

Wednesday Research Seminars 2019-2020 (Term 1)

2 October 2019

“An investigation of common factors in successful data science projects: A journey of three use-cases”

Krishnadas Nanath

Abstract

With data becoming the new oil of the 21st century, organizations are in constant pursuit of making informed data-driven business decisions. Analytics capabilities have leaped forward in recent years, and the amount of data collected by organizations has grown exponentially. The convergence of sophisticated algorithms, computational power, and cheap storage is fuelling rapid technology advances and business disruptions. However, ‘Data and AI Executive 2019 survey’ reported that only 31% of participating firms were truly data-driven organizations. IBM report also revealed that 87% of the data science projects never made it into the final production stage. This seminar aims at investigating the factors that contribute to the success of data science projects in business. I present my experience with three projects in data analytics that work on a business dataset and data science algorithms for generating efficacious business value:

1. Product Delisting in Retail- Given an option, which product would you remove from the product assortment in a retail store?
2. Keystroke Dynamics- Can your passwords be more secured if machines understand your typing behavior?
3. Park Assist- Can image recognition find your car in the parking lot of a mall in real-time?

The journey of these use-cases, along with the insights from the literature led to the development of a data science project framework. This framework highlights the factors that contribute to the success of data science projects in business. I will be sharing initial results to get feedback that would assist in a broader content analysis research involving a sizable collection of use-cases.

Biography

Dr. Krishnadas is an Associate Professor in Data Science (Computer Engineering and Informatics department) at Middlesex University Dubai. In his previous role @ Majid Al Futtaim (MAF), he was responsible for leading the efforts of enhancing Analytics and Data Science capabilities at MAF as the head of School of Analytics. Before joining MAF, he was teaching Data Science, MIS and Cloud Technologies at Middlesex University Dubai, Institute of Management Technology (IMT

Dubai) and IIM Indore. He has executed several corporate training programs and Data Science consulting assignments with prestigious firms in UAE (PWC, Landmark Group, National Bank of Fujairah, UAE Exchange and others). He has been the Keynote Speaker at several forums including Gitex Technology Week IIM Ahmadabad Data Science Summit, Smart Data Conference, Droidcon, Machine Learning Summit, Abu Dhabi Quality Council and several conferences.

He received his Ph.D. from the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIM K), and his thesis covered the areas of Green IT (Sustainability Analytics) and Cloud Computing. His career started as a Computer Science engineer (B.Tech CSE), and he had successful professional experiences with Microsoft Research and Honeywell. He won the best paper award (2018) for his research work on "Using Data Analytics to Deliver Dynamic Safety Predictions for Reduction in Traffic Accidents." He was also awarded 'Sustainability Researcher of the Year' award by Dr. Rashid Alleem at Alleem Congress. His other awards include the SAS Ambassador Award, Wings of Excellence award (St. Gallen), Emerald LIS research fund award, and Acer Green Innovation award.

9 October 2019

"A Fresh Approach to Current Ratio with respect to Airline Industry"

Venkatachalam Ramanathan

Abstract

Current ratio is the most important ratio in financial statement analysis. Normally the banks and financial institutions expect the ratio should be around 1.5:1. However, what constitutes current assets and current liabilities is really a matter. In order to provide correct information to external users, financial statements of public and private companies should follow the standards prescribed by generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) or International Financial Reporting Standards or Indian Accounting Standards as applicable. However, there is no single law or standard or authority to standardize the formulae to be used in computing financial ratios and the definition of various components being used in the ratio analysis. This is the main reason that various parties use different definitions and in computing the value of different components and use different formulae in evaluating the financial metrics. This paper has highlighted the anomaly in the definition of current liabilities and current assets being used in calculating current ratio in respect of airline industry.

Biography

Dr Venkatachalam Ramanathan is a visiting faculty at Middlesex University Dubai. He received his doctoral degree in Commerce on "Securitization". He has three decades of experience in

accounting and finance, of which for 25 years he worked in banking in areas of relationship management, branch management, risk management and training, in UAE, Saudi Arabia and India. In the UAE, he is a training consultant for Emirates NBD and Emirates Islamic Bank. He is an associate member of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, London, The Institute of Management Accountants, USA among others.

16 October 2019

“Mapping sustainability practices at Middlesex University Dubai”

Belisa Marochi

Abstract

The Institute of Sustainable Development (ISD) at Middlesex University Dubai aims at advancing sustainability on campus and in the community through outreach, research and training. The objectives of ISD are to advocate the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), strengthen stakeholder collaboration and align academic knowledge to professional practice. As a signatory of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), the world’s largest corporate sustainability initiative, Middlesex University Dubai shows its commitment to creating a just and prosperous world by being the first university in the UAE to report campus-wide activities based on sustainability principles. In 2018, the Institute of Sustainable Development presented the Communication on Engagement (COE) Report submitted to the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) showing how Middlesex University Dubai embeds sustainable development goals and principles and operations, curricula, research and student experience. To identify best practices and map the current state of sustainable practices on campus, a qualitative study was conducted through a set of semi-structured interviews with faculty and administration. The report shows our excellence in sustainable practices and creates opportunities for future collaboration and engagement between university staff and the wider community.

Biography

Dr. Belisa Marochi is a Senior Lecturer in International Relations and the Head of the Middlesex Institute of Sustainable Development at Middlesex University Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. With a PhD in Social Sciences from Roskilde University in Denmark, a MA Political Science from University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and a BA Global Studies from University of California Santa Barbara from USA, her research mainly focuses on stakeholder engagement and urban governance processes. Committed to engaging stakeholders on taking action on women

empowerment, Dr. Marochi is active in the committee of the UAE Women Empowerment Principles (WEPEs) Taskforce under the UN Global Compact UAE Network. She has also contributed to UAE National Committee on Sustainable Development Goals policy on the role of Higher Education Institutions in reaching a sustainable world.

23 October 2019

“Official Launch of Student Research Society (SRS) & Student Panel Discussion”

Middlesex University Dubai Student Research Society

Summary

The Middlesex University Dubai Student Research Society (SRS) is an initiative by students, supported by the Student Research Committee. Established in 2019, and comprising students from a range of undergraduate programmes, the SRS aims to support the growing student research culture evident at Middlesex University Dubai. SRS members work alongside faculty to organise events such as the upcoming MDX/BCS Student Research Conference, deliver information and training sessions on research-related issues, and encourage research participation among the wider student body. This seminar, we celebrate the official launch of the SRS followed by an interactive discussion by a panel of current and former MDX Dubai students, who will share their research experiences and insights.

30 October 2019

“A Lonely Planet for Women Travelers”

Heather Jeffrey

Abstract

Writing for the Guardian, Linda Kinstler (2018) reported the censorship of advice for women travelers on TripAdvisor, especially when that advice relates to their personal safety. Much of the academic literature centred on women’s travel highlights their own responsibility in safeguarding themselves from dangers abroad. As such this paper aims to widen discussions from personal

responsibility to institutional responsibility by honing in on the travel trade press and its promulgation of discourses on women's travel. Acknowledging that Lonely Planet is an important brand in travel advice, but also that many tourists now turn to internet based advice, this research is centred on a discourse analysis (Foucault, 1972) of the Lonely Planet website's advice for female travelers. The findings show how Lonely Planet (re)instates spatial segregation and assigns responsibility to potential victims while minimising the importance of harassment and disregarding women's feelings towards harassers.

Biography

Dr Heather Jeffrey completed her PhD at Middlesex University, London in 2017, her thesis is entitled *A Discursive Analysis of Women's Femininities within the Context of Tunisian Tourism*. Heather joined Middlesex University, Dubai after having held faculty positions at the University of Bedfordshire, Middlesex University London, and the University of East London. Heather's research interests centre on social inequality, qualitative methods, and gender studies and she was pleased to have been invited to become a member of the European Commission-funded International Network for Comparative Analysis of Social Inequalities in 2016. More recently Heather has been invited to become an associate for the non-profit organisation Equality in Tourism, she is also a dissertation reviewer for the Gender and Feminist Geographies Research Group at the Royal Geographical Society. In addition to creating scholarly outputs, Heather has written for the Huffington Post on issues related to tourism, gender and academia.

6 November 2019

“The marginal propensity to consume for different socio-economic groups”

Zara Canbary

Abstract

This paper investigates the marginal propensity to consume for UK households across different socio-economic groups. It uses the Family Expenditure Survey, a repeated cross-section of British Households, which reports expenditure, income, and household characteristics from quarter 1 of 1986 to quarter 1 of 2016. Since each household is interviewed only once we construct pseudo panels based on the socio-economic status of the household head. We find that households with higher socio-economic status have a lower marginal propensity to consume. We also find that the marginal propensity to consume increased after the 2007-2009 financial crisis. This study supports the hypothesis that credit constraints are more serious for lower-income groups.

Biography

Zara Canbary has recently submitted her PhD in Economics at Brunel University London. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Finance and Accounting from Brunel University London, and MSc in International Business, from the Australian University of Wollongong in Dubai, and BSc (Hons) in Business and Economics from Tehran University, Tehran, Iran. Her research mainly focus on empirical issues relating to consumption using household-level data. She has gained extensive experience investigating microeconomics, behavioral economics, and micro-econometrics using “Big Data”. Her thesis includes three papers examining households’ responses to different types of income shocks.

She has presented her research in different seminars and conferences such as “Family Finance Surveys User Conference, 2018” and “Brunel University London Economics and Finance Symposium, 2017, 2018, 2019“, and the 3rd International Conference on Advances in Business and Law (ICABL) 2019 in Dubai (upcoming).

13 November 2019

“Using Immersive Virtual Reality to Become Einstein”

Sameer Kishore

Abstract

Several studies over the past few decades have shown that people tend to react to situations in Virtual Reality (VR) as they would if that event were happening in real life. Concepts such as Presence, Place Illusion and Plausibility Illusion refer to the feeling of ‘being there’ in the virtual environment and believing that the events taking place in VR are really happening. Taking advantage of this phenomenon, experiences have been developed in VR for several applications: Treatment of phobias (fear of spiders, fear of public speaking, etc.), social psychology studies (bystander effect, racial bias, etc.) and even medical treatments, such as stroke rehabilitation. In this talk, after a brief overview of the technology and various interesting applications, I will talk about a recent study that we published, where we developed an application that was used to treat people with a fear of heights (acrophobia). The results were very positive in terms of improving the level of fear of the participants and were published in The Lancet. In addition, I will also talk about how owning a virtual body in VR tends to influence higher-level behaviour and implicit biases. I will provide certain examples from past research, and then talk about a study we carried out where we ‘embodied’ university students in the body of Albert Einstein in order to see if that would improve their cognition. We observed that ‘becoming’ Einstein improved their performance in a cognitive task and reduced their implicit bias against older people.

Biography

Dr Sameer Kishore is a senior lecturer at Middlesex University Dubai. His main research interest is human-robot interaction with a specific focus on studying the effects of having an illusion of body ownership over a humanoid robot. Dr. Kishore completed his PhD in 2016 at the University of Barcelona. He was awarded a three-year pre-doctorate grant from the Government of Spain for carrying out his PhD and received an additional award for successfully completing and defending his thesis. He spent a year as a post-doctoral researcher involved in a project funded by the Government of Spain, regarding higher-level cognitive functioning and implicit behaviours in immersive virtual reality. He has worked with state-of-the-art technological systems and carried out several studies, which were published in prestigious peer-reviewed journals and conferences such as The Lancet Psychiatry (Impact Factor 2018: 18.329), IEEE Computer Graphics & Applications and the ACM Symposium on Virtual Reality Software and Technology. His work has received widespread media coverage, including channels such as the BBC, The New Yorker and The Guardian. Dr. Kishore has a Master's degree in computer graphics and computer vision from University College London, UK and a bachelor's degree in computer science engineering from Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Dubai.

20 November 2019

“Rhythm and the Short Story”

Louise Edensor

Abstract

The beginning of the 20th century in Britain was a period of paradigmatic shifts in technology, science and culture. The human experience of living through such changes was reflected in the literature of the period, particularly literature that sought new ways of representing and contextualising the effects of change on the self. Much of this literature was published in ‘little magazines’ which were pervasive and popular. One such magazine was Rhythm, a magazine that would ‘be the rhythmical echo of the life with which it is in touch’. Its editor, John Middleton Murry, was a critic of some renown, but had little experience in commissioning and publishing short stories. Nevertheless, Rhythm became a haven for new (and established) literary talent that could encompass and narrativize the aims and ideals of the magazine. Scholarly interest in the artwork published in Rhythm (it was the first magazine in Britain to publish sketches by Picasso) has been thorough but little critical attention has been directed towards the short stories in the magazine. The stories, however, represent a rich tapestry of aesthetic approaches, narrative techniques and experimentation with style, sometimes deliberately reworking the genres of the fin-de-siècle. Drawn from a recently published book chapter, this seminar paper seeks to illustrate how the short stories in the magazine absorbed and re-textualised human concerns with the zeitgeist of early 20th century Britain. In so doing, these stories connected with and exemplified the artistic and rhetorical framework established by Murry’s conceptualisation of how a ‘little magazine’ could push the boundaries of the avant-garde to create unique and innovative artforms.

I will show how the short stories are functional, utilised not simply for their own artistic tenets but as a tool whose form is exploited in order to underscore the foundations upon which the magazine was determined to set itself.

Biography

Dr. Louise Edensor has a PhD in English Literature from the University of Northampton, UK. Her thesis explores the work of the short story writer Katherine Mansfield and the development of literary techniques that could accommodate her thoughts on matters of the self. Louise has published papers and book chapters on Mansfield and her associates. Louise's current research interests extend to the little magazines of the early 20th century and she is currently re-writing her thesis to prepare it for publication.

27 November 2019

“IoT and Smart Services”

Maha Saadeh

Abstract

The Internet of Things (IoT) has been introduced recently as the future of the Internet that provides different services in wide range of applications such as smart monitoring, navigation and route planning, healthcare, etc. It connects billions of objects which are different in their capabilities, size, and functionalities. Recently human lifestyle is influenced by the development of different IoT applications. These applications support different humans' daily activities such as transportation decisions, traffic and healthcare monitoring, route planning, elderly and children supervision, and many more. In order to motivate people to use different IoT applications and be part of the new connected world, it is important to provide some security services such as authentication. People would not be convenient to share and exchange their data and personal information unless efficient protection schemes are used to prevent any malicious behavior. Therefore, efficient security and authentication provisioning are necessary for the development and deployment of IoT applications. The diverse nature of numerous IoT objects creates several challenges that should be considered in the development of authentication schemes such as heterogeneity, mobility, scalability, and constrained devices.

In this seminar I will talk about the Internet of thing; components, importance and challenges. In addition to that, I will present recent studies that we published related to IoT smart services mainly, objects' authentication and smart transportation.

Biography

Dr Maha Saadeh holds a PhD in Computer and Networks Security and has both a BSc in Computer Science and a Master's in Computer Science from the University of Jordan. Her teaching and learning interests include Information and Network Security, Artificial intelligence, Robotics, Machine Learning, IoT, Computer Networks, Cloud and Fog Computing and Programming Languages. Her work has been published in leading journals and conferences.

4 December 2019

“An international exploration of what truly matters for student engagement”

Dawn England

Abstract

Join in a discussion of student engagement, where we will attempt to uncover the universals to student engagement globally. We will discuss contemporary perspectives on student engagement in the literature and highlight a new perspective on the importance of belongingness and career relevance to students. Research will be presented on a 4 year longitudinal research project in Guatemala examining what makes elementary school children drop out of school, followed by a multi-university intervention study in the UK to understand Black and Minority Ethnic student attainment in higher education. We will then review data from students at Middlesex University to explore extracurricular activities and lecture strategies that make them feel engaged. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of student engagement, pushing past the dogmatic and relatively boring approaches commonly paraded in education to attempt to understand what truly matters and how to best engage students of all ages across all levels of education.

Biography

Dr. Dawn England aims to apply the power and insight of research to innovations in education and human development, with a firm commitment to the idea that where you are born should not dictate what you become. She has collaborated with scholars in 17 countries over the past decade on research involving educational attainment in low- and high-income countries, including serving as Principal Investigator on a \$300,000 grant to study educational attainment in elementary and middle school across 5 countries and a position as Academic Lead for a HEFCE funded intervention to reduce the attainment gap in higher education across 3 UK universities. She holds a PhD from Arizona State University in Family and Human Development and an MBA from Hult International.

11 December 2019

“Conducting experimental research with emerging communication technologies: from virtual reality to social robots”

Laura Aymerich-Franch

Abstract

My research promotes the positive applied uses of emerging communication technologies, principally with virtual reality and social robots, to enhance the human well-being. In this talk, I will review the principal research projects I have conducted in the last years. First, I will address the project conducted at the Virtual Human Interaction Lab, Stanford University, as a Fulbright postdoctoral scholar. In that project, I manipulated the appearance of avatars in immersive virtual reality in order to reduce social phobia. Next, I will explain the robot embodiment project, funded by the European Commission through the prestigious Marie Curie IOF grant, which was conducted at the CNRS-AIST Joint Robotics Laboratory (Japan) and at the EventLab, Barcelona University. In this project, we created a humanoid robot avatar and demonstrated that humans are able to experience these avatars as if they were their own body. I will discuss the potential applications of these findings in the area of wellbeing. Finally, I will talk about my current research projects, including the collaborative project being conducted at the MIT Media Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in which we use social robots to promote human psychological well-being through coaching experiences. The results of all these projects have been published in highly ranked JCR journals including the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, the International Journal of Social Robotics, Consciousness and Cognition, Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, and many others, and presented at international conferences several times including the International Communication Association General Conference.

Biography

Dr. Aymerich-Franch is currently a Ramón y Cajal senior research fellow at Pompeu Fabra University. She was a visiting scholar at the MIT Media Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2018/19). Previously, she was a Marie Curie IOF postdoctoral fellow (funded by the European Union) at EventLab, Barcelona University and at the CNRS-AIST Joint Robotics Laboratory, Japan (2014/17). Previously, she was a Fulbright postdoctoral scholar at the Virtual Human Interaction Lab, Stanford University (2012/14). She earned a PhD cum laude on Audiovisual Communication from the Autonomous University of Barcelona (2010). She has also been a visiting scholar at the iCinema, Centre for Interactive Cinema Research, University of New South Wales (2009). Laura has a background in Media & Communication (BA), Digital Communication Technologies (MRes), Behavioral Psychology (MRes), Media Psychology (PhD), Positive Psychology, and Life Coaching. Her research promotes the use of virtual reality and social robot for the enhancement of the psychological wellbeing.

18 December 2019

“Innovation in Marketing”

Matthew Brown

Abstract

“Innovation in Marketing” has seen significant interest in recent years. Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) has decided that so critical is the topic of Innovation to marketing and business success that a compulsory module on their Diploma in Marketing was created. This seminar aims to introduce concepts of innovation in marketing to an audience that may not be familiar with the discipline and illustrate through real-world case studies the innovation activities that are already in common usage. The study utilizes a range of contemporary theories and case studies to demonstrate how theory is being applied to modern business, in a variety of sectors. This includes the full process of innovation, from idea generation, change management, creating a creative environment, approach to innovation and implementation of innovation products and services.

Biography

Matthew Brown is currently a Lecturer in marketing here at Middlesex, after spending two years as Director of Professional Studies at the University of Buckingham in the UK and a visiting lecturer at London Metropolitan University, lecturing on MBA programmes at both institutions, specialising in digital marketing and marketing innovation. Matt has a wealth of commercial experience before entering academia; he was the Head of Global Business Development for the Linguaphone Group, an international language training organisation and an independent marketing consultant working largely in the Middle East with organisations such as Samba Bank in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Qatar Petroleum, Doha. Before that he was Regional Education Manager for the Chartered Institute of Marketing, running the operations for CIM throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Matt began his career in politics as Association Chairman for the Liberal Democrats in the UK. Matt is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and a Fellow of both the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) and the Higher Education Academy (FHEA). Matt has a master degree in Management from London South Bank as well as Professional Postgraduate qualifications from the CMI and CIM.

Wednesday Research Seminars 2019-2020 (Term 2)

22 January 2020

“Windows or Mirrors? Of or About? Searching for ‘The Bell’ in contemporary photographic practice”

Eddie Ryan

Abstract

“But as a photographer, I’m strictly a listener –
I listen to stories told to me not by people,
but by landscapes and places, houses and streets.”

Wim Wenders, www.dw.com Interview, 2015

Research in Art and Design subjects is frequently practice-based, yet is still underpinned by the traditional research question. Working photographically in the UAE throws up many interesting conundrums that require careful consideration when making bodies of work that are legally compliant and respectful of the cultural codes of the country in which they are being made. My work involves making conceptual imagery that interprets non visual cultural material, meditative walking, and an engagement with exploring ideas around place and landscape, and our place in both.

To begin with, the research question was how to make photographs that document the liminal space between geographic location and respectful cultural enquiry, and the presentation is a reflective look at two concurrent photographic projects - one with its roots in Irish traditional music, the other in the subjectively interpreted understanding of a grace note.

Biography

Eddie Ryan is a visual communicator, design educator and photographer. A graduate of Central St Martins School of Art and Design, London, he began his creative career as a graphic designer. His primary means of expression is through photography, a subject he has utilised both figuratively and conceptually in analogue and digital forms. His work has been exhibited physically, online and in print on Featureshoot, Open Skies Magazine, Air Magazine, ‘Spotlight Sunday’ with Gulf Photo Plus, Vantage Point Sharjah 6, GPP’s ‘Behind The Portrait’ and ‘The Arab Street II’ community exhibitions, and is currently showing in ‘Observations in the Ordinary’ hosted online by The Image Guide.

At present, he makes photographs of the incidental visual phrases or ‘grace notes’ he encounters on walks through various Dubai neighbourhoods that give a sense of how the city speaks as itself in images, photographing the showing forth of the personality of a landscape he’s spending the time interpreting in order to understand.

29 January 2020

“To Wi-Fi infinity and beyond! A discussion of minors, iPads and internet usage”

Alun Epps

Abstract

The objective of this paper is to examine the concept of minors, iPad and internet usage. The methods deployed are a rigorous examination of the current literature in this nascent field coupled with educated observations and the development of a theoretical model. The study finds that whilst there are apparent benefits for minors having unlimited access to the internet, there are obvious causes for concern in the form of harm to the users. These are illustrated by way of a six sector theoretical matrix that the author proposes be tested in both a qualitative and quantitative manner.

Biography

Dr Alun Epps is the MBA CPC and Associate Professor in Marketing at Middlesex University Dubai. His creative teaching repertoire comprises; brand management, personal and professional development, marketing communication strategy, international business as well as post-graduate dissertation coaching (100+ successful completions). He has a PhD from the University of Wales and MBA from the University of Portsmouth and a BA from London South Bank University.

Dr. Alun has had numerous scholarly works published, presented at conferences across the globe, acted as guest editor for the International Journal of Business and Globalization as well as the World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development. His research spectrum includes; online and offline marketing communications, consumer behaviour, branding, education management, internet addiction in minors as well as community entrepreneurship.

He constantly acts as a principal on university consulting projects that include; Gargash Enterprises Mercedes-Benz, Chocolat handmade Swiss chocolates, Camelicious camel milk, an iconic Dubai leisure facility and most recently Etuix up-cycled fashion. Prior to his quarter of a century in academia his vocation lay in media and entertainment, including stints at the BBC, Virgin and the Rank Organization. Dr Alun has been in Dubai since 1999 and serves as a Governor for curriculum matters Gems FirstPoint School.

05 February 2020

“Immersive virtual reality to reduce racial bias and improve parenting

Domna Banakou

Abstract

My research focuses on immersive virtual reality (IVR) and how people respond to events within virtual environments. I'm attracted by the idea of simulating situations that are difficult (or impossible) to realize in physical reality, and I am especially interested in the topic of bodily representation. I focus mostly on studying transformations of the virtual bodily appearance, inspired by body ownership illusions as studied in cognitive neuroscience. My work explores the perceptual, behavioral, and higher level cognitive correlates of body ownership illusions that occur as a function of the type of body in which embodiment occurs. In this talk, I will focus on the use of embodiment techniques in IVR to bring about positive change, and specifically, to address empathy. First, I will give emphasis on the influence of owning a different race body on racial discrimination, a social phenomenon of increasing interest over the past decade. I will provide some concrete examples from the literature and present two recent studies on how implicit racial bias can be modulated in the long-term and under different social contexts. Next I will talk about how embodiment can be used to promote positive parenting, with two studies showing that embodying mothers in a child's body improves their empathy towards their children's needs. Last, I will bring up some ethical considerations that arise from the use of IVR related to the above topics, and I will cover briefly the current project I'm involved in at the Event Lab – MoTIVE - where we explore how IVR can be used to live through events from the past, specifically music concerts, and use these as a platform for scientific studies.

Biography

Dr Domna Banakou is a postdoctoral researcher at the Event Lab (Experimental Virtual Environments for Neuroscience and Technology) at the University of Barcelona. Dr Banakou completed her PhD in clinical psychology and psychobiology at the University of Barcelona (2017). She also holds a Master's degree in computer graphics, vision and imaging from University College London, UK, and a Bachelor's degree in computer science from the Ionian University, Greece. She was awarded a major three-year Spanish doctoral grant for her research, and she has won many other prizes for her academic achievements. She has collaborated with researchers internationally and first-authored research papers published in distinguished peer-reviewed journals and conferences, including two articles in PNAS and three articles in Nature Scientific Reports among others. She has given invited talks at esteemed international scientific meetings, and her research has been featured on major

media channels in Spain and abroad (BBC, The New Yorker, The Psychologist), including a documentary film (BIAS). She combines technical expertise and experience in research methodologies to understand and promote the use of virtual reality in the fields of psychology and cognitive neuroscience.

12 February 2020

““On The Margins of Where?: Representations of the Mainstream and the Marginal in Local and Global Cinema”

David Tully

Abstract

Cinema studies in recent times have come to lionize the era from 1967 to 1975 as the last Golden Age for Hollywood filmmaking, an odd period of creative freedom between the collapse of the classical era Studio System and the rise of the Blockbuster System that we still find mainstream filmmaking locked in. There are startling parallels between Hollywood’s situation in 1967 and its current one – this may signal, if we can learn anything from history, that the era of the Blockbuster is winding down. But if mainstream films appeal to a global audience, where are the off-the-beaten-track, on-the-margin films that would speak more directly to the turbulent cultural revolutions of our own time? Or have we truly come to a time where a viable “alternative” culture is no longer a possibility, engulfed as we all are in the web of social media – and if so, what does that say about the future of filmmaking? In other words, has our vision become so fragmented in the deluge of information, that terms like mainstream and marginal have ceased to hold any meaning, and “marginal” tales are therefore impossible? My discussion will attempt to find some answers to these questions.

Biography

Dr. David Tully holds a PhD in Literature from New York University (USA). David had previously taught at New York University, served as Public Affairs Liaison for the NYU Medical Center, and was Research Manager for News and Specials at VH1, as well as Head of Development for Oscar-winner Volker Engel’s production company in Los Angeles. In Munich, he worked as scriptwriter for TV and features, and headwriter for series. In Dubai, Tobe Hooper directed Tully’s screenplay DJINN. His script THE SANDMAN will be directed by Dario Argento and star Iggy Pop. Joe Dante is attached to direct his CASTING THE RUNES, with Simon Pegg attached to star. Tully has also written the critical biography TERRY SOUTHERN AND THE AMERICAN GROTESQUE, and his novel THE KILLING FLOOR was published by Amazon 47North Press. He is Head of Media and Senior Lecturer in Film at Middlesex University Dubai.

19 February 2020

“Examining the Linkage between Class Attendance at University and Academic Performance in an International Branch Campus Setting”

Ajit Karnik, Pallavi Kishore and Mohammad Meraj

Abstract

The relationship between class attendance and academic performance has been an important area of research with a positive association being posited between the two. The setting for our study is an International Branch Campus (IBC) of a British University which needs to demonstrate the quality of its service delivery both to the parent institution and to the fee-paying students. We employ a dataset of over 900 students in an undergraduate degree programme and subject it to statistical techniques, namely, quantile regression and two-stage quantile regression. Our results show that attendance has a beneficial influence on academic performance and this benefit increases with the percentile of grades. We propose that IBCs could consider an attendance policy that encourages students to attend classes.

Biography

Ajit Karnik is Professor of Economics. He was previously Professor of Political Economy before assuming the role of Director of the Department of Economics at the University of Mumbai, and served as Professor of Economics at the University of Wollongong in Dubai. He has been Indo-American Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin (USA), Overseas Visiting Fellow at St John's College (Cambridge University, UK), Fulbright Scholar at the Haas Business School, University of California (USA) and Smuts Fellow at Wolfson College (Cambridge University, UK). He teaches across areas spanning Econometrics, Introductory and Advanced Economics, Marketing Research, Operations Strategy, Research Methods, and Trade and Multinational Enterprises. To date he has supervised the dissertations of 11 PhD students, 5 MPhil students, 25 MA students, 10 MSc Banking and Finance students, and over 75 MBA students.

Pallavi Kishore is Senior Lecturer in Accounting and Finance. She holds a Master's in International Business from the University of Wollongong Dubai and a BSc in Statistics from Delhi University (India). She is a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (UK), the Accountants and Auditors Association (UAE) and is a Chartered Accountant of the United Arab Emirates (UAECA). Pallavi has taught for over a decade and has received both the 'Innovation Award for Teaching and Learning' and the 'Distinction and Excellence in Teaching and Student Centred Learning'.

Mohammad Ali Meraj is Quality Manager. He is an educator and senior manager with over 15 years' experience within the higher education sector in the United Arab Emirates. Over thirty (30) postgraduate dissertations and entrepreneurship projects have been completed under his supervision. During his career as a practitioner, he has successfully established new departments in fields of institutional research, quality management and customer service earning several Excellence awards in the process. He has professional training, certification and experience in project management, research methodology and quality management. He possesses sound understanding of the cultural sensitivities and business practices in the UAE and thorough knowledge of popular educational systems (UK, EU, Australia and the Commonwealth national qualifications frameworks).

26 February 2020

“Launch of MDX Dubai Health Out Loud series & Re:Set Dialogues Panel Discussion”

Task Force on Happiness and Well-being

Summary

The Middlesex University Dubai Health Out Loud series is a 2020 initiative by the Task Force on Happiness and Well-being. Established in line with the UAE's vision and Expo 2020, the monthly series aims to open dialogue between students, staff, and the community on health issues in the hopes of raising awareness and increasing opportunities for local research on these subjects. The Health Out Loud series partners with local organizations to hold talks and disseminate information, aiming to bolster health and wellness through conversations, evidence-based approaches, and applied research. This seminar, we launch the Health Out Loud series as a collaboration with Re:Set Dialogues. An interactive discussion by a panel of MDX Dubai students, faculty, and industry specialists will share their experiences and insights on the topic 'Juggling school and self-care', and the audience is invited to join the conversation with their own questions, feedback, and findings.

04 March 2020

““Nothing but he said, she said: The impact of gender dyad and type of abuse on UAE students’ judgments of seriousness and blame”

Anthony Murphy

Abstract

Background

In recent months, significant shifts in legislation and policy have taken place to recognise victim groups from a range of abuse types, moving UAE structures away from a domestic violence model, closer to international conventions relating to coercive control and abuse. During this period, there has been significant media coverage and recognition of males victims in the UAE. This study explores variations in perceptions of seriousness and blameworthiness across three different forms of coercive control (physical, psychological, and financial) in cases of male-on-female and female-on-male dyads.

Method

250 students (age 18-40) from a UK-based university in the UAE were recruited, using convenience sampling, to take part in this independent-groups study. Each participant experienced one of six vignettes depicting a hypothetical coercive control scenario, varied by male-female/female-male dyad and type of coercive control. Participants rated the perceived seriousness and humorousness of the incident and the blameworthiness of the actors involved.

Findings

Results demonstrated significant effects in the perceived seriousness, humorousness, victim responsibility, and perpetrator responsibility of cases based on male-on-female and female-on-male dyads of the actors involved, and variations in physical, psychological, and financial control. These effects also appeared to interact. Findings demonstrate that participant’s views of coercive control are significantly impacted by the gender dyads of those involved and the type of control exhibited.

Biography

Dr Anthony Murphy is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Middlesex University Dubai. He developed an interest in forensic psychology during his undergraduate studies, and after completing an MSc in forensic psychology, he began working in medium and high secure forensic psychological care with high risk violent psychiatric offenders in the United Kingdom, along with several prisons. Anthony was offered a PhD scholarship with Middlesex University

after developing a study to examine the experiences of parents who gain a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder. His recent research aims to use the tools of psychology to improve policing, investigation, and outcomes for victims, specifically in relation to crimes against the person, focusing on rape, violence, and domestic abuse.

18 March 2020

“Maternity in the tourism industry”

Heather Jeffrey

Abstract

In many contexts adequate maternity protection is almost non-existent, especially in the tourism-related industries. Maternity protection ensures equal access to employment, but also to the continuation of employment, a lack of maternity protection can alienate half of a country’s human resources and perpetuate traditional biological sex roles. Drawing on the stories of women working informally and formally, and in the public and private sectors in the Tunisian tourism industry, maternity protection is presented as a major challenge to the UNWTOs assertion that tourism can aid in the attainment of SDG 5: "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" (UNWTO, 2016). Women’s stories highlight the incompatibility of policy with pregnancy, presented here as culturally bound, and tourism.

Biography

Dr Heather Jeffrey completed her PhD at Middlesex University, London in 2017, her thesis is entitled A Discursive Analysis of Women’s Femininities within the Context of Tunisian Tourism. Heather joined Middlesex University, Dubai after having held faculty positions at the University of Bedfordshire, Middlesex University London, and the University of East London. Heather’s research interests centre on social inequality, qualitative methods, and gender studies and she was pleased to have been invited to become a member of the European Commission-funded International Network for Comparative Analysis of Social Inequalities in 2016. More recently Heather has been invited to become an associate for the non-profit organisation Equality in Tourism, she is also a dissertation reviewer for the Gender and Feminist Geographies Research Group at the Royal Geographical Society. In addition to creating scholarly outputs, Heather has written for the Huffington Post on issues related to tourism, gender and academia.

25 March 2020

“Investigating technology readiness of students and faculty members for adoption of distance learning: a case-study from an International Branch Campus in the UAE”

Mohammad Meraj, Ajit Karnik and Pallavi Kishore

Abstract

With the outbreak of Coronavirus (Covid-19) in January 2020, the higher education sector found itself in ‘unchartered territory’. In the worst hit countries, schools and higher educational institutions (HEIs) were ordered to be shut with no students allowed on campuses for weeks. The setting for this research is a London-based HEI’s international branch campus (IBC) operating in the Emirate of Dubai. The shutdown of the University constitutes a “natural experiment” and provides a unique context for the study as IBCs, by their very nature, have a high proportion of international students and are expected to maintain the learning experience for their students comparable to that of the home campus. The objective of this study is to examine the preparedness of faculty and students to the adoption of technology to deliver lectures online. The study has obvious links with the Technology Adoption Model, which has been a workhorse model in numerous areas. We seek to investigate the factors that might influence technology adoption among faculty members and students for e-Learning.

The methodology for the study will be as follows. Our literature review will explore the factors that impact the user acceptance of e-Learning. Primary data will be collected from the two key user groups i.e. faculty members and students. We plan to use a mixed methodology to achieve these objectives, beginning with a qualitative phase consisting of in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted via online video-conferencing with a small group of users (N=5-10, for faculty members and students each), to identify the issues faced by them regarding e-Learning. We will use convenience sampling for both qualitative and quantitative data collection. We will develop our hypotheses using our findings from these interviews and our literature review. Finally, we will use a quantitative study (online survey) (N=250-300) in the early stages of online learning and again after a four/five-week period using comparable questionnaires. We will analyze this data using appropriate software packages (e.g. NVivo, AMOS and SPSS) to test our hypotheses. We will then discuss our findings, their conceptual and managerial implications as well as future research directions.

Biographies

Mohammad Ali Meraj is Quality Manager. He is an educator and senior manager with over 15 years’ experience within the higher education sector in the United Arab Emirates. Over

thirty (30) postgraduate dissertations and entrepreneurship projects have been completed under his supervision. During his career as a practitioner, he has successfully established new departments in fields of institutional research, quality management and customer service earning several Excellence awards in the process. He has professional training, certification and experience in project management, research methodology and quality management. He possesses sound understanding of the cultural sensitivities and business practices in the UAE and thorough knowledge of popular educational systems (UK, EU, Australia and the Commonwealth national qualifications frameworks).

Ajit Karnik is Professor of Economics. He was previously Professor of Political Economy before assuming the role of Director of the Department of Economics at the University of Mumbai, and served as Professor of Economics at the University of Wollongong in Dubai. He has been Indo-American Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin (USA), Overseas Visiting Fellow at St John's College (Cambridge University, UK), Fulbright Scholar at the Haas Business School, University of California (USA) and Smuts Fellow at Wolfson College (Cambridge University, UK). He teaches across areas spanning Econometrics, Introductory and Advanced Economics, Marketing Research, Operations Strategy, Research Methods, and Trade and Multinational Enterprises. To date he has supervised the dissertations of 11 PhD students, 5 MPhil students, 25 MA students, 10 MSc Banking and Finance students, and over 75 MBA students.z\

Pallavi Kishore is Senior Lecturer in Accounting and Finance. She holds a Master's in International Business from the University of Wollongong Dubai and a BSc in Statistics from Delhi University (India). She is a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (UK), the Accountants and Auditors Association (UAE) and is a Chartered Accountant of the United Arab Emirates (UAECA). Pallavi has taught for over a decade and has received both the 'Innovation Award for Teaching and Learning' and the 'Distinction and Excellence in Teaching and Student Centred Learning'.

01 April 2020

“Implementing an integrated curriculum in a foundation programme module: early findings from a study of faculty and student experiences”

Andrew Mackenzie, Rory McConnon, and Lynda Hyland

Abstract

University transition programmes can be generic or specialised. In the latter case, students are exposed to an array of discipline-specific content that they will study at a more advanced

level once they commence their undergraduate degree. The literature suggests that an integrated curriculum wherein concrete connections are made between aspects of taught content, can result in beneficial outcomes for students (Stohlmann, Moore, & Roehrig, 2012) and teachers (Zhou, Kim, & Kerekes, 2017). The current study focuses on an integrated curriculum foundation programme module with a theme of sustainability, which was created using a constructivist approach. Kolb's learning cycle (1984) was central to the development of this module in terms of the learning experience- abstract conceptualization, converging ideas, active experimentation/ learning by doing, and student reflection. The aim of this exploratory, qualitative research is to assess the perceived effectiveness of this module, as evidenced by student experiences, topic comprehension, and student self-efficacy. Furthermore, it aims to explore faculty perceptions relating to the delivery of this module. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a representative sample of 19 foundation programme students (i.e., students across a range of grade brackets) and with 7 lecturers who delivered this module. This project is ongoing, with thematic analysis being conducted on qualitative responses. Therefore this presentation will focus on the rationale for, and the methodology of, the current study, and will highlight some early themes which are emerging from the data.

Biographies

Andrew Mackenzie is a lecturer specialising in Marketing and Innovation at Middlesex University Dubai with over 20 years' experience in education and training. Currently Andrew's research interest is in the field of sustainability and he is driving recycling initiatives as an ambassador for the closed loop recycling platform, Simply Bottles and learning and development research in experiential learning. This in turn will lead to exciting studies in understanding the effect of marketing and education on behaviour patterns in sustainable practices in the UAE.

Rory McConnon is Campus Programme Coordinator for Middlesex University Dubai's Business Management Programmes. He is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, UK, and Project Management Professional at the PMI. A graduate in Environmental Resources Management, Rory completed his MSc. Renewable Energy and MSc. Energy Management at the University of Ulster before obtaining an MBA at Middlesex University Dubai. Rory has been the recipient of the 1st prize for an energy related dissertation from the Energy Institute UK and the Certificate for Outstanding Performance from Middlesex University Dubai, as well as an Excellence Award for Innovation in Teaching. He has several years' experience in the sustainable energy sector in Ireland. He served as Chairperson of the Association of Irish Energy Agencies, and was a board director and evaluator for two EU LEADER organisations responsible for the distribution of multi-million euro support budgets for economic, environmental, and cultural development programmes. Rory has devised and delivered many programmes of study on business, environmental engineering, and sustainable energy. His learning and teaching interests include international business, entrepreneurship, project management, and sustainability and environmental management.

Dr. Lynda Hyland is a senior lecturer in psychology at Middlesex University Dubai. She is a chartered psychologist and an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society. Lynda graduated with a M.Sc. in Health Psychology from University College London, where she also

worked at the Centre for Outcomes Research and Effectiveness on Department of Health (UK) commissioned projects. Lynda's other previous roles include project lead on a large-scale randomised controlled trial, and lecturer in Health Psychology at Trinity College Dublin's dental school. Her Ph.D. from National University of Ireland (Maynooth) focused on stakeholder experiences of the 'Incredible Years' Teacher Classroom Management programme. During her doctoral studies, Lynda was the recipient of a fellowship from The Atlantic Philanthropies. A methodological pragmatist, Lynda employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches in her research, spanning eclectic areas including education and intervention research, and chronic illness management.

08 April 2020

“Statistical Analysis of COVID-19 Data”

Ajit Karnik

Abstract

This research is concerned with examining the statistical properties of the COrona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) which has had a profound effect on how we conduct our lives. Starting from January 22, 2020 a large amount of data on various aspects of the disease are being made available by various agencies. The data include information on total and new confirmed cases, total and new deaths due to the virus and recoveries from the virus. I will be using daily data sourced from the Johns Hopkins University. This presentation is in two parts. The first part carries out a cross-country comparison focusing on the countries accounting for the largest number of confirmed cases as per the latest count. We also include the UAE in this group even though it does not figure in the worst affected countries. I show that despite dissimilar paths that the number of cases have taken in these countries, there is an underlying similarity in the exponential growth. In this context, I also touch on the defining feature of pandemics – the so-called R_0 – and attempt a simplified approximation of it. The second part of the presentation investigates the likely factors that explain the progress of the disease across countries. I do this by estimating equations to model the number of confirmed cases as well as the death rates across countries. Some of the factors that seem important are levels of national income, share of population above 65 years, number of tourist arrivals and doubling rate of cases.

Biography

Ajit Karnik is Professor of Economics. He was previously Professor of Political Economy before assuming the role of Director of the Department of Economics at the University of Mumbai, and served as Professor of Economics at the University of Wollongong in Dubai. He

has been Indo-American Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin (USA), Overseas Visiting Fellow at St John's College (Cambridge University, UK), Fulbright Scholar at the Haas Business School, University of California (USA) and Smuts Fellow at Wolfson College (Cambridge University, UK). He teaches across areas spanning Econometrics, Introductory and Advanced Economics, Marketing Research, Operations Strategy, Research Methods, and Trade and Multinational Enterprises. To date he has supervised the dissertations of 11 PhD students, 5 MPhil students, 25 MA students, 10 MSc Banking and Finance students, and over 75 MBA students.

15 April 2020

“Sustaining Education through COVID-19 Pandemic - Learning from the Past Crisis”

Sreejith Balasubramanian

Abstract

The unprecedented spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in worldwide closure of educational institutions, impacting over 1.5 billion learners (91% of the world's student population) and 63 million educators across 188 countries. While efforts have been taken to mitigate the immediate impact of closures, it is crucial that educational institutions regularly review the changing situation, enhance their preparedness, and develop long term strategies. The lessons from past epidemics/pandemics such as the Spanish Flu pandemic (1918-19), the SARS outbreak (2002-04), the Swine Flu (H1N1) pandemic (2009-10), and Ebola epidemic (2013-16) and other crisis such as natural disasters and warfare can significantly enhance our understanding and help manage the current crisis. This study will examine how educational institutions' in the past have responded to crisis and what we can learn from it to address the current COVID-19 crisis and enhance our preparedness for the future. A secondary research methodology was adopted in this study, which involved the review of scholarly articles, government reports, University websites and blogs, and other reliable sources. The secondary findings (educational institutions response to crisis) were categorized into five stages namely i) Implementing safety measures (initial response); ii) Campus closures; iii) Ensuring business continuity which include implementing distance learning, revising assessments, and reassessing grading and moderation; iv) Campus reopening, and v) Prepare for future crisis. The lessons learned from this study are expected to be useful for practitioners and policymakers in the education sector in devising effective strategies at different stages, identify and support the key success factors, and overcome challenges during the crisis.

Biography

Sreejith Balasubramanian is a Senior Lecturer in Supply Chain Management, and Chair of the Research Committee at Middlesex University, Dubai. Sreejith completed his PhD from Middlesex University Business School, London. He also holds a Master's degree in International Business from University of Wollongong and a Bachelor's degree in Electronics and Communication Engineering from University of Calicut. In addition, Sreejith also holds a Certificate in Statistics from University of California, Berkeley, and Supply Chain Management from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has more than 12 years of experience in teaching, consulting, research, and project management. Prior to joining academia, he served as a Research Analyst and IT Consultant for leading companies in the United Arab Emirates. His work has been published in leading international journals and conferences in areas of Supply Chain Management, Sustainability, Tourism, Higher Education, and Knowledge Management. Sreejith is also a member of American Statistical Association (ASA), Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), Academy of International Business (AIB), and Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

Wednesday Research Seminars 2020-2021 (Term 1)

07 October 2020

“The effect of differential quality and differential zealotry in the best of N problem”

Judhi Prasetyo

Abstract

The best of N problem scenario in collective decision-making is when a group of individuals must achieve consensus in selecting option with the highest quality out of the N available options. This bio-inspired research studies how the consensus equilibria changed with respect to quality of the options versus the quantity of zealots promoting bad options. Zealots are agents who keeps their initial opinion throughout the experiment; they can influence other non-zealot agents' opinion, but their opinion cannot be changed. We use a computer simulation program to model a swarm of bees looking to achieve consensus in selecting their new nest. We perform systematic computer simulations in an antagonistic scenario, whereby one option has higher quality but has a minority of zealots as compared to the other option. We want to know, if there are more zealots promoting the bad option, will that option win over the best one. We found that in certain setup, it is possible that the option with lower quality wins against the option with higher quality with the help of zealot agents.

Biography

For the past 25 years, Judhi has been providing both services in the information and communication field to various verticals including government entities and law enforcement agencies in more than 15 countries. His area of expertise ranging from IT Security and Cyber-defense, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), Wireless Communication, Embedded System, Computer Programming, Robots Building, to Business Processes & Project Management. Judhi received a Master of Science in Engineering Management Degree with Distinction from Middlesex University Dubai, and has been a member of Middlesex University Dubai teaching team since 2017.

14 October 2020

“A Tale of Two Cities: COVID Transmission in Mumbai and London”

Ajit Karnik

Abstract

This seminar contributes to the research on the COVID pandemic stalking many countries of the world. The focus of the paper is on the spread of COVID cases in the cities of Mumbai and London. Employing the approach of the theory of public goods, the pandemic is viewed as such a “good”, albeit one that bestows negative benefits on those who “consume” it. Specifically, the pandemic in the two cities is considered as a local public “bad” with spillover effects across geographical regions (wards or boroughs) of each city. Spatial econometric models using panel data are used to estimate these spillovers. A measure of spatial dependence is estimated over time and across areas of the two cities. The results show that spatial dependence is increasing over time, which is cause for concern as cities increasingly open up for economic and social activities

Biography

Ajit Karnik is Professor of Economics. He was previously Professor of Political Economy before assuming the role of Director of the Department of Economics at the University of Mumbai, and served as Professor of Economics at the University of Wollongong in Dubai. He has been Indo-American Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin (USA), Overseas Visiting Fellow at St John’s College (Cambridge University, UK), Fulbright Scholar at the Haas Business School, University of California (USA) and Smuts Fellow at Wolfson College (Cambridge University, UK). He teaches across areas spanning Econometrics, Introductory and Advanced Economics, Marketing Research, Operations Strategy, Research Methods, and Trade and Multinational Enterprises. To date he has supervised the dissertations of 11 PhD students, 5 MPhil students, 25 MA students, 10 MSc Banking and Finance students, and over 75 MBA students.

21 October 2020

“Examination of Fake online content from a Viral perspective: An interplay of emotions, resonance, and sentiments”

Krishnadas Nanath, Supriya Kaitheri, Sonia Malik and Shahid Mustafa

Abstract

With the growth of social media platforms, the consumption of online content has drastically changed. A report by the Jumpshot Tech Blog found that Facebook has 50% of the total traffic to fake news sites and 20% of total traffic to reputable websites (Jumpshot, 2016). This research takes up online news to examine fake content and develops a model that could automate fake news detection.

The authors of this research take up a dataset of news articles that are coded as fake and non-fake (manually code). They further use the concepts of virality and explore how content is made viral with the help of theories in the literature. The modeling is based on the premise that the prime intention of a fake news creator would be to make it go viral and attain the intended reach and clicks. Therefore, the variables that could make online content go viral are selected as the independent variables to predict it in the category of fake or not. The study selects four groups of variables for the machine learning modeling using logistic regression: Verbosity (word and sentence count), emotions (trust, joy, anger, anticipation, disgust, fear, sadness, and surprise), topic modeling, and resonance between title and article (sentiment match, positive and negative sentiments). The results revealed that positive emotions, longer articles, and high sentimental resonance between the title and the text led to lower chances of being a fake article. On the other hand, longer titles and content related to illegal activities led to higher chances of news being fake.

Biographies

Krishnadas is currently the Assistant CPC and Associate Professor in Data Science (Computer Engineering and Informatics department) at Middlesex University Dubai. In his previous role @ Majid Al Futtaim (MAF), he was responsible for leading the efforts of enhancing Analytics and Data Science capabilities at MAF as the head of the School of Analytics. Before joining MAF, he was teaching Data Science, MIS, and Cloud Technologies at Middlesex University Dubai, Institute of Management Technology (IMT Dubai), and IIM Indore. He has executed several corporate training programs and Data Science consulting assignments with prestigious firms in UAE (PWC, Emirates NBD, Landmark Group, National Bank of Fujairah, PDO, UAE Exchange, and others). He received his Ph.D. from the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIM K), and his thesis covered the areas of Green IT (Sustainability Analytics) and Cloud Computing. His career started as a Computer Science engineer (B.Tech CSE), and he had successful professional experiences with Microsoft Research and Honeywell.

Supriya is currently working as a faculty in the Business school at Middlesex University Dubai campus. Before joining Middlesex, she completed her doctoral studies at the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, and the thesis was in the area of ICT for social development and e-Governance. She was also a Gold medalist in Computer Science and Engineering. She works in the areas of e-Governance, User Technology Readiness, Data Analytics, and Cloud Computing. She has special interests in the areas of Quantitative Research, Business Analytics, Social media Analytics, and Experimental Research.

28 October 2020

“A Scalable Correlation clustering strategy in Location Privacy for Wireless Sensor Networks against a Universal Adversary”

Chinnu George and Sharon Luke Babu

Abstract

Wireless network sensors are outsized number of pocket sized sensors deployed in the area under surveillance. The sensor network is very sensitive to unattended and remote Environment with a wide variety of applications in the agriculture, health, industry. There are lots of challenges being faced with respect to the energy, mobility, security. Suppose we take the scenario of the panda – hunter where in sensors are being deployed in the forest to monitor the endangered pandas. The adversary is quite efficient to monitor the panda and capture the panda. The research presents with regard to the context based surrounding information which has location privacy to the source node against an adversary who sees the network at a whole so a correlation strategy is proposed for providing the privacy.

Biography

Ms. Chinnu George is a lecturer in Computer Engineering and Informatics department at Middlesex University Dubai. Ms. Chinnu's career excellence at Middle East kicked off from University of West London, RAK. She has delivered several Faculty development program associated with Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme of Government of India (TEQIP). She has won awards for research excellence while working with UWL, RAK. She has also worked as Research Associate with Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO), Bangalore, India. Ms. Chinnu was assigned as the Regional Head-Goa as Campus Connector of “Infosys” which is a leading MNC that offers business consultancy, IT and other outsourcing services. Her career started as Assistant Professor with Don Bosco College of Engineering (DBCE), Goa, India. While working with DBCE, Goa she has received youngest faculty award 2017. She works in the areas of Wireless sensor networks, Mobile communication and data governance.

04 November 2020

“The Subversion of Women’s Anger in Travel Guidebooks”

Heather Jeffrey and Siân Stephens

Abstract

Guidebooks have a privileged role in tourism, they direct not only the gaze but also bodily engagements with the destination. Taking account of this influential role, surprisingly few feminist leisure scholars have engaged guidebooks as a source of data. This presentation aims to address this gap by utilising feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) to explore the women’s travel advice section in Lonely Planet on-line for destinations identified by travel bloggers as the most dangerous for women travellers (Fergusson & Fergusson, 2019). The results of the FCDA reveal that Lonely Planet ‘advice’ acts to discourage and subvert the anger women travelers’ experience when confronted with gender based violence. The ‘guidance’ offered to women travelers transmits the message that anger at misogyny and sexual violence is not legitimate when a woman is not at ‘home’ and entails the assumption that feeling (or displaying) anger when abroad is culturally inappropriate. The subversion of women’s anger in guidebooks may mean that women feel they must accept behaviours they find unacceptable, or that reporting the incident would be culturally disrespectful. Our findings must inform future guidebook writing if guidebooks are to ethically provide information to travelers.

Biographies

Dr Heather Jeffrey completed her PhD at Middlesex University, London in 2017, her thesis is entitled *A Discursive Analysis of Women’s Femininities within the Context of Tunisian Tourism*. Heather joined Middlesex University, Dubai after having held faculty positions at the University of Bedfordshire, Middlesex University London, and the University of East London. Heather’s research interests centre on social inequality, qualitative methods, and gender studies and she was pleased to have been invited to become a member of the European Commission-funded International Network for Comparative Analysis of Social Inequalities in 2016. More recently Heather is an associate for the non-profit organisation Equality in Tourism and a dissertation reviewer for the Gender and Feminist Geographies Research Group at the Royal Geographical Society. In addition to creating scholarly outputs, Heather has written for the Huffington Post on issues related to tourism, gender and academia.

Heather's co-author Dr Siân Stephens completed her PhD at Middlesex University in 2015, before which time she worked with a number of national and international charities. Siân co-leads the Business Ethics, CSR and Governance research cluster and is the Assistant

Director of Undergraduate Programs for the Management, Leadership and Organisations
Department of the Business School.

11 November 2020

“An inductive photo-elicitation study of streamed “identity”

Aditi Bhatia and Stephen King

Abstract

A multinational qualitative study was conducted to explore the presentation of 'self' on streamed computer-mediated communications services such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. 30 participants residing in various parts of the world during the COVID-19 lockdown, were interviewed to identify the unforeseeable impact of digital communication in professional settings. The interviews were conducted with a particular focus on the participant's image presented in the virtual meeting, as well as their visible backgrounds. The major themes that emerged from the data: Virtual Privilege; Virtual Identity as a Performance; Digital Spaces; and Unintended Influences - have wide application in the field of public policy formation, human resource management, social psychology, human rights, and education - during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Biographies

Aditi Bhatia is a lecturer in Psychology at Middlesex University Dubai. Aditi is currently involved in both teaching and research in the field of Clinical Psychology. Aditi has a Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health from University College London in the UK and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology with Counselling, from Middlesex University Dubai. She has previously worked as an Assistant Psychologist at St. Pancras Hospital in London and at Universal Hospital, Abu Dhabi. Aditi is actively involved in supporting community mental health initiatives through her volunteer work, and currently volunteers as a firstline responder for the national Mental Support Line. Aditi is a strong advocate for youth mental health, and also leads the wellness support group for students with emotional difficulties at the university.

Stephen King is a lecturer in Media at Middlesex University Dubai. Stephen holds a master's degree in Global Governance and Sustainable Development from Middlesex University and a bachelor's degree in Advertising and Marketing from Lancaster University. He currently lectures across Middlesex University Dubai's journalism, advertising and PR, and digital media programmes. Stephen has taught in a university setting for five years, and has provided professional training and counsel to colleagues and management across Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia for over a decade more. Working closely with the marketing teams of Nokia, Cisco and most recently Etisalat, he played key roles in the launch of fixed

and mobile broadband connectivity and value-added services across three continents. In academic year 2019-20 he received the Middlesex One award for Outstanding Contribution to Putting Students First, and also shared the Middlesex University Dubai Innovation Award for Administration Services.

18 November 2020

“The Native Companion: E. J Brady’s ‘home-grown’ literature and modernist aesthetics”

Louise Edensor

Abstract

The Native Companion was an early twentieth century little magazine of ‘Australian Life, Literature and Art’ that would ‘give a voice to Australian genius’. It ran for only two volumes, featuring 12 issues from January to December 1907, and is largely remembered as the magazine in which Katherine Mansfield published her first short stories. Carol Mills (1999) remarks that: ‘Volume one of the Native Companion looked like a late nineteenth century literary periodical. Volume two, from August 1907, was a child of the twentieth’. This significant transformation (Gelder and Weaver, 2014) had much to do with the new editor, E. J. Brady’s nationalist politics and his fervent devotion to a definitive Australian literature that was, nevertheless, in dialogue with the modernist aesthetics of Europe. By including stories from writers like Mansfield, Brady opened up ‘connections between colonial identity and literary modernism’ helping to create a ‘local modernist aesthetic’ in the magazine (Gelder and Weaver, 2014).

Eric White (2013) has argued that one of the most noticeable characteristics of the little magazines was their ability to ‘catalyse and sustain the production of avant-garde artworks and specialised discourse networks’. This places them in a unique position, enabling them to expose the dialogical relationship between transnational modernisms and national identities. As White highlights, the little magazines ‘complicate the boundaries that have traditionally divided modernist literature into canonical categories of ‘homemade’ and ‘cosmopolitan’ writing. This paper/presentation examines the short stories published in the Native Companion under Brady’s editorship to explore the interplay between his promotion of a home-grown Australian literature and that of transnational nascent modernist aesthetics.

Biography

Louise Jane Edensor is senior lecturer in Media and Education, and Programme Leader in Dubai for the International Foundation Programme, at Middlesex University, Dubai. She has a PhD from Northampton University, UK and her thesis was entitled ‘Katherine Mansfield and

Conceptualisations of the Self'. Louise has published articles and book chapters on Katherine Mansfield and her contemporaries and her current interest is in little magazines of the early twentieth century.

25 November 2020

Biopsychosocial implications of living with Multiple Sclerosis: An Interpretative phenomenological study

Seada Kassie and Lynda Hyland

Abstract

A demyelinating chronic disease of the central nervous system, multiple sclerosis (MS) is estimated to affect over two million people worldwide (National Multiple Sclerosis Society, 2016). The biopsychosocial model of health recognises interactions between biological, psychological, and social issues in illness, including those relating to illness management. Examples of psychosocial factors include personality, coping, social support, and family relationships. These collectively contribute to the overall experience of those diagnosed with MS. Various aspects of life with MS have been examined through a biopsychosocial lens, including pain (Kerns et al., 2002), fatigue (Wijenbergh et al., 2016), resilience (Black & Dorstyn, 2015), and quality of life (Strober, 2018). This idiographic study used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to explore the experiences of eight UAE-based patients diagnosed with MS. Three superordinate themes were identified from patients' candid accounts of their experiences of MS, highlighting issues of illness management, gratitude, and adaptive coping. The study emphasised the importance of adopting the biopsychosocial model to treat and manage MS. Additionally, it highlights the need for routine assessment and early, multidisciplinary intervention in MS to improve patients' quality of life. This research seminar will share the findings of our study and will involve our own reflections on the process of conducting the study.

Biographies

Ms. Seada Kassie is a Lecturer in Psychology at Middlesex University Dubai. A certified clinical research professional and currently pursuing a graduate certificate program in Clinical Research at Harvard Medical School, Seada holds an M.Sc. in Applied Psychology from Middlesex University. Her research interests include trauma-related disorders, adolescence mental health, cognitive flexibility, neuroplasticity, health-related quality of life, and chronic illness management.

Dr. Lynda Hyland is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Middlesex University Dubai. A chartered member of the British Psychological Society and a member of the American Psychological Association, Lynda holds an M.Sc. in Health Psychology from University College London, and a Ph.D. in Science (Psychology) from the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Her research interests include social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in childhood, student wellbeing and performance, health inequalities, and chronic illness management. Looking forward to seeing you at the seminar!

09 December 2020

“Bringing Books Back: A Qualitative Exploration of Therapeutic Skills Development in Psychology Students through Book Club Participation”

Olga Khokhlova and Aditi Bhatia

Abstract

The experiential and reflective nature of psychotherapeutic training is not always captured in undergraduate psychology teaching, therefore, there is a need for educational strategies that provide opportunities for deeper understanding of the therapeutic process. This study evaluates one such strategy – A Book Club, to support the development of counselling skills in Psychology undergraduate students at a private university in Dubai, UAE. Psychotherapy-related books were assigned as prior reading each month, which were then discussed in the group meetings facilitated by clinically-experienced Psychology lecturers. Fifteen semi-structured interviews were carried out with students and analysed using thematic analysis. Four primary themes were generated - (1) *Diversity in perspectives*, (2) *Autonomous learning environment*, (3) *Reality orientation*, and (4) *Sparking self-insight*. The results highlight that Book Clubs are useful in fostering deeper conceptualizations of the therapeutic relationship, visualizing future careers in psychotherapy, and promoting self-awareness among students. Discussions centred around books can provide students with discourse opportunities that enhance students' interpersonal skills, help to connect classroom knowledge with real-life experiences of psychotherapists described by authors and also improve student engagement.

Biographies

Olga Khokhlova is currently an Adjunct Lecturer in Psychology and Research Associate at the Social Psychology Research Lab at Middlesex University Dubai. She is also a practicing Psychotherapist, working on her PhD in Clinical Psychology at Lomonosov Moscow State University. She holds a Master of Science degree in Psychology with a major in Clinical Psychology from Bielefeld University (Germany) and a combined Undergraduate and

Graduate Degree in Clinical Psychology from Lomonosov Moscow State University (Russia). Olga also has a combined Undergraduate and Graduate Degree in Economics from Bryansk State Technical University (Russia). She has finished her training in Gestalt Psychotherapy at Moscow Gestalt Institute and currently is in the final year of her Training in Psychoanalytic work with couples and families (International Psychotherapy Institute, Washington DC). Olga has extensive experience working at mental health clinics and hospitals for both adults and children.

Aditi Bhatia is a Lecturer in Psychology at Middlesex University Dubai. Aditi has a Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health from University College London in the UK and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology with Counselling, from Middlesex University Dubai. She completed an intensive training programme in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy from the William Alanson White Institute (New York) and is currently training in Group Analysis from the Institute of Group Analysis (Oxford). Aditi is involved in both teaching and research in the field of Clinical Psychology. She has previously worked as an Assistant Psychologist at St. Pancras Hospital in London and at Universal Hospital, Abu Dhabi. Aditi is actively involved in supporting community mental health initiatives through her volunteer work, and currently volunteers as a first-line responder for the national Mental Support Line in the UAE. Aditi is a strong advocate for youth mental health, and also leads the Wellness Support Group for students with emotional difficulties at the university.

16 December 2020

“Buffering academic stress during the COVID-19 pandemic related social isolation: Grit and growth mindset as protective factors against the impact of loneliness”

Magdalena Mosanya

Abstract

The pandemic of the SARS CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19 sickness, constitutes a global challenge to well-being. Positive psychology constructs of grit and growth mindset may offer a solution to this challenge as both are associated with psychological resilience. A growth mindset describes the underlying beliefs people have about the malleability of intelligence, and grit refers to dedication to long-term goals. The present study explored whether such constructs could constitute protective factors against the academic stress associated with loneliness and perceived lack of control among international students ($n = 170$) during social isolation, induced by COVID-19 restrictions. The results of a hierarchical multiple regression model explained 36% of the variance in academic stress with a perceived lack of control ($\beta = .53, p < .001$) and growth mindset ($\beta = -.22, p < .001$) being significant direct predictors. Moderation analysis explained 17% of the variance and confirmed that a level of dispositional grit moderated the detrimental influence loneliness had on academic stress. Simple slopes analysis revealed a significant effect for moderate ($\beta = .07, p = .01$) and

high ($\beta = .16$, $p = .001$) levels of grit. Our findings suggest that grit and growth mindset, as dynamic variables, could be taught to students as resilience-building prevention of academic stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, our results have shown that parents (37%) and friends (32%) were most frequently identified by students as supporters during the COVID-19 pandemic with minimal reported support from universities (2.5%).

Biography

Ms. Magdalena Mosanya is an adjunct faculty at the Psychology Department of Middlesex University Dubai. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. program at the Polish Science Academy and holds master's degrees in Psychology, Cultural Anthropology, and International Relations. Magdalena is also a certified therapist and coach. Her research interests include cross-cultural communication, empowerment, the well-being of multicultural individuals, and trauma-related interventions. In these areas, she applies her combined psychological and anthropological expertise.