

## **Student trust in their professors ... How you can improve your teaching evaluations**

### **Abstract**

Improving student satisfaction remains a critical pursuit for institutions of higher education to address persistent challenges with student retention. Student trust in their professors offers one potentially impactful approach that faculty can individually pursue to improve such student satisfaction. However, the link between trust and satisfaction, including how trust is formed, has largely been overlooked in higher education research. Given this gap, we present initial empirical validation with U.S. student survey data of the profound impact of the ABI model of trust, which comprises ability (knowledge and skills), benevolence (concern for others), and integrity (sound ethical and moral principles). The results confirm ABI as a second-order construct that directly measures student trust in their professors rather than ABI serving as antecedents to such trust. Moreover, ABI trust acts as an exceptionally strong predictor of satisfaction of both undergraduate and graduate business students. Accordingly, we organize feedback from a survey of faculty to present specific, actionable tactics that professors can apply in their classes to enhance ABI trust, thereby elevating not only student satisfaction but also their own teaching evaluations.