

2024

# RESEARCH

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# Message from the Dean

Research is an important part of an academic institution's portfolio. Faculty are trained in conducting research early in graduate school and disseminate their continued research to the students they teach. All faculty, whether participating or supporting, bring their intellect into class. Some do this through their basic research, some through their applied research and some based on their professional qualifications as practitioners.

Business schools with various missions achieve their intellectual contribution goals through a variety of methods. Most of the research that is acceptable in modern internationally accredited business schools are often measured by the quality of the peer reviewed outlets, their impact on various entities and the overall populace.

The general guidelines of AACSB's new standards on research emphasize the impacts of these activities. These impacts can be measured in various ways:

- Does the research add value to the overall body of knowledge?
- Does it benefit the society and environment?
- Does it somehow influence policy and possibly policy makers?
- Does the research help corporations solve their problems and make them more efficient?
- And most important for a school whose mission is primarily connected to teaching, does it support improved pedagogy in the classroom?

You will see throughout this brochure how the faculty at Sykes College of Business are engaged in doing impactful and high-quality research. The various short synopses in these pages show that our faculty are providing benefits to companies and corporations, providing classroom support through case studies, influencing policy makers and advancing their field of business overall.

I am proud of our faculty and colleagues here at the Sykes College of Business and am happy we are part of a vibrant and dynamic University of Tampa. Thank you for your support and continued friendship.

## **F. Frank Ghannadian, Ph.D.**

Dean

John H. Sykes College of Business

The University of Tampa







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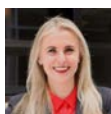
## The Human Costs of Immigration Policy

“Border fencing is fatal. All policies have costs and migration is no exception,” says Abby Hall Blanco, an associate professor in economics.

“While most policymakers focus on the monetary costs of migration policies, our research analyzes the human costs.” Hall Blanco, with fellow University of Tampa economist Michael Coon and their coauthor Cynthia Bansak, analyze the effects of effects of the 2006 Secure Fence Act on migration patterns along the border between the United States and Mexico.

Their paper, “Border Fencing, Migrant Flows, and Cross Deaths,” uses unique data on migrant fatalities and border wall construction. They find that while the number of apprehensions at the border fell over the period studied, the number of deaths increased significantly. The authors argue that the construction of the border wall, as opposed to deterring migrants from crossing, instead pushed crossers to attempt entry in more dangerous locations, increasing the likelihood of death.

This work adds to the existing literature on the effects of border barriers and has important implications for policy. “If the goal is to stop people from crossing, our work suggests this policy in an unequivocal failure,” Hall Blanco said. “In addition to failing to achieve stated policy objectives, our results highlight that this policy cost people their lives.”



**Abby Hall Blanco**  
Associate Professor,  
Economics



**Michael Coon**  
Associate Professor,  
Economics

Citation: Bansak, Cynthia, Abigail Blanco, and Michael Coon. (2022). “Border Fencing, Migrant Flows, and Crossing Deaths.” AEA Papers and Proceedings, 112: 381-385.



# Ad Affect Sensitivity: Influences on Consumers' Affect Traces and their Relationship with Retrospective Ad Evaluations

When spending millions of dollars on a Super Bowl ad, are companies simply entertaining people who are already positively predisposed to their products? Or are companies changing minds and attracting new customers to their brands? Jennifer Burton and Pranjal Gupta examine these questions using affect traces in their latest paper, "Ad Affect Sensitivity: Influences on Consumers' Affect Traces and their Relationship with Retrospective Ad Evaluations" published in the [Marketing Management Journal](#).

Affect traces are a state-of-the-art tool practitioners use to understand how consumers are responding to different plot elements of the commercials they watch. The output of this analysis is a graph of people's emotional responses to an advertisement captured second-by-second in real-time while consumers are watching that advertisement. Using data from 25 Super Bowl advertisements, the authors find that there is a tendency for people who like a product, have used a product before and are highly involved in a product category to provide positively biased ratings of advertisements for these products. This is potentially a problem because advertisers are often trying to bring new customers to the brand as opposed to pleasing customers who are already buying the brand. But the good news for these advertisers is that the relationship between ad liking and retrospective ad evaluations is stronger for people who are less positively predisposed to the brand. These are people with poor brand attitudes, less product experience, and lower category involvement. This means that creating ads that are well liked will attract those that already like the brand. However, these same ads will also be more effective at changing the minds of people who are not as positively predisposed to the product. It's a win-win situation for marketers and they can generally consider these entertaining, but expensive ads as money well spent.



**Jennifer Burton**

Associate Professor,  
Marketing



**Pranjal Gupta**

Professor, Marketing

Citation: Burton, Jennifer Lee, and Pranjal Gupta. "Moderators of the Relationship Between Consumers' Affect Traces and Retrospective Ad and Brand Evaluations." *Marketing Management Journal* 32, no. 2 (December 2022): 70-88.



# The Role of Mindfulness and Resilience in Navy SEAL Training



“The Role of Mindfulness and Resilience in Navy SEAL Training,” authored by Andrew Ledford, Celeste Raver, Deirdre Dixon, Patti Miles, and Scott Lynch, delves into how important mindfulness and resilience are for successfully completing Navy SEAL training. The researchers focused on three main questions: whether being more mindful helps in completing the Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training, whether higher resilience is a predictor of success in the same, and if resilience influences the link between mindfulness and training completion. Mindfulness and resilience are seen as vital traits for those in the military’s special operations, helping them withstand tough training and combat situations. However, their actual impact on training outcomes hasn’t been extensively studied.

The study was conducted at the Naval Special Warfare Center in Coronado, CA, and followed BUD/S trainees from the beginning to the end of their training. The research team, which included experts from five universities, surveyed 348 out of 406 eligible trainees, tracking whether they completed the training, dropped out voluntarily, were dismissed for poor performance, or left due to medical reasons. This extensive study involved multiple visits to the training center to collect data through surveys over time.

The findings showed that while mindfulness doesn’t significantly impact training completion, resilience does. Trainees with higher resilience were more likely to successfully finish the training. This suggests that while mindfulness might not be as crucial as previously thought, the ability to bounce back from challenges (resilience) plays a key role in completing SEAL training. This study sheds light on the traits that help candidates survive one of the toughest military training programs and suggests that while mindfulness is valuable, resilience is more critical for success in this high-stress environment.



**Deirdre Dixon**  
Associate Professor,  
Management

Citation: Ledford, Andrew, Celeste Raver Luning, Deirdre P. Dixon, Patti Miles, and Scott M. Lynch. “The role of mindfulness and resilience in Navy SEAL training.” *Military Psychology* (2022): 1-15.



# Gender of the Online Influencer and Follower: The Differential Persuasive Impact of Homophily, Attractiveness and Product-Match

With the rapid increase in the number of people who follow online influencers, it is likely marketers see them as a very significant medium to promote their products and services. However, how would a marketer know how to choose an influencer to have maximum impact on their followers? What gender should the influencer be? Will that depend on the gender of the followers? Do the physical looks of the influencer matter? Do followers connect emotionally with influencers and does that matter? These are the questions that Pranjal Gupta and his co-authors Jennifer Burton and Leticia Costa-Barros seek to answer in their paper "Gender of the Online Influencer and Follower: The Differential Persuasive Impact of Homophily, Attractiveness and Product-Match."

Through online experiments that they conducted, the authors studied the impact on both male and female followers of male and female influencers who were promoting consumer products. What they find is that physical good looks and influencer product expertise do matter and lead to stronger impact for both female and male influencers. Interestingly, the authors also find that if the follower feels an emotional connection with the influencer, that feeling leads to the strongest influence, regardless of the physical looks or expertise of the influencer. The authors further demonstrate that women followers are much prone to feelings of emotional connection, particularly with female influencers. Men followers tend to feel less emotionally connected to influencers and tend to base their product decisions on factors like the physical attractiveness and product expertise of the influencer.

Overall, Gupta, Burton and Costa-Barros provide online managers with several strategies on how to best choose the most effective influencer for their products given the nature of their product and the followers the influencer attracts.



**Pranjal Gupta**  
Professor, Marketing



**Jennifer Burton**  
Associate Professor,  
Marketing

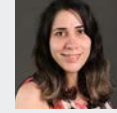
Citation: Gupta, Pranjal, Jennifer L. Burton and Leticia Costa Barros. (2023) "Gender of the Online Influencer and Follower: The Differential Persuasive Impact of Homophily, Attractiveness and Product-Match." *Internet Research*, Vol. 33 No. 2, pp 720-740. <https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-04-2021-0229>.





# Features Selection as a Nash-Bargaining Solution: Applications in Online Advertising and Information Systems

Objectively, an advertiser's goal is to utilize the most predictive subset of advertising features (such as location, demographics, and customer profiles) to result in higher customer conversion rates. Obtaining this predictive subset of features is considerable in cost and effort. Some features require computation by advertising delivery platforms and other features are acquired from third-party mobile data management platforms. Kimia Keshanian, an Assistant Professor in the Information and Technology Management Department, created a new process to identify advertising feature subsets. The process allows advertisers to select the best subset of features and embed these features in a machine learning framework for prediction/classification use. Keshanian and colleagues conceptualized and developed this feature selection process by employing a well-known concept in game theory called Nash-bargaining solution. The result is cost efficient and accurately predictive feature acquisition. What sets this process apart from other models is the outcome. This novel feature selection process delivers more accurate and reliable predictions, outperforming all other benchmark methods in accuracy metrics, while utilizing fewer features and decreases user costs by only collecting the most relevant data. The benefits of this novel process also extend beyond online advertising, as the model can be used to deliver general information system domain content.



**Kimia Keshanian**

Assistant Professor,  
Information and Technology  
Management

Citation: Keshanian, Kimia, Daniel Zantedeschi, and Kaushik Dutta. "Features Selection as a Nash-Bargaining Solution: Applications in Online Advertising and Information Systems." *INFORMS Journal on Computing* (2022).







## Level Up Learning: Transforming Cybersecurity Education Through Gamification

Can cybersecurity education be improved by adding game-like elements to hands-on lab exercises? That is the research question from J.B. (Joo Baek) Kim, Chen Zhong, and Hong Liu whose paper is designed to be “helpful for instructors who want to convert their traditional cybersecurity labs to gamified labs that are more engaging, digital, and streamlined.” Traditional lab exercises in cybersecurity courses often don’t excite students enough, so the idea is to use ‘gamification’ – the process of making activities more like games – to capture students’ interest.

Gamification is already popular in different educational and training areas because it helps keep people engaged and motivated. It’s also used in cybersecurity competitions to attract participants. However, many higher education instructors are hesitant to use it. They worry about the extra effort needed to create game-like activities and whether the benefits are worth it. Kim et al’s research develops a step-by-step process for instructors to follow, making it easier to integrate gamification into their classes, with the end result being a more motivating and effective learning experience for students.



**J.B. Kim**

Assistant Professor, Information and Technology Management

Kim, J. B., Zhong, C., & Liu, H. (2023). Teaching Tip: What You Need to Know about Gamification Process of Cybersecurity Hands-on Lab Exercises: Lessons and Challenges. *Journal of Information Systems Education*, 34(4), 387-405.

# The Value of Connectors

Elena Klevsky, assistant professor of accounting, explores the value of connectors for organizations. Klevsky and her co-authors published their research on connectors in [Accounting, Organizations, and Society](#)\* where they answer the question of whether connectors can add value to an organization by helping team members feel more connected to each other, and therefore more reluctant to leave the organization.

In this article, Klevsky and her co-authors developed a survey based on the traits and skills—falling under being personable, desiring to relate to others, and/or being able to influence relationships—that could make someone more likely to develop both high bridging social capital (i.e., knowing many different people who do not know each other) and bonding social capital (i.e., knowing many people who know each other). Next, the co-author team seeded the connectors identified by the survey into randomly assigned teams that performed a task together.

Interestingly, they found that assigning connectors to teams can improve team members' experiences on that team, and thereby increase team members' desires to remain on that team in the future. Furthermore, minority team members (e.g., a woman with no other women on the team) are particularly sensitive to the connector's effect on the team. When there are connectors on a team, minority team members feel more included!

Klevsky's work can help organizations fulfill their goals around both employee retention and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). For example, intentional assignment of connectors to teams can lower employee turnover, especially among the diverse voices that organizations want to keep. Organizations with employee retention and DEI goals may choose to implement Klevsky's research-based interventions to lower their costs of voluntary turnover and increase their return on investment (ROI) on diverse voices.



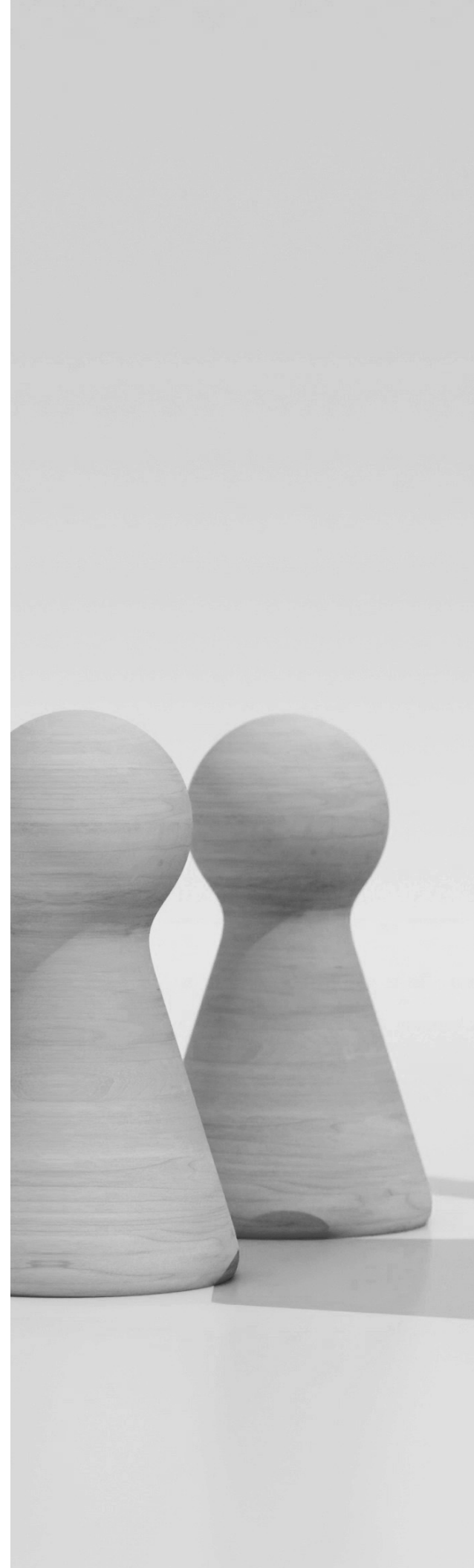
**Elena Klevsky**

Assistant Professor, Accounting

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Citation: Autrey, Romana L., Bauer, Tim, Jackson, Kevin E., Klevsky, Elena, and Margaret Shackell. "The Value of Connectors." *Strategic Finance* 104, no. 6 (2022): 42-49.

\* This study was initially published in [Accounting, Organizations, and Society](#). [The Strategic Finance](#) article explains this academic research and its practical implications to accounting and finance professionals







# Achievement and Expectation: Understanding Parental Satisfaction in Children's Schooling



How does children's academic performance and their parents' expectations affect the parents' satisfaction with their children's school? Professor Stefani Milovanska-Farrington's research looks at how happy parents are with various aspects of the school, like teaching quality, discipline and communication with staff, based on what they hope for their child's future education and the child's actual grades. Her study is crucial because the school a parent chooses is often influenced by other parents' opinions, and it's important to know if their satisfaction is based on the school's actual quality or their own expectations and their child's performance.

"This research suggests that excellent academic performance of the child is associated with higher parental satisfaction, regardless of parents' aspirations," Milovanska-Farrington says "but high parental expectations about the child's future education accompanied by low grades of the child make parents more dissatisfied with the school, teachers, academic standards, discipline and order, and staff-parent interaction." However, if a child gets mostly C's or lower grades, and the parents expect them to get a Bachelor's degree or higher, this leads to lower satisfaction with the school. This trend is particularly strong among lower-income families, but the difference is small when considering the parents' education level.

In the end, the research suggests that parents' opinions on schools may not always reflect the true quality of the school's academic preparation. This is because even if a child gets good grades, the school might not be providing a high-quality education. The findings also imply that school rankings should consider factors beyond just test scores and how well students do after graduation.



**Stefani Milovanska-Farrington's**

Associate Teaching Professor, Economics

Citation: Milovanska-Farrington, Stefani. (2022). "Do parents expect too much or is it all about grades? The discrepancy between parents' aspirations and child's academic performance, and parental satisfaction with the school." *Cogent Economics and Finance* 10, no 1 (2022). Doi: 10.1080/23322039.2022.2079178.

Number of children	[-0.013***] -0.006 (0.021) [0.001]	[-0.025***] -0.048** (0.020) [0.011**]	[0.011***] 0.013 (0.021) [0.003]	[-0.016***] 0.014 (0.021) [-0.003]
Female respondent	0.179*** (0.040)	-0.095** (0.038)	0.109*** (0.039)	0.152*** (0.039)
Employed mother	[-0.039***] -0.063 (0.044) [0.014]	[-0.021**] 0.009 (0.043) [-0.002]	[-0.025***] -0.059 (0.043) [0.013]	[-0.035***] 0.010 (0.043) [-0.002]
Employed father	-0.240*** (0.068) [0.054***]	-0.067 (0.068) [0.015]	-0.209*** (0.067) [0.048***]	-0.242*** (0.071) [0.056***]
Married parents	-0.140* (0.084) [0.031*]	-0.092 (0.085) [0.021]	-0.171** (0.079) [0.040**]	-0.100 (0.084) [0.023]
Black child	0.418*** (0.075)	0.299*** (0.074)	0.176** (0.077)	0.174** (0.077)
Hispanic child	[-0.096***] -0.004 (0.049) [0.001]	[-0.068***] 0.008 (0.050) [-0.002]	[-0.041**] 0.019 (0.048) [-0.004]	[-0.040***] -0.055 (0.048) [0.013]
Child's health below very good	0.683*** (0.062)	0.533*** (0.060)	0.519*** (0.058)	0.493*** (0.059)
Observations	[-0.159***]	[0.123***]	[-0.123***]	[0.116***]

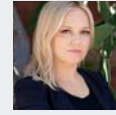


# An Interdisciplinary Approach to Teaching Business Decisions

When does a restaurant owner know it is time to give up on their dream? Can they find a way to keep going? How does an entrepreneur know when to start a new venture or close down an existing business? This is the question Olga Petrova and her coauthors (N. Gray, N. Johnson, and S. Stovall) look to answer in their paper “Unstacking the Russian Doll: An Integrative Interdisciplinary Analysis of Restaurant Operations.

Using insights from hospitality, management, entrepreneurship, strategy and economics, the authors provide an interdisciplinary approach to understanding important questions related to business viability including; comprehending profit and loss statements, reviewing and analyzing key performance indicators, evaluating service quality and business feasibility, and approaches for applying for startup capital.

The case presented in this paper is insightful not only for practitioners, but also for students and business faculty. “We created a comprehensive culminating case to enhance a capstone business course,” said Petrova. “Case method teaching is engaging, effective, and allows students to discover, develop and articulate most critical insights.” The case provides actual financial data and key information to help readers understand how to approach business ventures while alerting them to potential pitfalls. The case has been used in both undergraduate and graduate courses in both economics and hospitality and could easily be adapted to other courses, including senior capstone courses.



**Olga Petrova**

Assistant Professor, Economics

Citation: Petrova, Olga, Natallia Gray, Nick Johnston, and Steven Stovall. (2022). “Unstacking the Russian Doll: An Integrative Interdisciplinary Analysis of Restaurant Operations.” *Entrepreneurship and Education Pedagogy*, 5(4): 721-733.



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