

Smart Horizons 2026 International Conference on Business Agility and Educational Innovation- August 1-2, 2026

International Council for Education, Research, and Training (ICERT)

in collaboration with

Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State Nigeria

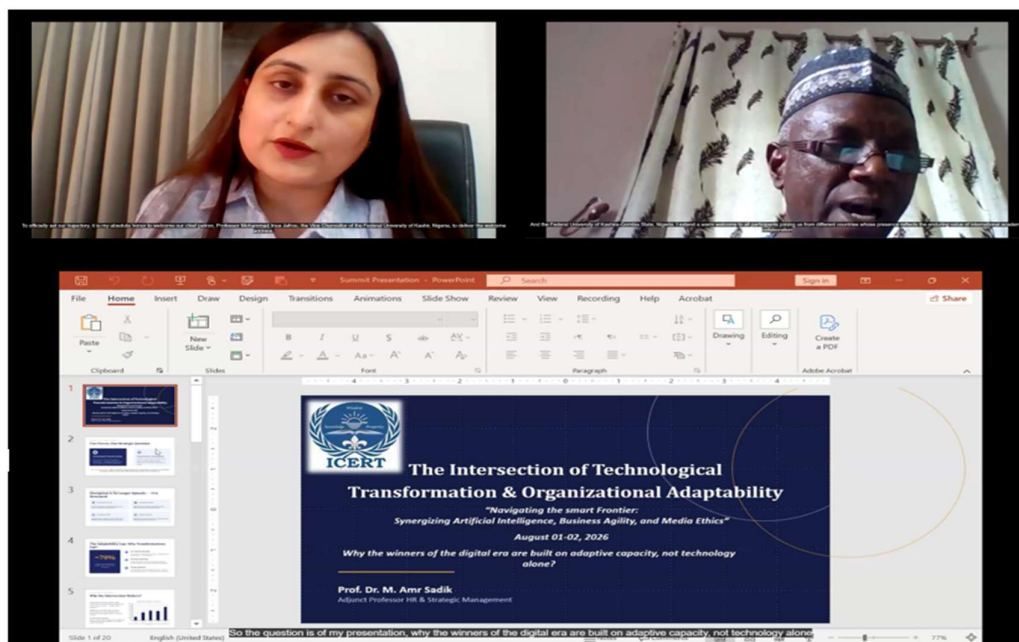
Day 1

Introduction

The **Smart Horizons 2026 International Conference on Business Agility and Educational Innovation** was organized by the **International Council for Education, Research, and Training (ICERT)** in collaboration with the **Federal University of Kashir, Nigeria** on **August 1-2, 2026**. The conference brought together **315 participants from multiple countries** for an intensive 11-hour session focused on the theme *"Navigating the Smart Frontiers: Synergizing Artificial Intelligence, Business Agility, and Media Ethics."*

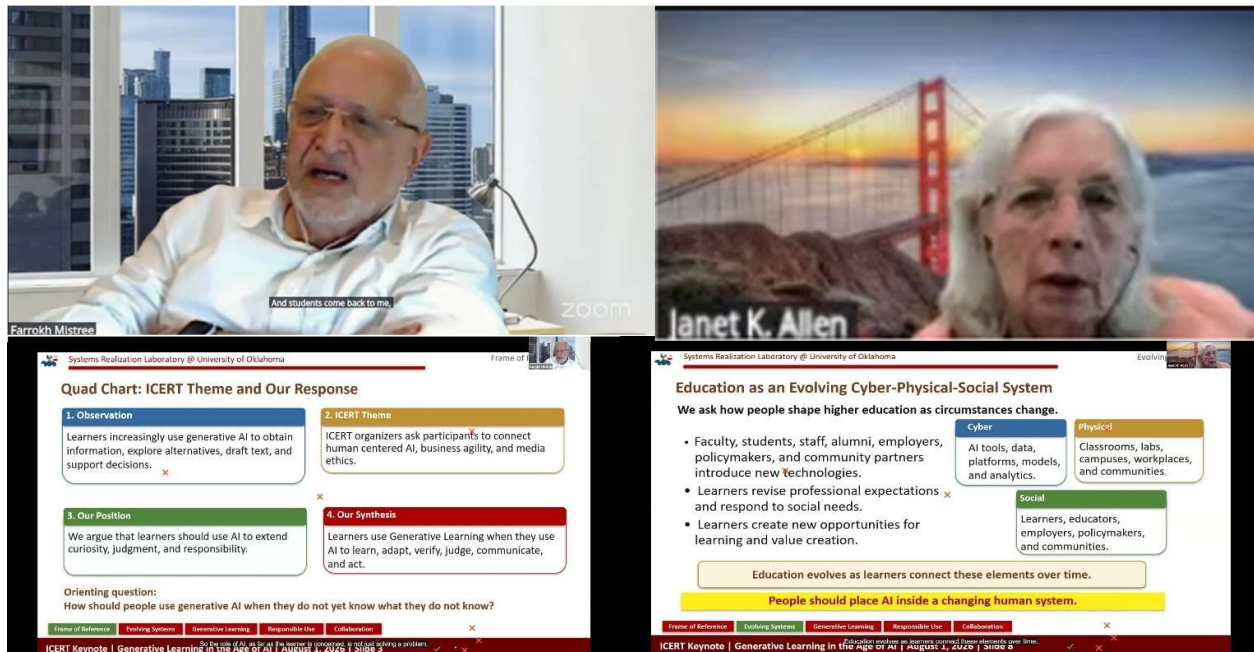
The conference attracted significant international interest, with approximately **560 registrations** from participants across **14 countries** including the **United States, India, Nigeria, Malaysia, Philippines, Ghana, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, Cameroon, Hungary, Syria, and Zambia**, reflecting the global relevance of the conference themes and ICERT's expanding international network.

- **Opening Ceremony:** Moderated by Ms Parnit Tomar followed by Professor Umar Guramar (representing Vice-Chancellor Professor Mohammad Jafar) welcomed participants and opened the conference.
- Presidential address delivered by **Professor Dr. M. Amir Sadiq**, who emphasized the importance of adaptability and the intersection of technology and social systems for organizational success.



Keynote Speakers

Janet K. Allen, Ph.D and Farrokh Mistree, Ph.D from the University of Oklahoma delivered the main keynote presentation titled *"Generative Learning in the Age of AI: Learning, Unlearning, Relearning and Acting Under Uncertainty."*



Key Messages from the Keynote:

- Emphasized using **AI as a learning partner** to develop critical thinking, judgment, and responsibility rather than passive information consumption.
- Introduced a framework of **Five Non-Technical Career-Sustaining Competencies** for learners to develop essential skills in the AI era.
- Stressed that learners should develop knowledge through **questioning, verifying, interpreting, reflecting, and deciding** what they can defend rather than simply receiving AI responses.
- Posed three critical questions: How learners use AI to identify gaps and ask better questions; how educators help learners adapt under incomplete information; and how learners verify and communicate AI-generated material responsibly.
- Highlighted the importance of using generative AI as a **conversational partner** to enhance learning and research processes.

Interactive Q&A with Speakers



Q: How can educators help students transition from passive AI consumption to active critical engagement?

Dr. Allen: The key is to design learning activities that require students to interrogate AI outputs rather than accept them at face value. We encourage educators to ask students: "What assumptions does this AI response make? What perspectives are missing? How would you verify this information?" This transforms AI from an answer machine into a catalyst for deeper inquiry.

Q: In disciplines where information changes rapidly, how do we balance learning foundational knowledge with the need to constantly unlearn and relearn?

Dr. Mistree: Foundational knowledge provides the framework for evaluating new information. The Five Non-Technical Career-Sustaining Competencies we presented aren't subject-specific — they're about building adaptive capacity. When learners develop strong questioning and verification skills, they can navigate uncertainty in any field while maintaining critical judgment about what knowledge to retain and what to update.

Q: What are the biggest risks when students use generative AI as a conversational partner without proper guidance?

Dr. Allen: The primary risk is developing a false sense of understanding. Students may mistake AI fluency for accuracy, or accept convenient answers without deeper reflection. That's why we emphasize responsibility — learners must be able to defend their work, trace their reasoning, and acknowledge the limitations of AI-generated content. The goal is not to avoid AI, but to use it as a tool for developing stronger intellectual autonomy.

Roundtable Panels

The conference featured panel discussions on **AI governance, responsible AI use in education, and the balance between innovation and accountability.**

Panel Moderator:

The roundtable panels were skillfully moderated by **Deion Jose Tulcidas** from **CLEAResult**, an alumnus of the **University of Pittsburgh, USA**. His expertise and facilitation ensured productive dialogue among panelists and audience members, guiding discussions on critical AI governance challenges and fostering meaningful exchanges on responsible AI implementation in educational contexts.

Panel Discussion Topics:

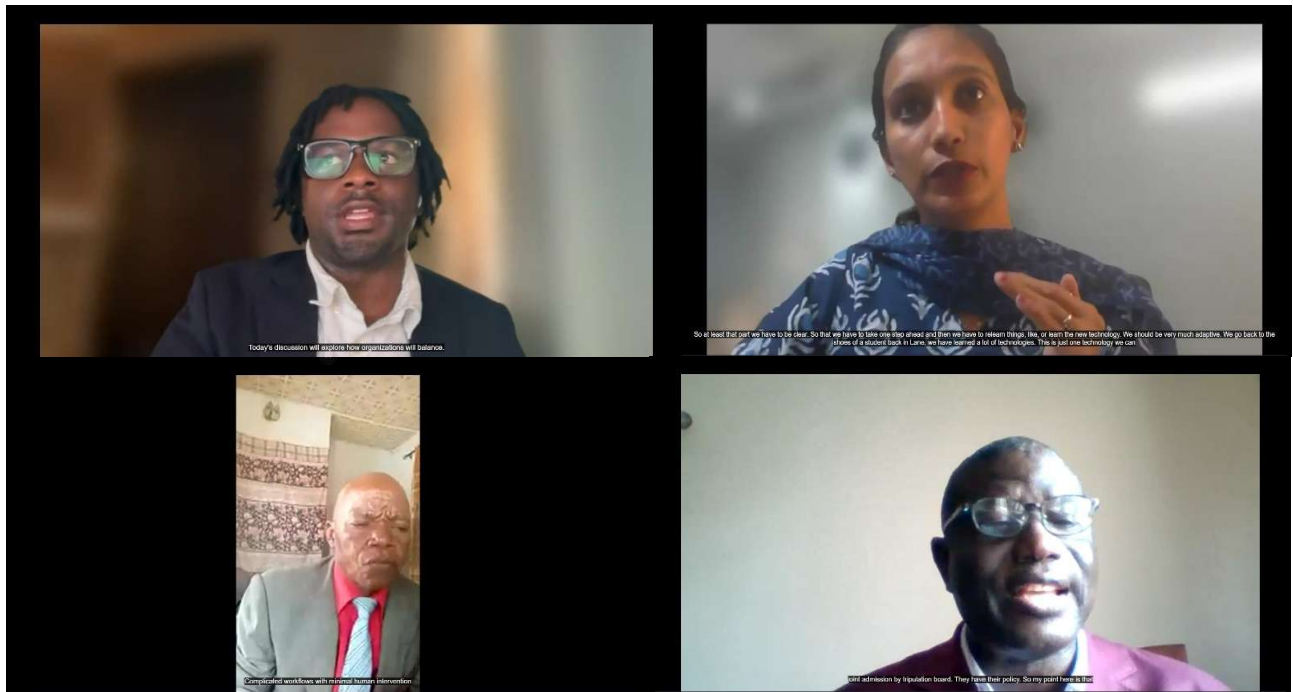
- **AI Governance Frameworks:** Policy development, regulatory compliance, risk management, and ethical standards for AI implementation in educational institutions.
- **Innovation and Accountability Balance:** How educational institutions, governments, and regulatory bodies should address AI challenges while maintaining ethical standards.
- **Technical Responsibilities:** Human oversight, data privacy considerations, and ensuring compatibility with legacy systems.

Key Panelists and Their Contributions:

- **Dr. Helen Joy, Christ (Deemed to be University) Bangalore Central Campus:** Proposed a **360-degree learning approach** starting from leadership down to students; emphasized the importance of awareness and transparency in using AI tools.
- **Dr. Benson Rubin, Universiti Sains Malaysia:** Highlighted the need for **human oversight, data privacy, and proactive risk management** in implementing agentic AI in universities; provided comprehensive recommendations including developing AI governance committees, establishing clear policies on AI use, and training educators in AI pedagogy.
- **Dr. Ayotunde, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria:** Discussed the importance of **harmonized policies across government bodies** and quality assurance mechanisms; outlined principles for regulatory compliance including risk-based regulation and proportionality; highlighted key roles for governments including providing policy support, funding, and organizing workshops to build capacity.



Federal University
of Kashere



Panel Conclusions:

- Educational institutions must establish **AI governance committees with clear policies** on AI use.
- Implement **360-degree learning approaches** starting from leadership to students.
- Develop **training programs for educators** in AI pedagogy.
- Create frameworks for **data privacy, human oversight, and risk management**.
- Harmonize policies across government bodies with **quality assurance mechanisms**.
- Address challenges in developing regions such as **framework overload and infrastructure limitations**.

Technical Session

Session Coordinator: Dr. Adamu Abubakar Muhammad

Session Chair: Dr Manisha D Bhagoji

Presentations Overview

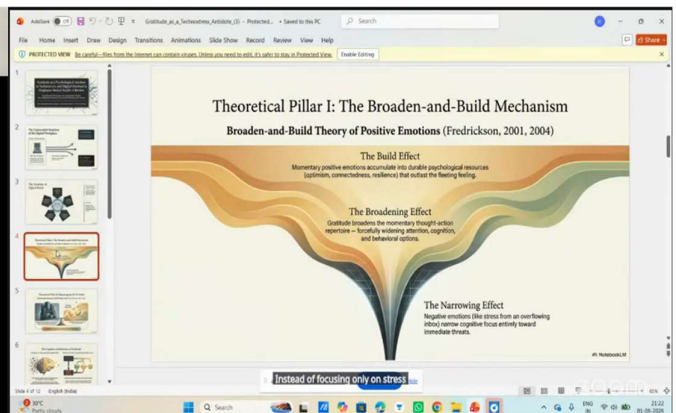
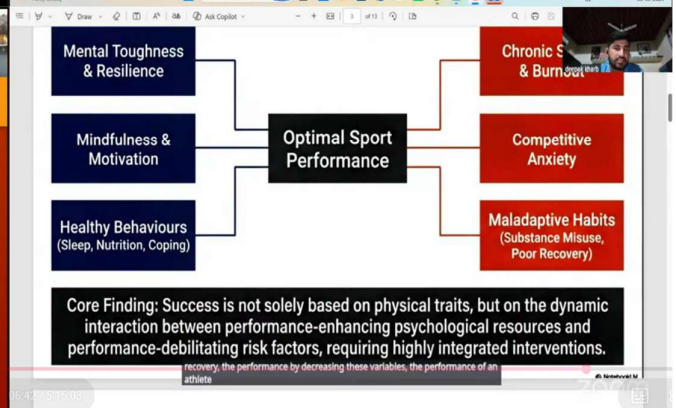
The conference featured **multiple academic presentations** covering diverse research areas. Presenters were instructed to follow a specific format focusing on title, method, findings, significance, and conclusion.



Table 2: Perception of ANC among Respondents (N=188)

Variables	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
ANC is only necessary if the woman is sick	91 (48.8)	83 (44.4)	3 (1.6)	11 (5.9)
Attending ANC helps reduce maternal mortality	2 (1.1)	14 (7.4)	69 (36.7)	103 (54.8)
ANC is a waste of time and money	86 (47.5)	75 (39.9)	6 (3.2)	21 (11.2)
Health talks during ANC sessions are useful	1 (0.5)	3 (1.6)	51 (27.5)	133 (70.7)
I feel comfortable interacting with healthcare workers	3 (1.6)	10 (5.3)	81 (43.1)	94 (50.0)
ANC should be made compulsory for pregnant women	—	—	50 (26.6)	133 (70.7)

Note: And about 41% lived in urban areas. The other seen on the slide. With regards to the perception of

Core Finding: Success is not solely based on physical traits, but on the dynamic interaction between performance-enhancing psychological resources and performance-debilitating risk factors, requiring highly integrated interventions.

Presentation Themes:

- **AI Ethics and Education:** Generative AI's influence on critical thinking through cognitive offloading; responsible AI use in learning contexts.
- **Psychological Research:** Psychological capital as a protective factor against loneliness among students; gratitude as a psychological antidote to technostress and digital overload in employee mental health.
- **Sports Performance:** Psychological and physical factors of sports performance in boxing athletes.
- **Social Justice:** Reimagining social justice through Mulk Raj Anand's literature, examining structural inequalities, human dignity, and sustainable development.
- **Educational Innovation:** HR analytics as a pathway to sustainable organizational growth.
- **Digital Culture and Media:** "Ugly on Purpose" — examining anti-aesthetic digital content and authenticity on social media; digital remains and existentialism, discussing how digital resurrection through AI chatbots may strip away meaning and authenticity.
- **Healthcare and Gender Studies:** Maternal education and perception of antenatal care among pregnant women in Lagos State, Nigeria; feminist bioethics and reproductive justice; gender differences in food moralization.

Best Paper Presentation

During the **First Technical Session**, **Dr. God's Power Onuposi** was awarded **First Place** for the Best Presentation in recognition of the outstanding quality of the research presentation. **Ms Hetvi Thakar** secured **Second Place** for her excellent presentation and valuable contribution to the technical session.

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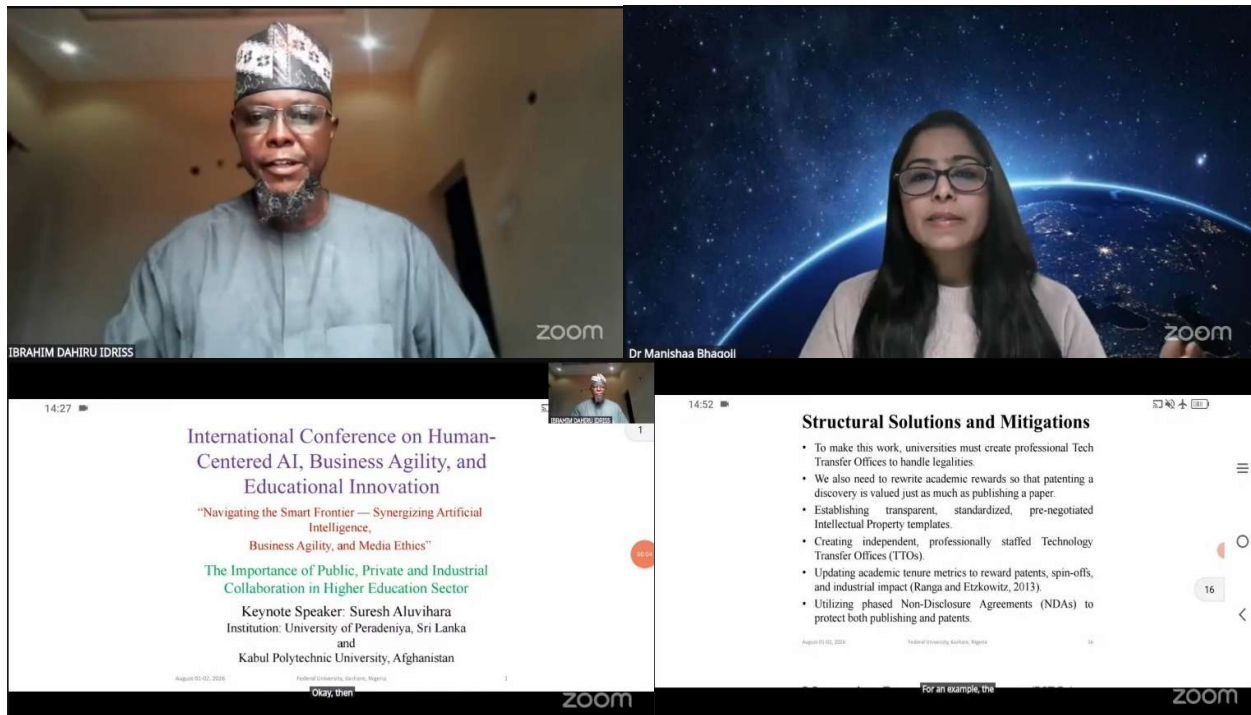
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Day 2

Introduction

The Smart Horizons 2026 International Conference on "Navigating the Smart Frontier — Synergizing Artificial Intelligence, Business Agility, and Media Ethics" was held on **August 01-02, 2026**, jointly organized by **ICERT** and **Federal University of Kashere**. The conference attracted **266 participants** from diverse academic and professional backgrounds to explore critical issues at the intersection of artificial intelligence, business agility, and media ethics in education and workforce development.



Keynote Speakers

Dr. Manisha D. Bhagoji — Presidential Keynote

Secretary General of ICERT

Dr. Manisha delivered the presidential plenary address on the future of education, research, and innovation in an AI-driven world. She emphasized building a future that is not only smart but also **wise, ethical, and inclusive**. Her key message focused on the responsible use of AI in education to **enhance rather than replace human intelligence**. Dr. Manisha proposed five commitments for the collective journey:

Innovating responsibly

Embracing AI critically

Pursuing efficiency without compromising humanity

Advancing technology while protecting truth

Building the future together inclusive.

Dr. Suresh Aluvihara, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka — Public-Private-Industrial Collaboration

Dr. Aluvihara presented a recorded keynote on the importance of public-private-industrial collaboration in higher education. He explained the **triple helix model** and discussed partnership structures, governance frameworks, and knowledge transfer mechanisms between universities, industry, and government. He emphasized that successful collaboration requires **deliberate policy changes, mutual trust, structural alignment**, and modified academic incentive models that value industrial collaboration and patent filings alongside traditional academic publications.

Roundtable Panel

Topic: "The Shared Footprint: Balancing Resource Consumption with Workforce Equity"

Moderator: Dr. Kaushal Chauhan

Panelists:

- Dr. Dalvinder Kaur, GlobalNxt University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Dr. Harshita Sharma, Vivekananda Global University, Jaipur, India
- Dr. Suparna Sanyal Mukherjee, Seacom Skills University, Bolpur, Santiniketan, India
- Dr. Sapna Rathore, Asian Educational Institute (An Autonomous College) Patiala



Key Conclusions:

- **Academia-Industry Gap:** **Dr. Dalvinder Kaur, GlobalNxt University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia** highlighted the need to bridge the gap between university education and workforce expectations through curriculum redesign, micro-credentials, and collaboration with industry advisory panels, integrating creative thinking and critical skills.
- **Educational Equity:** **Dr. Suparna Sanyal Mukherjee, Seacom Skills University, Bolpur, Santiniketan, India** emphasized reaching remote and underserved communities through innovative educational approaches, including community-oriented and interdisciplinary learning strategies, while incorporating sustainable development goals.
- **AI Implementation Framework:** **Dr. Sapna Rathore, Asian Educational Institute (An Autonomous College) Patiala, India** stressed balancing institutional agility with strict accountability when implementing AI technologies, proposing a dual-gate procurement process ensuring data privacy, labor accountability, and transparency. She also suggested transforming internal quality assurance cells into agile, AI-enabled systems.
- **Global Education Framework:** The panel discussed globalizing education systems, particularly India's 2020 education policies, emphasizing unified educational frameworks and shared curricula to enable seamless student transitions across regions.

Technical Sessions

Session 2

Track: Education, Pedagogy, Media & Communications (aligned with Track 2: Media & Communication and Track 6: Education & Pedagogical Innovations).

Moderator: Dr. Adamu Abubakar Muhammad, Federal University of Kashere Gombe State Nigeria

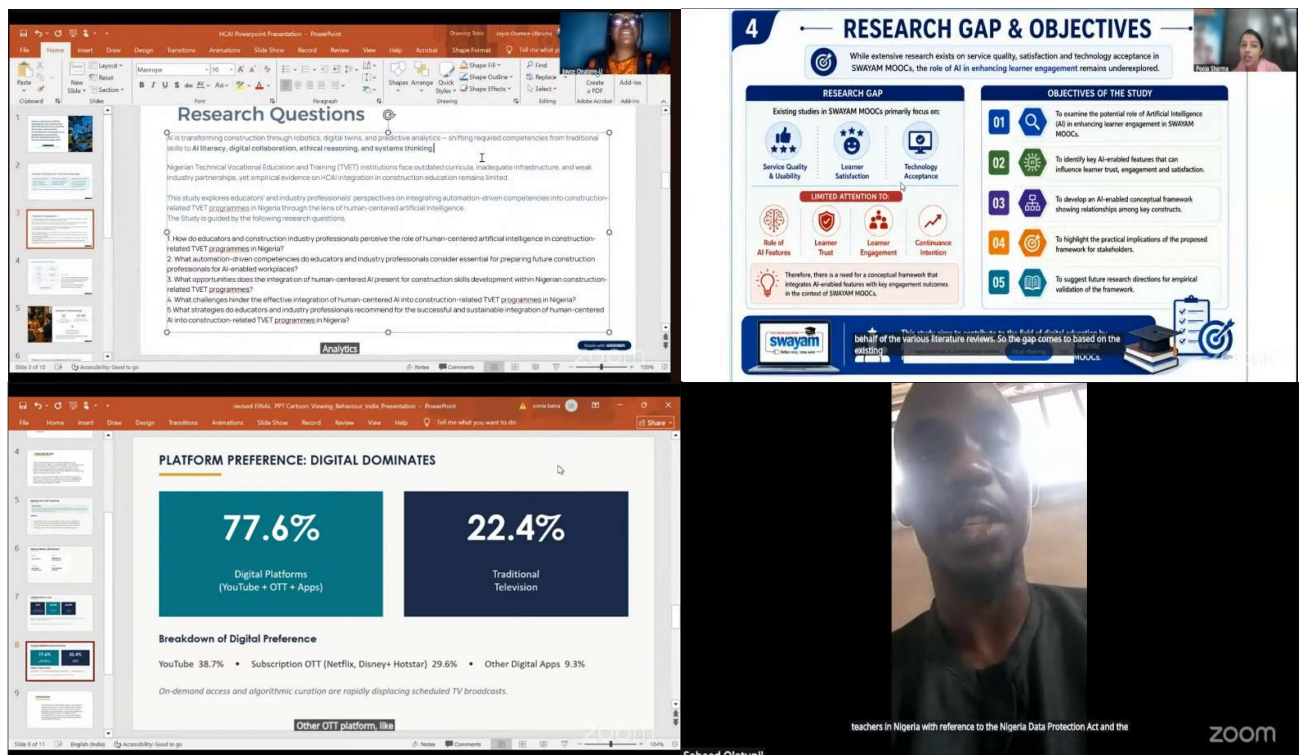
Chair: Dr Manisha D Bhagoji, Secretary General – International Council for Education Research and Training (ICERT) PA USA

Research Presentations

A total of **15+ research presentations** were delivered across the following thematic areas:

AI and Digital Transformation in Education

- AI readiness in strategic frameworks for sustainable digital transformation in higher education.
- AI-enabled framework for enhancing learner engagement in Swayam MOOCs.
- Human-centered AI for outcome-based chemical engineering education.
- Human-centered AI for construction skills development.



The image displays a collage of research presentations and a Zoom video call. The top left shows a PowerPoint slide titled "Research Questions" with a list of questions about AI in construction education. The top right shows a slide titled "RESEARCH GAP & OBJECTIVES" with a table of objectives. The bottom left shows a slide titled "PLATFORM PREFERENCE: DIGITAL DOMINATES" with a bar chart showing 77.6% for Digital Platforms and 22.4% for Traditional Television. The bottom right shows a Zoom video call with a participant named Saheed Olatunji.

RESEARCH GAP & OBJECTIVES

RESEARCH GAP	OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
Existing studies in SWAYAM MOOCs primarily focus on:	01 To examine the potential role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in enhancing learner engagement in SWAYAM MOOCs.
Service Quality & Usability	02 To identify key AI-enabled features that can influence learner trust, engagement and satisfaction.
Learner Satisfaction	03 To develop an AI-enabled conceptual framework showing relationships among key constructs.
Technology Acceptance	04 To highlight the practical implications of the proposed framework for stakeholders.
LIMITED ATTENTION TO:	05 To suggest future research directions for empirical validation of the framework.
Role of AI Features	
Learner Trust	
Learner Engagement	
Continuance Intention	

PLATFORM PREFERENCE: DIGITAL DOMINATES

77.6% Digital Platforms (YouTube + OTT + Apps)

22.4% Traditional Television

Breakdown of Digital Preference

YouTube 38.7% • Subscription OTT (Netflix, Disney+ Hotstar) 29.6% • Other Digital Apps 9.3%

On-demand access and algorithmic curation are rapidly displacing scheduled TV broadcasts.

Other OTT platform, like

teachers in Nigeria with reference to the Nigeria Data Protection Act and the

zoom

Educational Innovation and Pedagogy

- Skill-based education and vocational training in Haryana schools
- Storytelling as a medium for sustaining indigenous wisdom and oral knowledge systems — Gavri ritual folklore case study
- Institutional quality assurance metrics for e-learning
- Practical skill needs assessment for electrical and transport technology education

Social and Behavioral Studies

- Parent-child relationships of high school students during lockdown
- Predicting academic procrastination through dimensions of social media usage
- Comparative study on cartoon viewing behavior in India

Media, Technology, and Ethics

- Digital storytelling and immersive media in journalism.
- Instagram's recommendation algorithm for businesses and MSMEs in India
- Rebooting Humanity: The Connected Paradox of Digital Lives, Mental Health and Digital Detox

Data Protection and AI Ethics

- Early childhood teachers' awareness of AI ethics and child data protection in Oyo Town, Nigeria
- Professional development in AI ethics and data literacy integration.

Session 3

Track: Technology, Applied Sciences, Business & Finance (aligned with Track 1: Commerce, Management & Finance, Track 3: Information Technology & Engineering, Track 7: Life Sciences, and Track 8: Medical & Paramedical Sciences).

Moderator: Dr. Chetna Gupta, Government SPMR College of Commerce, Cluster University, Jammu

Chair: Dr. Shipra Dua Piplani, JIMS Rohini Delhi India

Session Highlights:

- Showcased interdisciplinary research in artificial intelligence, machine learning, cybersecurity, computational biology, healthcare, business innovation, and finance.
 - Included presentations on AI-driven business practices, predictive analytics, molecular docking, decentralized finance (DeFi), Waqf-based sustainable development, assistive technologies, entrepreneurship, and technology-enabled healthcare solutions.
 - The session emphasized innovation, sustainability, ethical technology adoption, and interdisciplinary collaboration to address contemporary global challenges.
-

Awards and Recognition

Best Paper Awards:

- **Second Technical Session:** 1st Place — Dr. Rosary Giruba Alexi, 2nd Place — Ms Palak Gupta
- **Third Technical Session:** 1st Place — Ms Mahalakshmi & Dr Neetu Ashokan, 2nd Place — Dr Jajbir Singh

Awards presented by Professor Muhammad Ramadan Sharif included ICERT awards, Transatlantic Youth Alliance Honors, and Impact Awards to multiple recipients from different institutions.



The ceremony featured a distinguished award presentation by **Professor Muhammad Ramadan Sharif**, who conferred multiple honors including **ICERT Distinguished Achievement Awards** recognizing exceptional contributions to international education and research collaboration, **Transatlantic Youth Alliance Honors** celebrating emerging scholars bridging continents through innovative research, and **Impact Awards** acknowledging researchers whose work demonstrates significant potential for real-world application and societal benefit. Recipients represented diverse institutions from across the globe, reflecting the truly international character of the Smart Horizons 2026 conference.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the conference discussions and research presentations, the following policy recommendations emerged to guide institutions, governments, and stakeholders in responsibly navigating the smart frontier:

Artificial Intelligence Integration

- **Establish Human-Centered AI Frameworks:** Educational institutions should adopt AI implementation guidelines that prioritize human intelligence enhancement over replacement, incorporating ethical review boards and transparency mechanisms before deploying AI tools in teaching and assessment.
- **Mandate AI Ethics and Data Protection Training:** Require comprehensive professional development programs for educators on AI ethics, child data protection, and digital literacy, particularly for early childhood and primary education levels.
- **Create Dual-Gate Procurement Processes:** Implement rigorous evaluation frameworks for AI technology adoption that ensure data privacy, labor accountability, algorithmic transparency, and institutional agility with strict oversight.

Business Agility and Academia-Industry Collaboration

- **Redesign Academic Incentive Models:** Modify faculty evaluation and promotion criteria to equally value industrial collaboration, patent filings, and knowledge transfer alongside traditional academic publications.
- **Institutionalize Industry Advisory Panels:** Establish formal governance structures connecting universities with industry partners to co-design curricula, micro-credentials, and competency frameworks aligned with evolving workforce demands.
- **Transform Quality Assurance Systems:** Convert internal quality assurance cells into agile, AI-enabled systems capable of real-time curriculum adaptation and continuous improvement based on labor market analytics.

Media Ethics and Digital Responsibility

- **Develop Algorithm Accountability Standards:** Governments and regulatory bodies should establish transparency requirements for recommendation algorithms and social media platforms, particularly regarding their impact on vulnerable populations and MSMEs.
- **Promote Digital Wellness Initiatives:** Educational institutions should integrate digital detox practices, mental health support, and critical media literacy into curricula to address the paradox of hyperconnectivity and psychological well-being.

- **Protect Indigenous Knowledge Systems:** Support policies that preserve oral traditions and indigenous wisdom through ethical digital storytelling practices, ensuring community consent and cultural sensitivity in documentation efforts.

Global Education Framework

- **Advance Unified Educational Standards:** International organizations should facilitate shared curriculum frameworks and credit transfer agreements enabling seamless student mobility across borders while respecting regional diversity.
- **Ensure Educational Equity:** Governments must prioritize infrastructure investment, community-oriented learning models, and innovative delivery mechanisms to reach remote and underserved populations, integrating sustainable development goals throughout.

Conclusion

The Smart Horizons 2026 conference successfully achieved its mission of exploring the dynamic convergence of artificial intelligence, business agility, and media ethics in reshaping education and workforce development. Through two intensive days of keynote addresses, roundtable discussions, and technical presentations, participants engaged in critical dialogue that illuminated both the transformative potential and ethical responsibilities inherent in our increasingly AI-driven world. The conference's exploration of **artificial intelligence** extended beyond mere technological adoption to emphasize human-centered AI implementation. From Dr. Manisha Bagoji's call for wisdom and inclusivity in AI integration to the diverse research presentations on AI-enabled educational frameworks, participants consistently reinforced that technology must enhance rather than replace human intelligence, creativity, and ethical judgment. **Business agility** emerged as a crucial theme throughout the conference, particularly in discussions of academia-industry collaboration and institutional responsiveness. Dr. Suresh Aluvihara's triple helix model and the roundtable panel's insights into curriculum redesign, micro-credentials, and adaptive quality assurance systems demonstrated that educational institutions must cultivate organizational agility while maintaining accountability and academic rigor to meet rapidly evolving workforce demands. The theme of **media ethics** permeated discussions on digital storytelling, algorithm transparency, data privacy, and the responsible dissemination of information in an era of immersive technologies. Research presentations on Instagram's recommendation algorithms, digital journalism practices, and early childhood data protection underscored the urgent need for ethical frameworks that protect vulnerable populations while fostering innovation and digital literacy. The conference fostered meaningful international partnerships, collaborative research opportunities, and actionable insights for preparing future-ready workforces through ethical AI integration, sustainable educational practices, and innovative pedagogical approaches. Certificates will be provided to all participants and awardees within one to two weeks via email.