



KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY
COLES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Ph.D. in Business Administration

Graduation Reception
Academic Year 2024-2025

May 5, 2025
The Conservatory
Acworth, GA

Dear Graduates,

Congratulations on earning your Ph.D. in Business Administration from Kennesaw State University. The value of this accomplishment cannot be overstated. As a member of the graduating class of 2024-2025, not only have you taken a significant step toward achieving your professional goals, but you have also proven your ability to overcome challenges and strive to better yourself.

Completing your Ph.D. is one of the most difficult things you will ever do. While celebrating your success, be sure to thank the friends and family in your life who supported you on this journey and helped give you the strength to earn the highest academic degree awarded by our University.

To our 2025 Ph.D. graduates, what you have already accomplished is amazing. What comes next from you will be no less than inspiring. Congratulations!

Robin Cheramie

Robin Cheramie, Ph.D.
Dean, Coles College of Business
and Professor of Management
Kennesaw State University



Spring Commencement Reception Event Program

Welcoming Remarks

Dr. Saurabh Gupta
Executive Director, Ph.D. Business Administration

Dr. Alison Keefe
Associate Dean for Graduate Programs

Presentation of Program Outstanding Student Award

Recognition of Graduates

Closing Remarks

Dr. Robin Cheramie
Dean, Coles College of Business

Dinner



Graduates

Ph.D. in Business Administration



Folahan Ayeni

Management

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Canan Mutlu: Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Second: Birton Cowden, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Reader: Shelby Meek, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

The Impact of Social Capital on Women Entrepreneurial Decisions to Create Independent Ventures in Preference to Dependent Ventures

Key Points:

- The study explores the impact of social capital on women entrepreneurs as they decide whether to pursue independent or dependent entrepreneurship.
- It investigates gender differences in access to capital and resources, self-efficacy, stereotypes, risk, and entrepreneurial propensity.
- The analysis of the Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics II (PSED II) aims to uncover strategic differences in how social capital influences both independent and dependent entrepreneurship.



Owen Chilongo

Information Systems

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Mia Plachkinova, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Second: Ace Vo, Ph.D., Loyola Marymount University

Reader: Solomon Negash, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

OneMoney – A Design Science Research Artifact for Mobile Remittances from the USA to Zambia

Key Points:

- In 2022, global mobile money providers like Western Union and M-Pesa saw bill payment transaction volumes averaging \$88 billion due to increased integrations with service providers.
- Currently, no mobile money providers allow Zambians in the US to directly pay for essential services in Zambia.
- The study proposes a mobile payment assistance artifact called “OneMoney,” integrated with service providers in Zambia, guided by design principles and kernel theories..



Katie Harris

Accounting

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Dana Hermanson, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Co-Chair: Hong Qu, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Second: Lucy Ackert, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Reader: Vineeta Sharma, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

The Effects of Communication Mode Richness and Risk Priming on Auditors' Skeptical Judgment and Action

Key Points:

- The study examines how communication mode richness (video vs. audio) and risk priming (present vs. absent) affect auditors' skeptical judgment and actions during client inquiries.
- Results show a significant interaction between communication mode and risk priming on perceived plausibility and a marginally significant interaction on perceived truthfulness of client responses.
- Auditors in the video condition performed more audit work compared to those in the audio condition, indicating that richer communication modes prompt auditors to seek more evidence.



Scott Henry

Management

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Jennifer Hutchins, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

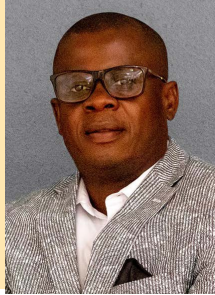
Second: William Gillis, Ph.D., University of South Alabama

Reader: Sergey Lebedev, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

The Thin Edge of the Wedge: Conflicting Institutional Demands and Climate Change

Key Points:

- The study merges institutional and resource dependence theories to characterize the complexities in firms' organizational settings and their decision-making processes.
- Findings indicate that cohesive market conditions result in stronger climate change strategies, and firms will not alter these strategies unless regulatory conditions change the overall market conditions to incentivize them.
- Normative forces in business conditions did not directly or indirectly influence firms' climate change strategies, while several cultural dimensions did affect these strategies directly.



Dierto Matanda Moke

Marketing

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Stefan Sleep, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Second: Pramod Iyer, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Reader: Sterling Bone, Ph.D., Utah State University

Strategic Dynamics of SFCS: Leadership Styles and Decentralization in Fostering Salesperson Loyalty

Key Points:

- Decentralization: Positively influences salesperson loyalty, with organizational loyalty slightly surpassing managerial loyalty.
- Fairness Perceptions: Significantly mediate the relationship between decentralization and loyalty, highlighting fairness as crucial.
- Technology-Enabled Selling: Enhances fairness perceptions and loyalty outcomes, indicating investments in sales technologies may complement or surpass traditional managerial roles.



Francis Owuor

Accounting

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Velina Popova, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Second: Mark Sheldon, Ph.D., John Carroll University

Reader: Andrew Trotman, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

An Examination of Assurance Services Currently (Not) Provided by Blockchain Auditors

Key Points:

- **Blockchain's Impact on Financial Reporting and Auditing:** Blockchain introduces a distributed, transparent, and immutable ledger system that could fundamentally change how financial data is recorded, stored, published, and audited.
- **Role of Auditors and Advisors in Blockchain Ecosystems:** Auditors enhance the security, functionality, and scalability of blockchain systems by incorporating expertise in economics and cryptographic mechanisms. Advisors focus on strategic decision-making, business viability, and long-term operational efficiency.
- **Primary Auditing Needs and Challenges:** The study examines the current state of the block-chain assurance market, addressing the assurance services auditors provide, the challenges they face, and the primary auditing needs of blockchain clients.



Barry Robbins

Information Systems

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Humayun Zafar, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Second: Saurabh Gupta, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Reader: Khawaja Saeed, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

The Coyote and the Roadrunner: Digital Options Impact on Innovation Speed

Key Points:

- **Innovation Speed:** Increasing innovation speed in financial services can help address market challenges, reach the unbanked, and improve financial literacy.
- **Digital Option Generators:** Innovation speed is positively impacted by digital option generators like knowledge reach and process richness, enhancing innovation agility.
- **Financial Inclusion:** Accelerating innovation in financial services promotes financial inclusion, reducing inequalities and fostering economic growth.



Sowmddeb Sen

Marketing

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Pramod Iyer, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Second: Nik Nikolov, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Reader: Leo MacDonald, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

ESG: CEO Characteristics, Institutional Investors and Brand Equity

Key Points:

- The research explores why organizations invest in ESG initiatives, focusing on stakeholder theory.
- It examines how CEO traits like hubris, narcissism, and psychopathy influence ESG participation using upper echelon theory and stakeholder theory.
- The study provides new insights into CEO characteristics and presents a model for how other stakeholders may impact the CEO's role in ESG performance and brand equity.



Mari Sifo

Management

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Canan Mutlu, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Second: Patricio Duran, Ph.D., University of Richmond

Reader: Raj Veliyath, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

The Impact of Female Board Representation on Corporate Social Responsibility

Key Points:

- The research explores the impact of female board representation on corporate social responsibility (CSR) outcomes, considering the moderating effects of the presence of women in leadership roles on the board of directors and industry representation.
- The sources of legitimacy for female directors are both internal (e.g., prevalence and hierarchical positions of female directors) and external (prevalence of female directors within the industry).
- The study will empirically test the conceptual model using firms across various industries within the U.S. between 2012 - 2022.



Lesya Stallings

Accounting

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Sunay Mutlu, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Second: Divesh Sharma, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Reader: Kelly Ha, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Firm-Level Climate Change Exposure and Analysts' Information Environment

Key Points:

- The study examines the link between firm-level climate change exposure and financial analysts' information environment.
- It investigates how a firm's climate change exposure score from earnings calls affects analysts' forecast properties.
- The study uses a specific component of CSR disclosure in climate change exposure and its impact on analysts' forecasts and recommendations.



Joseph Washburn

Information Systems

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Aaron French, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Second: John D'Arcy, Ph.D., University of Delaware

Reader: Reza Vaezi, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Gamification Affordance Stress Creators Mitigated by IT Identity

Key Points:

- **Gamification in Company Systems:** Company systems now include game-like features such as leaderboards, points, and badges to boost employee engagement and motivate system use.
- **Technostress and Identity Involvement:** Gamification affordances can lead to technostress in the work environment. Feedback from gamified systems acts as stimuli to be appraised for threats and coping options, with identity involvement, particularly IT identity, moderating this relationship.
- **Research Approach and Implications:** A two-study, mixed methods approach is used to identify and examine gamification-related affordances and their influence on technostress formation. The results aim to help organizations and system designers understand how gamification affordances impact employee technostress.











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