

*List of Topics*

**Exploring the Role of Pleasure Tourism in Enhancing Social-Cultural Integration among non-Western Immigrants in the UK.....3**

**Analysing Time-Lag and Data Uncertainty Affects in Efficiency Evaluations of R&D Institutes: Evidence from the UK.....4**

**Connected and Autonomous Vehicles, Future Employment and Labour Market Disruption ....5**

**An empirical analysis of the impact of ESG practices on financial firms’ reputation and performance .....6**

**Digital humans and emotional support, connection and guidance .....7**

**The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Microbusiness Performance .....8**

**Evolution of cash flow sensitivity of cash: international evidence.....9**

**Exploring the influential factors of a growth mindset among the ethnic minority business owners (EMB) in the UK ..... 10**

**A possible title (broadly): Embedding technology-enhanced teaching and learning into legal pedagogy .....11**

**The recruitment of older workers in the UK hospitality industry. ....12**

**A subnational analysis of financial inclusion and economic inequality across regions within the United Kingdom..... 13**

**The impact of board diversity, plasticity, and financial access on Small and Medium- sized Enterprises (SME) productivity: insights from the Northern Powerhouse ..... 14**

**Consuming natural places and spaces ..... 15**

**Leadership and moral identity; exploration of temporary and migrant workers’ organisational citizenship behaviours and commitment ..... 16**

**Transitional entrepreneurship/ marginalization, and demarginalization through entrepreneurial ventures..... 17**

<b>An empirical analysis of innovation and technology adoption within robotics and AI, including impacts on productivity and income .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Managing ecosystem of refugee employment in the British labour market.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>The impact of digital technologies on firms' internationalization strategies .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Public Transport Resilience in the Era of Disruptions: The Case of the UK.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Role of Law in incorporating Artificial Intelligence into Climate Change &amp; Sustainability Frameworks.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Exploring accountability issues in the accounting practices of African private organisations/NGOs/SMEs .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Resolving paradoxes in sustainable business transformation .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>The Financial Implications of Climate Change on Business Sustainability Outline of Research Proposed: Climate change poses significant risks and opportunities for businesses.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Can hybrid entrepreneurs benefit wage-paying employers? If so, how? .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Micro-level decision-making and implementation of corporate sustainability strategies in Multinational Corporations .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>CEO Compensation, CEO Characteristics and R&amp;D.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>The Impact of Environmental Policies Within the Transport Sector: An Analysis of Welfare Effects.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>The differential effects of environmental factors on children's education, health, and mental wellbeing in England .....</b>	<b>30</b>

# **Exploring the Role of Pleasure Tourism in Enhancing Social-Cultural Integration among non-Western Immigrants in the UK**

Supervisor – Jialin (Snow) Wu  
Email: [j.wu@hud.ac.uk](mailto:j.wu@hud.ac.uk)

## ***Outline of Proposed Research***

Does travel by non-Western immigrants aid or hinder social integration into the host communities, such as the UK? Assimilation by migrants into host communities is a multi-faceted process that can be accelerated or inhibited by several factors (McKercher & Yankholmes, 2018). One of those factors is pleasure travel. How quickly, how fully and the process of travel learning undertaken by migrants may be a key indicator of successful social-cultural assimilation into a new home community.

Tourism, migration, and immigrant integration are interconnected in many ways (Choe & Lugosi, 2022; Timothy, 2002). Extant literature suggests that immigrants' social and psychological adjustment to their new society is influenced by their willingness or ability to integrate into the host community while maintaining a cultural identity of their homeland (Sun et al., 2020). Research also indicates that stereotypes and prejudices contribute to perceived social distance, hindering immigrant integration (Gholamian et al., 2021). Reviving functional immigrant integration through lifestyle activities, like tourism, is vital. However, the role of pleasure tourism in aiding non-Western immigrants' socio-cultural integration in receiving societies (e.g., the UK) remains insufficiently explored. Thus, this research seeks to reveal how pleasure travel affects the social-cultural integration among non-Western immigrants in the UK.

## ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

A two-stage mixed-method approach will be employed. The first approach involves interviews, followed up by a questionnaire survey. Combining qualitative and quantitative data/approaches provides an opportunity to identify key factors, propose conceptual framework and test proposed hypotheses, while also enabling the research to understand the meanings and sentiments behind the ideas generated.

## ***Any other relevant details***

This research builds upon a previous ICF-funded project, which laid a good foundation for this research with some valuable pilot interviews. Additionally, the collaboration with a professor from the University of Queensland (QS Top 300) as external supervisor, would not only further strengthen the quality of the research, align with UoH strategy, but also help to enrich the PGR student's academic experience and professional growth.

# **Analysing Time-Lag and Data Uncertainty Affects in Efficiency Evaluations of R&D Institutes: Evidence from the UK**

Supervisor: Prof Adel Hatamimarbini  
Email: [a.hatamimarbini@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.hatamimarbini@hud.ac.uk)

## ***Outline of Proposed Research***

This study focuses on Research and Development (R&D) institutes in the United Kingdom, aiming to comprehensively assess the effects of both time-lags and data uncertainty on efficiency evaluations through Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA). Recognising the significance of R&D in the UK's innovation landscape, the research seeks to address the following key questions: How do varying time-lags impact efficiency assessments in UK R&D institutes? How does data uncertainty affect the accuracy of these assessments, and what are the combined implications for productivity growth calculations?

## ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

The DEA models will be adapted and developed to incorporate both time-lag and uncertainty variables, providing a holistic evaluation of efficiency scores and their impact on productivity growth calculations. A sample of firms will be derived from merging the Business Research and Development Database (BERD) and the Annual Respondents Database (ARD). The empirical phase will involve the collection and analysis of data from diverse R&D institutes in the UK, taking into account project duration, funding cycles, and factors contributing to data uncertainty.

## ***Any Other Relevant Details***

The dual consideration of time-lags and data uncertainty is essential for a comprehensive understanding of efficiency dynamics in R&D institutes. This research aims to offer practical insights for policymakers, institutional leaders, and industry stakeholders by providing a perspective on how these factors collectively influence efficiency assessments. The findings will contribute to informed decision-making in resource allocation and strategic planning within the evolving landscape of UK R&D.

## **Connected and Autonomous Vehicles, Future Employment and Labour Market Disruption**

Main Supervisor: Dr Elena Alyavina

Email: [e.alyavina2@hud.ac.uk](mailto:e.alyavina2@hud.ac.uk)

Co-supervisor 1: Prof. Alexandros Nikitas

Email: [a.nikitas@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.nikitas@hud.ac.uk)

Co-Supervisor 2: Professor Abhijit Sharma

Email: [a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

A Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) is a vehicle that can understand its surroundings, move, navigate and behave responsibly without human input, and at the same time has connectivity functions enabling it to be proactive, cooperative, well-informed and coordinated (Nikitas et al., [2021a](#)). CAVs, despite a wealth of potential benefits spanning from increased accessibility levels and productivity improvements to congestion, emission and noise reduction (Liu et al., [2020](#)) threaten to kill millions of driving-based jobs (Nikitas et al., [2021b](#)). This could generate serious labour market disruptions and new unprecedented layers of employment-related social exclusion. The proposed study will pro-actively explore expert and public attitudes referring to CAVs and their impact on future employment to inform equitable policy planning and propose skill enhancement programmes that will safeguard human employment.

### ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

The PhD candidate will employ a mixed-method approach. More specifically, the project will run a Q-methodology, which a powerful semi-quantitative tool for prioritising and grouping expert insights (Nikitas et al., [2024](#)) necessary for forecasting and decoding the employment disruption specifics followed by an online attitudinal survey for the general public and transport professionals. A Q-Analysis followed by a Structural Equation Modelling approach will produce our results. The project's theoretical underpinning will be that of an extended model of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

### ***Any other relevant details***

Our results will contribute to the study of Artificial Intelligence and its impact on the future of employment through the use of the driverless mobility paradigm as its case study. The project will produce critical recommendations eventually helping users, transport professionals, policy-makers and mobility-providers to adjust to the era of CAVs.

## **An empirical analysis of the impact of ESG practices on financial firms' reputation and performance**

Main Supervisor: Nodirbek Karimov

Email: [n.karimov@hud.ac.uk](mailto:n.karimov@hud.ac.uk)

Co-supervisor: Prof. Abhijit Sharma

Email: [a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

This research aims to assess the ESG (environmental, social and governance related) performance of financial firms, specifically focusing on how ESG (and its pillars namely particular environmental, social, and governance practices) risks impact key bank performance indicators as well as reputation, and risk management.

The data on ESG metrics and financial data can be obtained using Fitch Connect and Refinitiv. Some possible questions that can be explored relate to the potential impact of ESG practices/risk on key performance indicators for banks, including:

- **ESG and impact on performance:** Examining any potential relationship between ESG performance/risk and measures like profitability, operational efficiency, and loan delinquency rates.
- **ESG and reputation:** Investigating how stakeholder perception and overall reputation may be affected by a bank's commitment to ESG initiatives.
- Use of cutting-edge statistical methods including possible use of quantile methods to assess the impacts on the entire distribution of the key variables of interest rather than only or mainly focusing on the mean as is done in conventional regression analysis.

## **Digital humans and emotional support, connection and guidance**

Supervisor: Araz Zizar Email:

[a.zirar@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.zirar@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

A 'digital human', a highly realistic digital entity, resembles humans in look and behaviour and can converse with humans (Silva & Bonetti, 2021). Digital humans can present information, help humans learn skills, and support people with disabilities (Alsokkar et al., 2023). Research suggests that performing a task with digital humans improves humans' attention and memory abilities (Fabio et al., 2021).

While computer manipulation allows rendering human-like gaze for digital humans to communicate warmth (Cuello Mejía et al., 2023), competence is influenced by the anthropomorphism of a digital human (Pizzi et al., 2023). Further, even if digital humans have human-like appearances and voices (Tastemirova et al., 2022) and are high in behavioural realism (Guadagno et al., 2007), humans still only trust digital humans when guidance is for a predictable outcome (Lin et al., 2023). Moreover, in several cultures and religions, humans seek emotional support, connection and guidance from the same sex (Liu & Yao, 2023). The existing literature, therefore, builds on the idea that humans suspend their disbelief that digital humans are inherently false (Golf-Papez et al., 2022). The research question that guides this study is: How do humans perceive receiving emotional support, connection and guidance from digital humans?

### ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

The research design will be qualitative. The data collection will mainly be through semi-structured interviews. Other qualitative data collection techniques, such as focus groups, can be considered. The data will be analysed thematically following Braun & Clarke (2022).

# The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Microbusiness Performance

Supervisor: Tribikram Bhudhathoki

Email: [t.budhathoki@hud.ac.uk](mailto:t.budhathoki@hud.ac.uk)

## ***Outline of Proposed Research***

Adoption of emerging technologies has contributed considerably to microbusinesses' (MBs) ability to effectively overcome challenges, collaborate and interact with their business customers, and improve firm performance. Artificial intelligence (AI) is a system's ability to interpret and learn from data mimicking human intelligence and it is part of a new generation of technologies that introduce novel approaches in the business context. In a survey of executives, Ransbotham et al., (2019) found that 90% of respondents agree that AI presents an opportunity for their organisation and Nafizah et al., (2024) has also argued that adoption of AI and machine learning by microbusinesses can lead to increased market share and higher revenues.

Given the importance placed on MBs for economic growth in the United Kingdom, it is imperative to identify drivers and outcomes of adoption of new technological advancements so that these organisations succeed and remain competitive. However, there is currently a gap in the literature exploring this in the context of B2B MBs acceptance of AI practices. Therefore, the questions this research aims to answer are:

1. What are the main antecedents and consequences of acceptance of AI practices by B2B MBs in the UK?
2. How could AI practices help B2B MBs improve their business performance?

To explore the research questions, this study will conduct a cross-sectional survey and collect a large sample employing a FAME<sup>1</sup> database. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) will be used for the data analysis. This research will provide a broader base for theoretical and practical understanding of issues related to AI practices in microbusinesses and the B2B sector in general.

---

<sup>1</sup> The FAME (Forecasting Analysis and Modelling Environment) database provides financial accounts (10 years) for over three million UK and Republic of Ireland companies including company and director contacts and numbers of employee.



## **Evolution of cash flow sensitivity of cash: international evidence**

Supervisor: Beata Coldbeck  
Email: [b.coldbeck@hud.ac.uk](mailto:b.coldbeck@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

The research project aims to investigate firms' cash flow sensitivity of cash holdings over time. More specifically the research delves into the literature of financial constraints by investigating the interactions between financial decisions of firms with an emphasis on the implications of recent economic phenomena such as financial crisis of 2007 and COVID-19. The findings and insights provided by the research would enhance our understanding of firms over time cash reserves decisions.

### ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

This project will involve use of an international long term secondary data set, available through the University's subscribed database: Refinitiv. Knowledge of Refinitiv is required.

Research will involve downloading, cleaning and re-organising data, and analysis of such data using suitable quantitative/ econometric methods. Knowledge of relevant econometric methods and of Stata program is required for data management purposes.

Research will centre around a model using Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) estimation procedure. This framework allows to recognize that firms' cash behaviour is characterized by a partial adjustment to long-term target cash and that adjustment involves a lag in removing the effects of random events which take firms away from their optimal cash level. This makes it possible to explore both the nature of adjustment and the empirical determinants of cash resources.

## **Exploring the influential factors of a growth mindset among the ethnic minority business owners (EMB) in the UK**

Supervisor: Muhammad Burhan  
Email: [m.burhan@hud.ac.uk](mailto:m.burhan@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

The landscape of entrepreneurship in the United Kingdom has evolved over the years, reflecting the increasing diversity within the business community. Ethnic minority business (EMB) owners play a crucial role in this transformation, contributing significantly to economic development (Smith, 2017). One key aspect of their entrepreneurial journey is the cultivation of a business growth mindset, which involves a positive and adaptive attitude towards both, challenges and opportunities (Dweck, 2006).

Ethnic minority business owners (EMB) in the UK often face unique challenges that can impact their mindset towards business growth. Discrimination/intersectionality, limited access to financial resources, and cultural biases can create barriers, consequently impacting their ability to scale their business (Denzin, 2018). These challenges can cultivate a fixed mindset, discouraging expansion and risk-taking (Morris *et al.*, 2010). However, ethnic minority entrepreneurs with a growth mindset are more likely to adopt innovative strategies, seek mentorship, and engage in continuous learning (Patel *et al.*, 2020). A business growth mindset is a belief in the malleability of abilities and skills, emphasizing effort, learning, and resilience (Dweck, 2006). While we know the significance of a growth mindset from the literature, we are yet to know the influential factors of such a mindset (Kumar, 2019). Accordingly, the research questions that guide this project are:

1. What are the key factors contributing to developing a business growth mindset among ethnic minority business owners?
2. How do individual characteristics, community influences and systemic factors influence business growth mindset among EMB owners?

This research will adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews and surveys. The study will target a diverse sample of ethnic minority business owners across various industries.

**A possible title (broadly): Embedding technology-enhanced teaching and learning into legal pedagogy**

Supervisor: Naila Anwar  
Email: [n.anwar@hud.ac.uk](mailto:n.anwar@hud.ac.uk)

***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

Doctrinal legal methods, comparative legal methods, political realism, interpretive approach.

Data: Primary and secondary laws.

***Education and Law – an inter-disciplinary proposals:***

As my current research project is in the areas of legal education, technology and regulation, I can see an opportunity for inter-disciplinary research with the School of Education. If there are any PGRs who want to explore legal aspect of education (regulation, pedagogy or modality/tech) I would be interested in supervising them. If inter-disciplinary, empirical research methods can be used.

## **The recruitment of older workers in the UK hospitality industry.**

Supervisor: Andrew Jenkins  
Email: [a.k.jenkins@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.k.jenkins@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

The UK hospitality industry is facing a recruitment crisis. A report from the UK's Office for National Statistics (2021) commented that the number of job vacancies in hospitality was at a record high, with three in ten hospitality businesses experiencing recruitment difficulties. According to the Financial Times (2022), hospitality businesses in the UK have lost 2 million workers since the end of 2019. Hospitality businesses in the UK have experienced recruitment difficulties due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit, demographic changes to the UK population and the poor image of hospitality work amongst many people (Jenkins, 2023). One possible solution to staffing problems in the UK hospitality industry is the recruitment of older workers.

The research question for this project is: "To what extent can the recruitment of older workers in the UK hospitality industry help alleviate staff shortages?"

### ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

It is anticipated that the research project will employ a mixed methods design, possibly commencing with a survey of the attitudes of HR/line managers in hospitality businesses to the employment of older workers followed by interviews with older workers (defined as anyone aged 50 and above). The interviews might focus on two groups of people: older workers in employment in the UK hospitality industry and older workers who are not in employment but who are looking for work.

### ***Any other relevant details***

This research fits with two of the UN's goals for sustainable development: decent work and economic growth (SDG 8) & reduced inequalities (SDG 10).

## **A subnational analysis of financial inclusion and economic inequality across regions within the United Kingdom**

Main Supervisor: Kay Smith

Email: [k.i.smith@hud.ac.uk](mailto:k.i.smith@hud.ac.uk)

Co-supervisor: Prof Abhijit Sharma

Email: [a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

The United Nations considers financial inclusion to be a key enabler of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) to promote economic growth and reduce inequality. There is a large body of literature looking at country-level and cross-country data but only one previous study by Sapre, Sharma, and Adkins (2024) that investigates subnational analysis of financial inclusion. This study used India as the focus on their investigation, and therefore, there is currently no literature using this type of analysis of financial inclusion within the United Kingdom.

This research will consider regional variations in access to credit within the United Kingdom. Identifying patterns of inequality between regions and considering how these differences in financial inclusion affects regional economic growth.

### ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

To achieve the research aims and objectives secondary data will be collected from available published indices that include regional information at various levels, for example, the indices of multiple deprivation. Using appropriate statistical techniques patterns of inequality across a robust sample of regions will be identified and evaluated.

## **The impact of board diversity, plasticity, and financial access on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) productivity: insights from the Northern Powerhouse**

Supervisor: Ruth Brooks Email:

[r.brooks@hud.ac.uk](mailto:r.brooks@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

Aim: To research the impact of diversity of senior leadership, and their access to finance, upon productivity, focusing on SMEs across the private, public and third sector.

The Project comprises three strands:

1. Measuring Productivity
2. The Impact of Diversity of SME Leadership on Productivity
3. The Impact of Diversity on Organisational Plasticity

Research indicates that diverse corporate boards are more productive (Dezso & Ross, 2012) and innovative (Griffin et al., 2019) which leads to improved decision making and performance (Rhode & Packel, 2014). Despite these benefits, women and ethnic minority groups remain under-represented in leadership roles (Geletkanycz et al., 2018). Much of the research to date has focused on large organisations, yet in the UK SMEs account for 99% of businesses (Ward, 2021). Improvements in SME productivity could therefore lead to significant economic growth. To improve the evidence base, a greater understanding of the impact between the gender and ethnicity upon SME leadership, particularly in relation to productivity, is required.

The PhD will focus on the second strand, to gain insight into the lived experiences of SME leaders in the West Yorkshire region to understand the influence of diversity on productivity. A qualitative methodology using semi-structured interviews will be adopted to gather the data. The data will then be qualitatively analysed to gain insights to support the work on the other areas of the project.

## Consuming natural places and spaces

Supervisor: Fiona Cheetham

Email: [f.cheetham@hud.ac.uk](mailto:f.cheetham@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

This PhD project will be of interest to applicants with a background in consumer research and marketing, and an interest in the natural environment, sustainable living, and responsible consumption. The research is premised on the assumption that if we are to preserve the planet for future generations it is imperative that contemporary consumer culture shifts radically to engender a more compassionate relationship with the natural world.

The project will draw on a burgeoning body of literature within consumer research, marketing, and cultural geography on human-nature connections and consumption (e.g. Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Cheetham, et al. 2018; Couper, 2018; Kunchambo, et al 2017), and a desire to contribute to the achievement of the following United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

**SDG 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities; a key target of which by 2030 to provide access to safe, inclusive, and accessible, green, and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older people, and people with disabilities.

**SDG 12:** Responsible Consumption and Production; a key target of which by 2030 to ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development, and lifestyles in harmony with nature.

Adopting qualitative research methodologies, you will unpack the relationship between people's engagement with natural places and spaces, and their engagement in sustainable consumption practices. Suggested research questions:

1. What mechanisms and partnerships work best to encourage key target groups to access and enjoy local green and blue spaces and places?
2. Can emotional connections with natural places and spaces lead to consumption lifestyles that are more harmonious with nature?

## **Leadership and moral identity; exploration of temporary and migrant workers' organisational citizenship behaviours and commitment**

Supervisor: Ijeoma Ukeni Email:

[i.ukeni3@hud.ac.uk](mailto:i.ukeni3@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

Leadership as a dyadic phenomenon influences followers as its direct recipients (Naber & Moffett, 2017). Hence, a dysfunctional relationship between leaders and their followers has huge ramifications that could lead to turnover (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021) and quiet quitting in a post-pandemic era. On the other hand, a healthy working relationship is said to positively impact employees' organisational citizenship behaviours (Thao & Kang, 2020) and commitment (Sokoll, 2014), which are beneficial to organisations. Yet, an emerging inquiry is whether this will be the case for temporary and migrant workers, who have to grapple with uncertainties. Whilst much of the literature on maternity leave covers has proposed ways that the leave takers can return to work and advance their careers, (Acas, 2024), the covers or contractors are themselves left to the clause of losing their job on the return of the leave taker even before the end of the proposed term (CIPD, 2023). It becomes imperative that they seek other opportunities and as such total commitment to one organisation is conceivably unrealistic or fluid at best. Normative commitment focuses on employees' perceived obligation to their organisation because it is the '*right and moral thing to do*' (CIPD, 2021; p.5), which is premised on deontic moral philosophy (Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007) and makes a compelling case for total commitment. Besides, morality to the self has become an important predictor of moral or ethical behaviours (Aquino & Freeman, 2009) and humans have a psychological tendency to possess a moral identity or goal to be respected within one's moral community (Krettenauer, 2022). It is, however, unclear the extent to which employees' moral identity can positively impact employees' commitment and organisational citizenship behaviours in the face of uncertainty. This novel integrative study that seeks to draw from moral psychology, philosophy and business and people management fields calls for quantitative or mixed methodology but is open to creative or alternative approaches.



## **Transitional entrepreneurship/ marginalization, and demarginalization through entrepreneurial ventures.**

Main Supervisor: Prof John Nicholson  
Email: [j.nicholson@hud.ac.uk](mailto:j.nicholson@hud.ac.uk)

Co-Supervisor: Dr Noor Muhammed  
Email: [n.muhammed@hud.ac.uk](mailto:n.muhammed@hud.ac.uk)

Co-supervisor 2: Dr Rabake Nana  
Email: [r.nana@hud.ac.uk](mailto:r.nana@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

The ideas of transitional entrepreneurship seminally proposed by Pidduck and Clark (2021) suggestion the potential of entrepreneurship to aid marginalized persons/groups to transition from a state of marginalization, probably characterized as a state of penury to something more sufficient. However, many questions remain regarding how this transition occurs. Alongside penury, the nature of marginalization could occur through race, gender, culture, religion, gender definition, past criminality, geographic peripherality, class, disability and many other factors. The proposers would be interested in receiving proposals that consider intersectional samples so that present the potential develop a theory of transitional entrepreneurship that transcends specific groups of marginalized peoples. The supervisory team would also encourage proposals that seek to uncover marginalized narratives in the qualitative accounts of marginalised groups and individuals in the emerging tradition of entrepreneurial journeys (Garud et al., 2014; Garud & Giuliani, 2013). The theoretical positioning may include concepts such as liminal entrepreneurship (Prashantham & Floyd, 2019) bricolage (Tasavori et al., 2018) nascent necessity entrepreneurship (Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018) institutional voids (Webb et al., 2020) and potential broader concepts like open strategy (Dobusch et al., 2019; Dobusch & Kapeller, 2018) which would allow for the potential for strategizing in transition to be considered as inclusion, transparency and closure (boundary decisions).

## **An empirical analysis of innovation and technology adoption within robotics and AI, including impacts on productivity and income**

Main Supervisor: Andrew Johnston

Email: [a.johnston@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.johnston@hud.ac.uk)

Co-supervisor: Prof. Abhijit Sharma

Email: [a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

Innovation and the adoption of technology are key factors in the development and growth of firms, industries, and economies. The National Innovation Systems literature has demonstrated that innovation and technology adoption is reliant upon the broader ecosystem of supporting organisations and institutions. Furthermore, national innovation systems tend to follow a clear trajectory based on the interaction of firms, industries, support organisations and institutions. Of course, the national innovation system is also influenced by exogenous factors such as human capital, openness of firms to collaboration, FDI, market structure and market changes.

In addition, new technologies involving robotics and artificial intelligence may allow increased automation capabilities and change the dynamics of the national innovation system and competition between firms. Given this context, we seek proposals that wish to develop this literature through an empirical examination of innovation and technology adoption using suitable firm/industry/country level data, with particular focus on the role of robotics and artificial intelligence and their impact on productivity and employability within the wider macroeconomy. Suitable quantitative methods would be employed.

This research seeks to address the following, related themes:

1. Analysis of the relationship (if any) between the diffusion and dynamics of innovation and technology adoption within firms/industries and the trajectory of these variables at national level.
2. The interrelationship between national innovation systems (NIS), institutional variables, and the dynamics of evolution of NIS.
3. The impact of innovation and technology adoption on productivity and the overall labour market; including an empirical, cross-country assessment of this.
4. The implications arising from such industrial structural change on employment, as well as necessary skills and qualifications (ie “desirable” characteristics of human capital).

## **Managing ecosystem of refugee employment in the British labour market**

Supervisor: Qiu Wang Email:  
[q.wang@hud.ac.uk](mailto:q.wang@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

Increasing numbers of people fleeing war, persecution or economic crisis pose a grand challenge to the British government and local communities. In response, a number national and local level policies were initiated to foster refugees' long-term integration into society and the labour market in particular, especially when the number of arrivals peaked since 2015 (McCollum & Findlay, 2015). For instance, The Refugee Employability Programme (REP) is a Home Office initiative for the specific needs of refugees. Similarly, the Refugee Employment Network (REN) brings together local authorities and business to ensure refugees in UK have access to paid work. However, a report reveals that refugees in the UK have a disproportionately low employment rate of 51%, compared with economic migrants who have an employment rate of 88%. Such gap narrows over time but remains present even after more than 25 years of residence in the country (Kone et al., 2019). A vital limitation seems to be various actors taking initiatives at a local, regional and national level without any kind of coherent strategy or actual exchange of information (Fernández-Reino & Brindle, 2024).

### ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

This research project will address this gap from an ecosystem perspective, compared to existing research and policy tend to focus on particular actors in isolation or tell us little about the interconnectedness among the interventions (Gericke et al., 2018). Ecosystem perspective has been adopted to explain multinational firm's resource allocation, legitimacy, and competitive advantage in host countries (Zeng, 2022). International Business in general offers a much-needed management perspective to address complex cross-border challenge such as refugee integration. Given the dearth of models to explain refugee employment as the function of ecosystem management, this study will use qualitative multiple-case research design. Rich, contextualized data will be collected from interviews with refugees, employers, government and support organizations. The MAXQDA software will be used to conduct a systematic and rigorous thematic analysis. The research aims to advance theoretical understanding and policy implication for a long-term refugee integration into the British social and economic life.

## **The impact of digital technologies on firms' internationalization strategies**

Supervisor: Nan Zheng

Email: [n.zheng@hud.ac.uk](mailto:n.zheng@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

The research will look at the impact of recent digital technologies on firms' internationalization strategies. Data will be collected through a questionnaire survey. The proposed relationships will be tested using regression analysis/structural equation modelling.

## **Public Transport Resilience in the Era of Disruptions: The Case of the UK**

Main Supervisor: Dr Nima Dadashzadeh

Email: [n.dadashzadeh@hud.ac.uk](mailto:n.dadashzadeh@hud.ac.uk)

Co-Supervisor: Dr Alexandros Nikitas

Email: [a.nikitas@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.nikitas@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

Public transport (PT) is the backbone of any local, regional, national and international transport system (Nikitas et al., [2015](#)) and the cleanest form of mass mobility in sustainability terms (Nikitas et al., [2021](#)). It is also the main mode of travel for vulnerable social groups like low-income, disabled, elderly, and people without cars such as students (Dadashzadeh et al., [2021](#), [2022](#), [2023](#)). Millions of road users cannot travel to address their daily activities when PT services are disrupted by *natural disasters* such as heavy rain/snow, flood, earthquakes, OR *human-made crises* such as pandemics, wars, shortage of staff due to strikes and system malfunctions. This is very frequent lately and has evolved to a massive problem for the UK economy. There is still limited understanding of the challenges and needs for both supply (PT service providers) and demand (PT users). This project aims to address this gap by determining the factors that underpin the provision and uptake of PT services during disruptions and suggesting evidence-based solutions to make PT more resilient.

### ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

In this project, the PhD candidate will use a mixed-method approach. Required data will be collected through interviews and online surveys from both PT providers and PT users. Then, Thematic Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling benchmarked against the Theory of Planned Behaviour will be used for our qualitative and quantitative analyses respectively.

### ***Any other relevant details***

Our results will benefit transport policy-makers and PT service operators providing them with a thorough understanding of users' requirements during disruptions to plan/provide customised services. The project will also generate recommendations eventually helping users to access more resilient PT services during disruptions.

# **Role of Law in incorporating Artificial Intelligence into Climate Change & Sustainability Frameworks**

Supervisor: Dr Kikelomo Kila

Email: [k.o.kila@hud.ac.uk](mailto:k.o.kila@hud.ac.uk)

## ***Outline of Proposed Research***

Climate Change is arguable the greatest environmental challenge of the modern era. As climate crisis intensifies, its impact on the environment, livelihoods, and communities becomes increasingly apparent. Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation are irreversibly displacing populations and rendering once-habitable areas uninhabitable. On the other hand, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (as reflected in various technologies e.g., 'green tech', 'fin tech' and 'reg tech') also raises profound legal, ethical, and societal questions. Many of these questions are connected to the role that law is called to play in an AI-driven world and in addressing issues such as the implications of AI for fundamental rights, algorithmic accountability and transparency in decision-making, the role of AI in law enforcement and the judiciary, and the need for global cooperation in this field. There is thus the need to investigate/carry out research on the capacity of global constitutions, state structures and regulatory regimes at international, regional, and national levels, to anticipate, mitigate and adapt to unforeseen climate crises and challenges, including climate displacement of persons, political crises, socio-economic disruptions, health emergencies, and environmental calamities. Also pivotal is the role of corporations, as key industry stakeholders, in incorporating AI in their internal regulatory structures as a tool to meet due diligence expectations, comply with regulatory frameworks, and improve their social and environmental impacts.

## **Possible Research Questions:**

1. What is the role of law in creating effective legal & regulatory frameworks for Artificial Intelligence usage in tackling Climate Change mitigation or/and adaptation.
2. Can Law be used as a tool for creating innovative legal/regulatory regime for intersecting AI with Climate Change & Sustainability Frameworks
3. What is the role of Law in creating a Legal/regulatory framework for the utilization of AI as a governance/adaptation tool, e.g. the creation of climate-resilient infrastructures through AI, or AI as a governance/securitisation tool, the strengthening of border control and pushback operations etc.

## ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

Doctrinal research methodology Social-legal research Comparative study

## **Exploring accountability issues in the accounting practices of African private organisations/NGOs/SMEs**

Supervisor: Jiafan Li Email:

[j.li2@hud.ac.uk](mailto:j.li2@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

Accounting and accountability practices have already well explored in private organisations and NGOs in developed countries (UK, US, Italy, Germany, etc.). In the past decade, academics have investigated accountability practices in developing countries (China, India, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, etc.) and carried out comparative studies between developed and developing countries. However, it remains unclear the development of accountability in the African context. With the necessity and promotion of sustainability and carbon emission reduction nowadays, transparency and accountability play a key role in engaging all stakeholders to contribute to the organisational transformation in various aspects. It is worth exploring the change in the African context.

### ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

A mixed research method is preferred to collect the first-hand data in less-explored countries/regions/areas. For example, participant observation (1-3 months) with daily recorded journals, semi-structured interviews with different stakeholders and questionnaires.

### ***Any other relevant details:***

The target area is accounting and accountability. The potentially targeted journals are accounting journals, such as AOS (ABS 4), AAAJ (ABS 3) and Accounting Forum (ABS 3).

## **Resolving paradoxes in sustainable business transformation**

Supervisor: Eshani Beddewela

Email: [e.s.beddewela@hud.ac.uk](mailto:e.s.beddewela@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

The climate emergency together with increasing governmental and stakeholder pressures, have propelled business corporations, specifically those operating in high-polluting industries, to adopt transformational changes within their business models. A key mechanism which facilitates such change is, the adoption of innovations. However, innovating for sustainability, can create conflicts in relation to the achievement of economic, environmental and social objectives of the business. In such instances, businesses need to resolve these 'paradoxes', in order to implement sustainable business transformations.

### **Research questions:**

1. How do firms in the process of innovating their business for a more sustainable future make trade-offs between different objectives?
2. What are the approaches which could be applied to study the 'tensions' in innovation for corporate sustainability – e.g. paradox approach etc.
3. How do corporations resolve sustainability innovation paradoxes? – for example, how do they use 'policy-practice' decoupling and 'means-ends' decoupling to resolve paradoxes for sustainable innovation?

### ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

Given the exploratory nature and the associated complexity and dynamism of the research problem the adoption of qualitative methods, comprising of the interview method and/or case study approach would be most suitable for this research.

### ***Any other relevant details***

The focus of the research should be on high-polluting industries and sub-sectors.



## **The Financial Implications of Climate Change on Business Sustainability**

### **Outline of Research Proposed: Climate change poses significant risks and opportunities for businesses**

Supervisor: Rukaiyat Yusuf  
Email: [r.a.yusuf@hud.ac.uk](mailto:r.a.yusuf@hud.ac.uk)

#### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

This research aims to understand how these changes are affecting the financial sustainability of businesses across various sectors. The motivation is the increasing need for businesses to adapt to climate change and the potential financial implications.

The research questions include:

1. How does climate change affect the financial sustainability of businesses?
2. This involves investigating how climate change-related events (like extreme weather conditions) are affecting costs, revenues, and ultimately the profitability of businesses. It will also explore how these changes are reflected in businesses' financial statements.
3. How are businesses adapting their financial strategies to mitigate climate change risks?

This part of the research will focus on how businesses are adjusting their financial and operational strategies to mitigate the risks posed by climate change. It will look into changes in investment strategies, adoption of green technologies, and shifts in operational practices.

#### ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

The research will adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative data will be collected from financial reports, sustainability reports, and other public disclosures of companies. This data will be analyzed using regression models.

Qualitative data will be collected through interviews and case studies to gain insights into the strategic decisions made by businesses in response to climate change. This research could inform policy-making by highlighting the role of financial strategies in promoting business sustainability in the face of climate change.

## **Can hybrid entrepreneurs benefit wage-paying employers? If so, how?**

Supervisor: Zhuang Ma

Email: [z.z.ma@hud.ac.uk](mailto:z.z.ma@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

Employees increasingly take wage-paying jobs while pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities (i.e., hybrid entrepreneurship). Hybrid entrepreneurs can contribute to wage-paying employers by sharing knowledge gained in the entrepreneurial endeavour. However, hybrid entrepreneurship presents challenges for wage-paying employers to reconfigure their human resource management (HRM) practices and incentive designs to create new forms of person-organisational fit, which can lead to desirable outcomes such as knowledge sharing and employee well-being. This research aims to explore how wage-paying employers design HRM practices in response to hybrid entrepreneurship with employee motivation and abilities in mind, and how such practices affect employees' person- organisation fit and subsequent behaviours (e.g., benefit sharing & turnover).

This study intends to answer the following critical research questions (RQs):

1. To what extent do wage-paying employers perceive hybrid entrepreneurs to be beneficial or harmful? Or another term?
2. How do those wage-paying employers develop HRM practices to facilitate the contributions of hybrid entrepreneurs?
3. How do those HRM practices affect employees' person-organisation fit and subsequent behaviours (e.g., knowledge sharing & turnover)?

### ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

A sequential mixed methods design involving qualitative and quantitative data

# **Micro-level decision-making and implementation of corporate sustainability strategies in Multinational Corporations**

Supervisor: Eshani Beddewela Email:  
[e.s.beddewela@hud.ac.uk](mailto:e.s.beddewela@hud.ac.uk)

## ***Outline of Proposed Research***

The decision-making process for corporate sustainability in Multinational Corporations (MNC) are driven by strategic priorities identified at either the global and/or regional levels. However, the implementation of these globally and/or regionally designed corporate sustainability strategies takes place at the national/country-level across different subsidiaries of the (MNC). In such instances there could be dichotomous differences between local stakeholder issues and those which are being addressed through the MNCs sustainability strategy, specifically in relation to social sustainability. As such, questions arise as to how subsidiary managers could utilise their managerial agency to influence the local-level implementation of corporate sustainability strategies.

## **Research questions:**

1. How do subsidiary managers engage in the subsidiary and/or regional level strategising for sustainability?
2. How do subsidiary managers negotiate with their head-offices to 'localise' corporate sustainability strategies?
3. What are the internal and external enablers (and barriers) which could support (or restrict) the exercising of managerial agency by subsidiary managers when implementing corporate sustainability strategies?

## ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

Given the exploratory as well as expansive nature of the research problem the adoption of qualitative methods, comprising of the interview method and/or case study approach or a mixed-method design, comprising of interviews and a large-scale survey, would be most suitable for this research.

## ***Any other relevant details***

The focus of the research should be on multinational corporations and their subsidiaries, across multiple countries.

## **CEO Compensation, CEO Characteristics and R&D**

Main Supervisor: Prof. Zulfiqar Shah

Email: [Zulfiqar.Shah@hud.ac.uk](mailto:Zulfiqar.Shah@hud.ac.uk)

Co-supervisor: Prof. Abhijit Sharma

Email: [a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

The study aims to examine how CEO compensation and CEO Characteristics influence the extent of R&D expenditures. In addition, it also examines the relationship across two situations (1) when CEO retires and/or CEO is replaced (2) when firms face a small decline in earnings or a small loss.

### **Research questions:**

1. How do subsidiary managers engage in the subsidiary and/or regional level strategising for sustainability?
2. How do subsidiary managers negotiate with their head-offices to 'localise' corporate sustainability strategies?
3. What are the internal and external enablers (and barriers) which could support (or restrict) the exercising of managerial agency by subsidiary managers when implementing corporate sustainability strategies?

### ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

Econometric analysis based on relevant literature

### ***Skills required***

This is an empirical study using archival data. An ability to download, merge, treat and analyse large datasets is required. Students undertaking this project require an understanding of some basic econometric techniques and the use of databases such as DataStream (Thomson International)/Worldscope/Refinitive.

# **The Impact of Environmental Policies Within the Transport Sector: An Analysis of Welfare Effects**

Main Supervisor: Eric Tchouamou Njoya  
Email: [e.njoya@hud.ac.uk](mailto:e.njoya@hud.ac.uk)

Co-Supervisor: Prof. Abhijit Sharma  
Email: [a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk)

## ***Outline of Proposed Research***

Environmental policies play a crucial role in enhancing economic welfare and sustainable development. Understanding the effectiveness of such policies is vital for addressing global environmental challenges such as climate change and resource depletion. There are often trade-offs between environmental policies and macroeconomic objectives. This research aims to examine the impacts of environmental policies within the transport sector, using microsimulation analysis for analysing welfare effects. Specifically, the study will explore how environmental policies targeted at the transportation sector affect sectoral and economic growth, income distribution, household welfare, poverty and inequality. By identifying effective policy instruments, this research aims to contribute valuable insights for informed decision-making. The study can be conducted in either a developed or developing country and can also be implemented at the regional level using a regional social accounting matrix.

## **Research Questions:**

1. What is the impact of environmental policies within the transport sector on overall economic growth and productivity?
2. How do transport sector environmental policies affect household incomes, household welfare, poverty, and inequality?
3. What policy instruments are most effective in achieving both environmental sustainability and macroeconomic objectives?

## ***Methodology, Data and Suggested Empirical Approach***

Quantitative Analysis: We will use (i) a dynamic transport-focused computable general equilibrium model and (ii) a microsimulation model to estimate the economywide impact, distributional effects, and impacts on inequality and poverty.

## ***Data Sources***

Social accounting matrix/input output tables and households survey data – available for most developed and developing countries.

## **The differential effects of environmental factors on children's education, health, and mental wellbeing in England**

Main Supervisor: Veronica Vienne

Email: [v.vienne@hud.ac.uk](mailto:v.vienne@hud.ac.uk)

Co-Supervisor: Prof. Abhijit Sharma

Email: [a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.sharma2@hud.ac.uk)

### ***Outline of Proposed Research***

Environmental conditions where people grow up can have long-term effects on people, which may come through their education, health, and mental wellbeing. In this project we aim to analyse the impact that environmental factors have on student's health, mental wellbeing, and educational outcomes in England.

Our main research questions are:

1. Do the environmental factors that students face impact their education?
2. To what extent do the environmental factors that students face impact their health and mental wellbeing?
3. Do the impacts differ for different groups of children?

The goal of this project is threefold. First, to analyse the impact that environmental factors have on students' educational outcomes. Second, to analyse the channels through which this could happen, namely their health and mental wellbeing. And third, to analyse the differential effects for different groups (distributional, geographical, etc).

We use suitable, cutting-edge regression methods to address our research questions. We aim to study the effect of environmental factors over different education and health outcomes, so we plan to use a mix of empirical approaches to identify causal effects.

The dataset for this project is a child-level longitudinal dataset that follows different cohorts of children living in England between 2006 and 2019. The educational, health, and mental wellbeing variables are retrieved from EChild (ADR UK), whereas the meteorological and atmospheric information is retrieved from various sources (including satellite and monitoring station observations).