conceptualise RA by using the lens of food citizenship, which posits that consumers can act as civic agents shaping socio-ecological agri-food systems. Using nineteen semi-structured interviews and a persona-based analytical approach, we identified three personas: the Systems Change Agent, who advocates for transparency and systemic transformation; the Relational Prosumer, who prioritises reciprocity, care, and localised exchange; and the Pragmatic Futurist, motivated by efficiency, innovation, and climate responsibility. The findings reveal diverse and heterogeneous pathways for food citizenship, demonstrating strong consumer demand for provenance transparency, relational trust, and credible verification mechanisms. These findings have implications for marketers, policymakers, and agribusinesses seeking to develop authentic, regenerative brands.

Keywords: regenerative agriculture, food citizenship, consumer behaviour, relational trust, sustainable food systems, personas

Addressing Income Inequality in Timor-Leste and Fiji through fiscal policy: A qualitative study

Jo Monteiro

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Abstract: This paper explores the use of fiscal policy to address income inequality in Timor-Leste and Fiji – specifically limiting the research methodology applied. The following research questions will be addressed: (i) How does fiscal policy impact different groups of the population in Timor-Leste and Fiji in view of income inequality and how the patterns/trends differ between countries? (ii) How institutional governance and history have influenced or advanced the fiscal policy reforms implemented over the years? (iii) What should be the appropriate fiscal policy measures for small island developing economies such as Timor-Leste and Fiji in view of inter-generational equity?

Methodologically, this study applies qualitative methods, drawing upon semi-structured interviews, focus groups interviews, and comparative case studies. Guided by pragmatism, the research remains open and flexible in adopting and adapting quantitative tools or parameters of fiscal incidence analysis (FIA) such as Microsimulation and Generational Accounting to enrich the analysis beyond conventional macroeconomic metrics.

The semi-structured and focus-group interviews will involve policymakers, experts, groups of citizens (e.g. people with disabilities), as well as academic and civil society organizations – using purposive sampling to ensure inclusion. Macroeconomic metrics such Household Income and Expenditure Surveys (HEIS), Administrative Tax Data, Budget Structure/GDP and Gini Indexes will serve as empirical foundation guiding the discussions. Given its pragmatism, the snowballing (chain referral) approach is also applied.

Finally, they study will apply thematic analysis to identify the key patterns/trends, and emergent narratives in evaluating the cross-country similarities and differences. The study's findings will be contextualized, triangulated, and analysed across different data sources such as interview insights, macroeconomic data and policy discourses/documents/reports.

Keywords: Income Inequality, Fiscal Policy, Timor-Leste, Fiji, Qualitative Method

Employees' perspectives on management control systems and compensation

Krista Chen

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Abstract: Employees are at the heart of this study, as they directly experience the management control and compensation systems in their daily work. Their feelings, motivation and well-being matter greatly. As part of the organisation, they contribute directly to the production, service and overall success. Grounded in Simons' (1995) Levers of Control framework, this study seeks insight into retail employees' perceptions of management control systems, whether they find them motivating or stressful, and how these views shape or are shaped by pay and reward structures.

This study will use a qualitative approach, focusing on companies in the New Zealand retail sector. Data will be collected through interviews with employees at various job levels to explore their views on different levers of control, whether these controls motivate or stress them, and how their perceptions are shaped by the structure of their pay and reward systems within the New Zealand retail context.

Theoretically, this research will extend Simons' (1995) Levers of Control framework by integrating it with compensation systems. Practically, this will help organisations, particularly in the retail sector, design management control and compensation systems that foster a positive organisational culture. The study enhances understanding of how aligning compensation structures with control systems can motivate rather than stress employees and improve employees' well-being and retention. Ultimately, it seeks to guide the design of the systems that create healthier and more effective workplaces.

Keywords: Management Control Systems; Compensation Systems; Levers of Control; Motivation

Wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ Individuals in Service roles: Insights from Bangladesh

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¹ Department of Management, Marketing and Tourism, UC Business School

² School of Health Sciences, UC

³ Support Services, UC

Abstract: LGBTQIA+ service providers often face multiple contextual challenges that trigger, cascade, and reinforce vulnerabilities across personal, professional, and institutional domains. While service research increasingly addresses consumer vulnerability, limited insights exist on how LGBTQIA+ service providers navigate challenges and mobilise resources within service ecosystems. This study addresses this gap by examining how LGBTQIA+ individuals mitigate challenges through strengths to sustain wellbeing. This research, grounded in Transformative Service Research, synthesises the TSR literature to augment the Resources-Challenges Equilibrium (RCE) framework by incorporating economic and cultural dimensions in addition to its original psychological, cognitive, social, and physical dimensions. To capture a balanced understanding of LGBTQIA+ challenges and resources, Luna's layered vulnerability conceptualisation is reinterpreted and combined with the RCE framework to develop a strength-based framework guiding the study. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews and focus group discussions with LGBTQIA+ individuals and service actors across Bangladesh to explore how wellbeing is sustained amid systemic adversity. Findings reveal multilayered vulnerabilities shaped by identity conformity, socio-cultural policing, economic marginalisation, and institutional influences of state, religion, and media. Despite these challenges, individuals demonstrate agency by strategically mobilising their diverse resources. The study illustrates how LGBTQIA+ individuals balance personal strengths (intra-balancing) and co-create wellbeing with other service actors (inter-balancing) across micro, meso, and macro levels of service ecosystems, navigating triggers and cascades of vulnerabilities and strengths. The research advances a strength-based approach to LGBTQIA+ populations, offering actionable insights for policymakers, practitioners and community members. The framework guides the design of inclusive service ecosystem policies, interventions, and support systems that enhance LGBTQIA+ agency and help mitigate contextual vulnerabilities by leveraging individual and collective strengths. It also provides a foundation for future research on LGBTQIA+ wellbeing in diverse service contexts.

Keywords: Vulnerability; wellbeing; Transformative Service Research; LGBTQIA+; Balancing; strengths-based approach

Beyond Compliance: Exploring Behavioural and Institutional Dimensions of Tax Amnesty in Bangladesh

Nazmun Nahar

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Abstract: Tax amnesty programs are regarded as a controversial policy which have been repeatedly applied in Bangladesh to broaden the tax net, increase revenue, and inspire voluntary compliance. Despite frequent implementation, questions remain about their long-term effectiveness and impact on taxpayers' compliance behavior. This study explores the behavioral and institutional dimensions of tax amnesty in Bangladesh, focusing on how attitudes, social norms, perceived control, and trust in institutions shape taxpayers' responses to such policies. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and institutional trust theory, the research adopts a qualitative approach to examine taxpayers' motivations, and experiences with recent amnesty initiatives. Data is collected through semi-structured interviews with individual taxpayers, tax consultants, and officials of the National Board of Revenue (NBR). Using thematic analysis, the study identifies how perceptions of fairness, deterrence, and administrative integrity influence both participation decisions and post-amnesty compliance intentions. Situated within an epistemological framework, the study recognizes the value of multiple perspectives and contextual meanings in understanding compliance behavior. Findings reveal that while tax amnesty temporarily increases revenue, its sustained impact depends on the credibility and consistency of tax administration. Many taxpayers perceive amnesties as politically driven or unfair to compliant taxpayers, which undermines institutional trust and voluntary compliance.

This research contributes to the behavioral tax literature by offering an interpretive understanding of compliance beyond economic rationality, emphasizing moral obligation, institutional legitimacy, and governance quality. Policy implications highlight the need for transparent design, equitable enforcement, and post-amnesty monitoring to strengthen taxpayer trust and sustain compliance in Bangladesh's evolving fiscal landscape.

Keywords: Tax Amnesty, Tax Compliance, Institutional Trust, Qualitative Research, Theory of Planned Behavior

A Review of Indigenous Food Sharing Practices to Inform the Design of a Transformative Service Initiative to Redistribute Surplus Food

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Abstract: Sharing of food is a key part of Indigenous peoples' traditions that has been recognised to enhance the wellbeing of individuals, communities and the natural ecosystem. In contrast, modern societies often discourage such practices, which consequently affects the effectiveness of food surplus redistribution efforts. In line with FAO's recommendations, this paper conducts a thematic systematic review of Indigenous practices of food sharing to inform the design of contemporary service-related food initiatives. Guided by the PRISMA protocol, our review of 25 articles from top Indigenous-focused journals uncovered five key themes. These themes reveal that Indigenous food sharing practices are driven by various factors, involve diverse redistribution methods, aimed at promoting wellbeing of individuals, collectives and the environment. However, these practices face numerous barriers. To overcome these challenges, integrating our findings into service design and improving service experiences can help build capacity and support these cultural practices. This review is timely and relevant to the Transformative Service Research and Service Design literature, as it provides solid groundwork for effective food initiative co-design.

Keywords: Indigenous food sharing practices, surplus food, determinants of food sharing, types of food sharing, Transformative Service Initiatives.

Beneath Every Consumer Disposal Decision Lies a Personal Value

Thejani Wickrama Hewage, Lucie Ozanne, Ann-Marie Kennedy, Joya Kemper

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Abstract: The growing volume of global household waste has become an alarming issue. The current waste management approaches largely depend on end-of-pipe solutions such as incineration, material recovery and landfilling, which are infrastructure and technology-intensive. The literature has often overlooked the value-based and behavioural foundations of consumer disposal, which appear to be the root cause of waste generation. To address this gap, this thesis aims to understand consumer disposal behaviour and decision-making to inform strategies for waste management and support the transition to a circular economy. To achieve this overarching aim, guided by a pragmatist paradigm, this thesis integrates three complementary studies. To identify gaps and inconsistencies in the consumer disposal literature, Study 1 systematically reviews 64 articles, and provides a revised definition of disposal, a typology of disposal methods, a model of the consumer disposal process, a conceptual framework of independent, dependent, mediating, and moderating variables, and a future research agenda. The literature identifies that existing studies address what and how consumers dispose, but often overlook the reasons behind consumer disposal behaviour. The literature also suggests that personal values are the ultimate driver guiding consumer behaviour. Therefore, to explore why consumers decide to dispose in the first place, Study 2 applies the Means-End-Chain approach through 64 laddering interviews. Similarly, Study 3, following the same methodology, explores what drives consumers to opt for circular disposal methods over disposal to landfill. Studies 2 and 3 reveal several personal values driving consumer disposal decisions, identify the hierarchical cognitive structure of disposal decision-making, and determine perceptual patterns that enable the identification of key consumer segments for market targeting. Together, these studies provide a multi-level understanding of disposal behaviour from conceptual foundations to personal values and behavioural stages. Further, this thesis contributes to theory by integrating consumer decision-making within the Waste Management Hierarchy and provides interventional strategies for practitioners that encourage waste prevention and reuse of goods, supporting the transition towards the circular economy.

Keywords: Disposal, Decision-making, personal values, waste management hierarchy, means-end-chain

Progressive Repeat Consumption through Reaction Videos

Tin Trung Nguyen, Ekant Veer, Paul W. Ballantine

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Abstract: This research examines when, why, and how consumers turn to reaction videos as a vehicle for progressive reconsumption and how such socially mediated returns enhance enjoyment of the original. Across four experiments, we show that media content complexity and enjoyment jointly determine both the likelihood and mode of reconsumption, distinguishing regressive rewatching from progressive, socially scaffolded engagement via reaction videos. After viewing complex content, consumers are more likely to choose a reaction video over rewatching or switching. This preference is mediated by the search for interpretive validation and the acquisition of novel insights, consistent with stimulus level and self level novelty pathways. We further demonstrate that complexity and enjoyment interact to channel reaction viewing, and that reaction videos increase subsequent enjoyment of the original content, with attitudinal congruence between viewer and reactor moderating these paths. The findings validate a dual pathway model of progressive reconsumption, clarify how reaction videos unlock embedded novelty without altering the stimulus, and refine debates on derivative user generated content by showing that interpretive formats viewed post exposure tend to augment rather than displace originals. Managerially, the results inform platform, creator, and rights holder strategies for sequencing and recommending reaction content after complex works to sustain engagement and counter hedonic adaptation.

Keywords: Reconsumption, reaction video, co-viewing.

Exploring the Transformative Role of Assistive Technologies in Enhancing Wellbeing and Inclusion for Disabled People: A Systematic Literature Review

Xinyun Yan

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Abstract: Digital and intelligent services are increasingly transitioning from “Optional Solutions” to “Essential Components” of people's daily lives. Following this trend, AI-driven assistive technologies are bringing new possibilities for the inclusion and wellbeing of disabled people. However, existing studies focus on the functional applications and independent research findings of AI-assisted technologies, lacking systematic integration and in-depth analysis within disability services. This article adopts a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, screening 37 peer-reviewed publications from the Scopus database. Four major research themes were identified: (1) application of assistive technologies for disabled people; (2) user interaction and experience of assistive technologies services; (3) the impact of assistive technologies on the wellbeing of disabled people; (4) challenges and ethical risks of assistive technologies. The findings indicate that AI-driven assistive technologies transforming from functional support towards enabling social inclusion and co-creation, while still facing challenges related to trust, privacy and accessibility. This article proposes an integrated framework from the perspective of Transformative Service Research (TSR), emphasising the potential of AI technology in disability service, co-creation experiences, and the development of Meta Humans. It provides theoretical and practical insights for future research on Meta Humans and inclusive service design for disabled people.

Keywords: Assistive Technologies; Artificial Intelligence; Disabled People; Transformative Service Research; Wellbeing

- **Poster presentations**

AI-based decision support systems for enhancing resilience and improving meteorology-driven decision-making in civil aviation

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Abstract: Safety and efficiency are important issues in aviation. Considering the growing role of AI in all domains, it becomes valuable to leverage AI in the aviation industry. In our research, we aim to explore how AI-based decision support systems enhance Resilience and improve decision-making driven by meteorological information systems. To the best of our knowledge, there is a knowledge gap about AI-assisted decision-making impacted by weather conditions. we are going to explore how aviation professionals perceive AI-based meteorology-driven decision-making. Focusing on concepts such as transparency, data integrity, reliability, and interoperability, which are currently underexplored in human-AI synergy within the domain of civil aviation, we aim to develop a framework that ensures resilience and optimal decision-making. Our findings from this research would lead to a safer and more efficient commercial flight. Our method would be Q-Sort, which captures the subjective viewpoint. The participants would be pilots and air traffic controllers. Due to increasing extreme weather conditions caused by climate change, along with the unpredictable nature of weather patterns, this research aims to inform recommendations for future AI-based DSS design, communication protocols, and training that will enhance safety and efficiency in flight.

Keywords: AI, Decision Support Systems, Aviation, meteorology-driven Decision-Making

A co-designed Transformative Service Initiative to engage Generation Z in Surplus food redistribution in Aotearoa New Zealand

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² Food Innovation, New Zealand Institute for Bioeconomy Science, Auckland

Abstract: Surplus food that goes to waste has become a significant issue in developed countries, with far-reaching impacts on the social, economic and environmental dimensions of wellbeing and sustainability. Several service-related food initiatives are implemented, but they are unable to engage and empower consumers and address the underlying causes of food waste. This necessitates the need for effective solutions to redistribute surplus food by adopting circular approaches. This research engages Generation Z, who are one of the major contributors to household food waste and transforms their unsustainable food consumption practices into circular food practices by instigating a Transformative Service Initiative as an intervention. The design of this intervention is informed by the Indigenous and contemporary practices of food sharing. This research conducts a systematic literature review to explore the cultural practices of Indigenous peoples, while participatory action research, comprising semi-structured interviews and two workshops, provides deeper insights into contemporary perspectives, thus informing the design of the intervention. This study further examines how this co-designed intervention transforms Gen Z perspectives towards surplus food and its redistribution and alters their linear consumption practices while contributing to overall wellbeing.

Keywords: Transformative Service Initiative, surplus food, food redistribution, co-design, wellbeing.