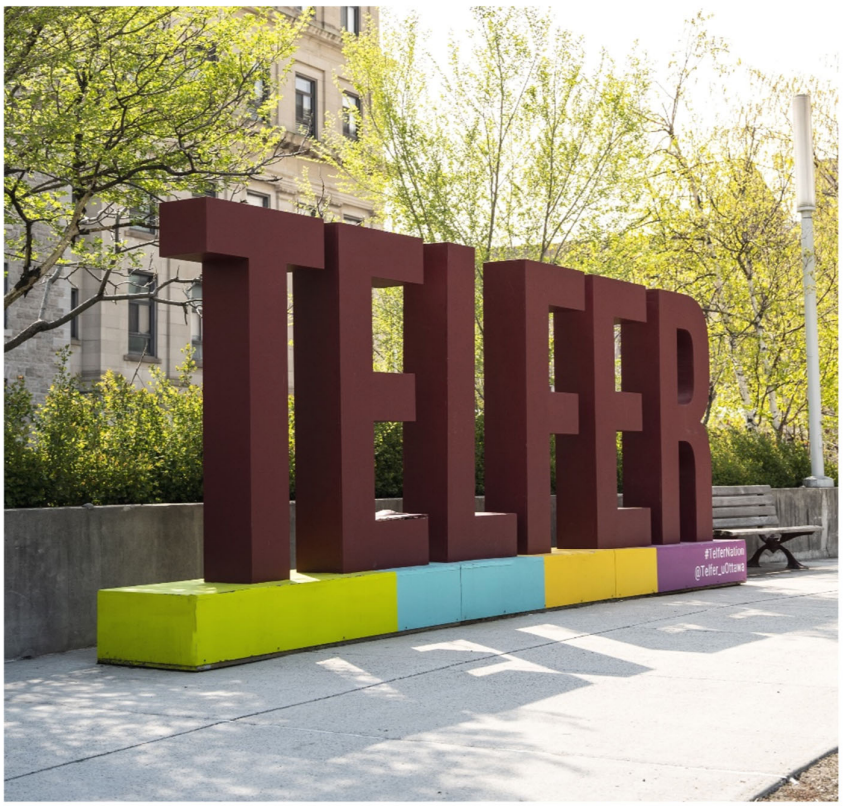
ÉCOLE DE GESTION **TELFER** SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT



Telfer Graduate Research Programs' 6th Annual Thesis Competition

Friday February 6th, 2026

9:15 AM – 3:00 PM

DMS 4101

AGENDA

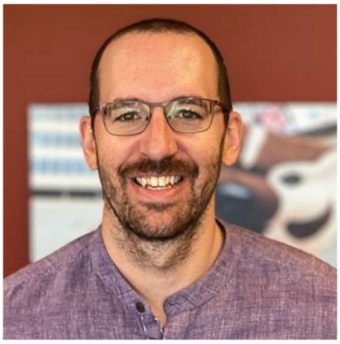
9:15	**9:30**	**Coffee and muffins**
9:30	**9:35**	**Welcome**
9:35	**9:40**	**Message from the Dean:** Dr. Stéphane Brutus
9:40	**9:45**	**Message from the Vice-Dean (Research)**: Dr. Silvia Bonaccio
9:45	**10:15**	**Keynote Speaker**: Dr. Justin Boutilier ***Actionable analytics for social good***
10:15	**11:15**	**Oral Presentations** – Session 1 *Guilda Akbari* *Noah Sidoli* *Fiona He* *Ayman Ajaj* *Shaista Jaffer*
11:15	**11:30**	**Break** (15 minutes)
11:30	**12:30**	**Oral Presentations** – Session 2 *Danielle Cruise* *Maryam Mahmoudi Mesineh* *Maryam Vahabi* *Tarek Khalil* *Manal Chakra*
12:30	**13:30**	**Lunch** (1 hour)
13:30	**15:00**	**Poster Session** *Maria Adams* *Ali Esmaeili Aftabdari* *Carolyn Arner* *Yasaman Gheidar* *Amanda Kutenski*

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr. Justin Boutilier

Assistant Professor

Actionable analytics for social good

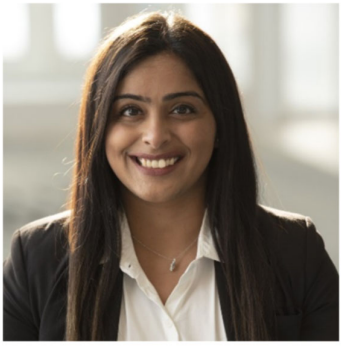
In this talk, Prof. Boutilier will provide an overview of several projects that use *actionable analytics for social good* – the theme of his research program. He will discuss projects that apply techniques from operations research to problems in areas such as global health, digital health, and emergency medicine. Through these projects, he will share insights from developing collaborations with individuals and organizations in North America, Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South America. Finally, Prof. Boutilier will share some of his current research with local healthcare organizations in Ottawa.



Bio: Justin Boutilier is an Assistant Professor at the Telfer School of Management within the University of Ottawa and a Research Chair in AI and Mental Health at the Institut du Savoir Montfort. His research focuses on developing and applying actionable analytics to solve health and humanitarian problems, primarily focusing on the interface between predictive and prescriptive analytics. He holds a Ph.D. in Operations Research from the University of Toronto and is a winner of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS) Pierskalla Best Paper Award. Prior to joining the University of Ottawa, Justin was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering and an Affiliated Faculty in the BerbeeWalsh Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of Wisconsin Madison.

MASTERS OF CEREMONIES:

Shaista Jaffer



Shaista Karim Sadrudin Jaffer is a doctoral candidate in finance at the Telfer School of Management. Her research focuses on the intersection of corporate finance and labour economics, exploring how financial strategies influence workplace equity and dynamics. She is supervised by Dr. Ali Akyol, under whose guidance she is examining the strategic use of share repurchases and their implications for labour relations. During her studies to earn an MSc in Finance from Telfer, Shaista published a book chapter in *CryptoFinance* and explored Bitcoin's role as a hedge during the COVID-19 pandemic. Last summer, she published two chapters in an open educational resource, *The FinTech Explorer*. She has also designed and taught an undergraduate course, "FinTech," and created a junior high level mini-course, "AI & Business: What's the Link?" to introduce young learners to the transformative role of technology in business. Outside of the university, Shaista is a founding member of All Seasons Indian Catering, Tree of Africa Foods, and SKJ Superior Solutions Ltd. Her drive to connect rigorous academic research with real-world applications continues to shape her academic journey and entrepreneurial pursuits.

Danielle Cruise

Danielle Cruise is a doctoral student in management, with a specialization in health systems under the supervision of Dr. Mirou Jaana. Danielle is interested in exploring organizational resilience and performance in long-term care homes, and is a recipient of the Ontario Graduate Scholarship. In her previous studies, Danielle obtained a bachelor's degree in public health from the University of Waterloo and an MSc in health systems from the Telfer School of Management. Her master's thesis explored the factors that managers consider to inform their decision to adopt health information technology in long-term care homes. Danielle has presented her work at several conferences, including the Canadian Association on Gerontology, the Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research, and the AGE-WELL Annual Conference, among others. She was also a finalist in the SSHRC's Storytellers Competition, where she communicated the impact

and relevance of her research in a 300- word infographic. Danielle also attended the 2024 CIHR Summer Program on Aging, held in Vancouver, British Columbia.

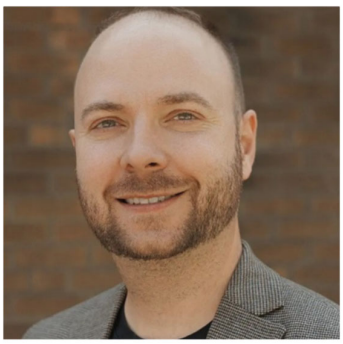
JUDGES:

Dr. Rengong (Alex) Zhang
Assistant Professor

Dr. Rengong (Alex) Zhang's research uses big data to study workplace safety, labor, and capital market issues. He has recently published in the Journal of Finance and Quantitative Analysis, Organization Science, Journal of Operations Management, Review of Quantitative Finance and Accounting, and European Accounting Review. His research has been covered by media outlets such as S&P Global and National Affairs.

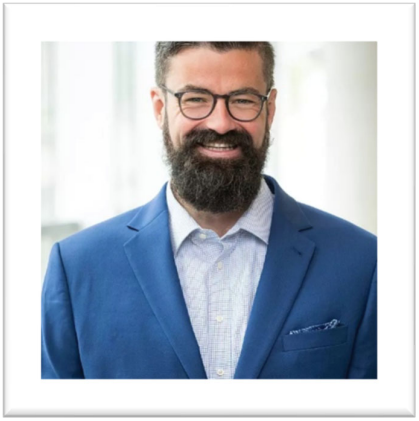
Before joining Telfer, Dr. Zhang worked at City University of Hong Kong. Sponsored by a large government grant, he led the establishment of Asia's first cloud-based ESG analytics (virtual) lab. He was frequently invited as a guest speaker on Fintech and data analytics at large education forums. Professionally, Dr. Zhang was also invited to speak on Fintech and investment strategy at reputable financial institutions such as S&P global and AIA.

Dr. Francis Desjardins
Assistant Professor



Professor Desjardins is an Assistant Professor at the Telfer School of Management. He holds a PhD in Management, Strategy, and Entrepreneurship from HEC Montréal. His research focuses on the qualitative dimensions of managerial decision-making, particularly how new managers integrate into organizational life and how external pressures—such as social media and stakeholder influence—shape complex and often ambiguous decisions. He studies a range of organizational settings to better understand how managers develop practical and ethical strategies to navigate uncertainty. His work engages with themes such as reflexivity, moral pluralism, and role ambiguity, while also examining how emerging technologies—especially artificial intelligence and social media—affect organizational development and strategic thinking.

Dr. William Van Woensel
Assistant Professor



Dr. William Van Woensel received his PhD in Applied Computer Science at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in Belgium. He was a Research Associate at Dalhousie University, and a Visiting Researcher at the Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Spain. It is his ambition to develop novel methods for health informatics, information systems, and artificial intelligence; and translate them into practice to transform healthcare. Themes of interest include the data-driven mining and analysis of real-world care trajectories, knowledge-driven representation of clinical guidelines, and symbolic reasoning to infer useful information from both artefacts.

His award-winning research program has produced innovative methods for clinical decision support, care trajectory analysis, and knowledge representation and reasoning. His work has received 4 best paper awards spanning these fields. He has co-organized the premier Artificial Intelligence in Medicine conference series (AIME) and DeclarativeAI conferences, together with a number of workshops and tutorials. His program has received multiple grants from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada., Institut du Savoir Montfort, Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation, and the Telfer School of Management.

Dr. Ahmed Khalil Ben Ayed
Assistant Professor

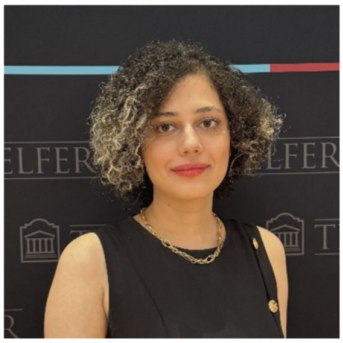
Dr. Ben Ayed joined the Telfer School of Management in 2019 as an Assistant Professor in Marketing. He earned a Ph.D. in Administration from HEC Montréal, an M.Sc. from the same university and completed his postdoctoral studies in Quantitative Psychology at McGill University. Dr. Ben Ayed is multilingual (fluent in English, French and Arabic with working knowledge of Italian). He worked for several years at The Canada Research Chair in the Management of Employee Commitment and Performance and was part of the Performance Measurement Center of Expertise of the Canada Revenue Agency right before joining Telfer's faculty.

Dr. Ben Ayed's main research interests focus on service failure and measurement. He is extensively interested in integrating theories and concepts from other research areas,

such as Social Psychology and Organizational Behaviour into marketing frameworks to gain further understanding of the consumer-service provider interaction. His research has been published in journals such as Journal of Service Marketing, Journal of Organizational Behavior, Human Relations, The Leadership Quarterly, and Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS:

Guilda Akbari



Guilda Akbari is a PhD candidate in finance at the Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Dr. Fabio Moneta and Dr. Adelphe Ekponon. Her research lies in asset pricing, with an emphasis on understanding risk and return patterns across multiple financial markets, including cryptocurrencies, mutual funds, and traditional assets.

Her current work studies cryptocurrency markets and how their returns are related to broader trends in traditional financial markets. In particular, she examines whether information from equity markets and market uncertainty can help explain and predict cryptocurrency returns. This research highlights meaningful connections between digital assets and conventional financial markets and contributes to a better understanding of how cryptocurrencies behave as an investment class. She is presenting this work at the Telfer Thesis Competition.

In addition to her work on cryptocurrencies, Guilda conducts research on mutual funds, focusing on how environmental, social, and governance (ESG) characteristics are associated with fund risk and performance.

Before joining Telfer, Guilda earned an MSc in Industrial Engineering with a specialization in financial systems from the University of Tehran. Her academic background provided strong training in quantitative analysis and risk management, which continues to support her research.

Alongside her doctoral studies, Guilda has extensive experience as a teaching and research assistant for finance courses. She is also teaching ADM 3351 at the Telfer School of Management during the Winter term.

Risk Premiums in the Cryptocurrency Market

Abstract: We ask whether cryptocurrencies earn risk premiums linked to broad stock-market risks. Specifically, do coins that move more with equity market returns and equity market volatility earn systematically different average returns?

We build a model in which a cryptocurrency is a “levered claim’’ on the stock market and its volatility. The model predicts that coins more exposed to stock returns and less exposed to stock-market volatility should earn higher expected returns. Empirically, we use daily data for the top 200 cryptocurrencies from 2017–2023. We estimate time-varying exposures (“betas’’) to the equity market return and the VIX index with rolling regressions, and price these betas using Fama–MacBeth cross-sectional regressions,

portfolio sorts, and principal-component factors. We also assess overall model fit with standard asset-pricing distance tests.

We find that equity risks are clearly priced in the cryptocurrency market. Coins with higher exposure to stock-market returns earn higher average returns, while coins that perform poorly when equity volatility spikes (high VIX beta) must offer a return premium. A trading strategy that buys coins with high market-return beta and low volatility beta, and shorts the opposite set, earns about 4.8% per month (≈58% per year) after estimated trading and shorting costs. A composite factor that combines market return and volatility generates even larger and highly significant spreads. Pricing-kernel tests support a two-factor model.

Overall, the evidence supports viewing cryptocurrencies as equity-linked assets rather than stand-alone "alternative" investments. Equity market return and equity volatility jointly explain a substantial share of the cross-section of crypto returns, especially after 2018. This has practical implications for risk management and asset allocation, and motivates studying whether similar pricing holds for newer segments such as DeFi tokens and layer-2 coins.

Noah Sidoli

Noah Sidoli is a first-year doctoral student in Management at Telfer, specializing in Finance under the supervision of Dr. Fabio Moneta. His research interests lie at the intersection of monetary economics, asset pricing, and commodity markets, with one particular focus on how monetary policy shocks transmit through macroeconomic and financial channels to influence commodity prices. His master's research examined the announcement effects of quantitative easing and tightening by the Federal Reserve, European Central Bank, and Bank of England on global crude oil futures.

Prior to joining the doctoral program, Noah worked across international trade policy, national defence, capital markets, and corporate treasury in both public and private Canadian institutions. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce and a Master of Science in Finance from the University of Ottawa. In his spare time, Noah enjoys cycling and reading about ancient Roman history.

High-Frequency Monetary Policy Surprises and Commodity Risk Premia

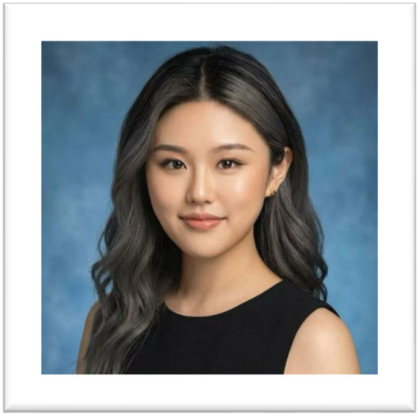
Abstract: Past research shows that commodity price responses account for 47% of the effect of U.S. monetary policy on domestic inflation and 57% on global inflation (Miranda-Pinto et al., 2023). Building on this evidence, this study examines whether high-frequency

U.S. monetary policy shocks are systematically priced in the cross-section of commodity futures returns, asking whether investors are compensated with higher expected returns for exposure to monetary policy shocks.

The study combines high-frequency monetary policy identification with cross-sectional asset pricing tests. Monetary policy surprises are measured using the Bauer and Swanson (2023) dataset, which captures unexpected changes in interest rate futures within 30-minute windows around Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) announcements as a proxy for exogenous changes in U.S. monetary policy. The analysis employs the two-stage Fama-MacBeth (1973) procedure. In the first stage, time-series regressions estimate each commodity's exposure to monetary policy shocks. In the second stage, cross-sectional regressions would test whether these exposures explain variation in average returns, yielding a proposed estimate of the price of monetary policy risk. The dataset includes sixteen actively traded commodity futures contracts across energy, metals, agricultural, food, and livestock markets, covering 361 FOMC policy announcements from 1989 to 2023.

Monetary policy is primarily conducted through the management of short-term interest rates, which directly influence exchange rates and inflation expectations, key determinants of storable and industrial commodity prices. Exogenous changes in policy then act as a primitive source of variation that ultimately drives the risk and expected returns of commodity futures. Commodities with different sensitivity to monetary policy shocks are expected to earn different excess returns. Pro-cyclical commodities may show negative exposure to contractionary shocks, while commodities that retain value during downturns are likely to exhibit positive exposure. This research establishes monetary policy shocks as a fundamental source of risk explaining commodity futures risk premia.

Fiona He



Fiona (Xinyi) He is a PhD student in the Digital Transformation and Innovation program, under the supervision of Dr. Christopher Sun. Her research focuses on the human-AI interaction in healthcare, particularly how different artificial intelligence (AI) interfaces and explainable artificial intelligence (XAI) strategies influence doctors' and patients' decision-making processes, trust, and satisfaction. In addition to her work on clinician- and patient-facing interfaces, Fiona also studies AI for mental health, with a specific focus on modelling and predicting antidepressant treatment response trajectories in major depressive disorder (MDD). She recently completed a systematic review on AI-based

antidepressant selection and is now developing large-model approaches to support personalized medication decisions.

Fiona holds a bachelor's degree in Design from the University of Alberta and was fast-tracked to a PhD. Her work integrates multimodal data, interpretable modelling, and human–AI interaction, with the goal of building clinically meaningful and trustworthy AI tools. Fiona's broader research vision is to bridge machine learning, clinical workflows, and user-centred design to support safe, explainable, and personalized healthcare.

Machine Learning for Comparative Antidepressant Selection in Major Depressive Disorder: A Systematic Review

Abstract: Background: Major depressive disorder affects 322 million individuals worldwide, yet antidepressant selection relies on trial-and-error with 42-53% response rates. Current AI models focus on individual treatments rather than comparative selection, limiting clinical utility.

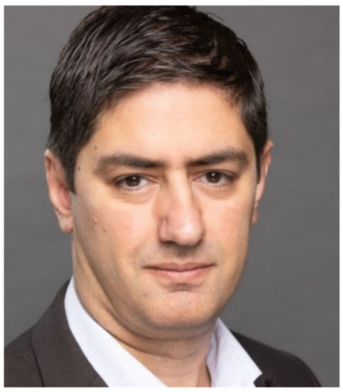
Objective: To evaluate AI models for predicting treatment outcomes in major depressive disorder, emphasizing comparative treatment selection between medications.

Methods: We systematically reviewed PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science (January 2015-March 2025) following PRISMA guidelines. Included studies examined adult MDD patients and utilized AI models comparing two or more pharmacological interventions.

Results: From 1,902 initial records, 15 studies met the inclusion criteria. Dataset sample sizes ranged from 49 to 77,226 participants. STAR*D was most frequently used dataset (20% of studies), followed by GENDEP and EMBARC (13.3% each). Studies compared 2 to 15 antidepressants using two main modeling approaches: separate drug-specific models trained independently for each medication (n=5 studies), or unified frameworks using clustering or trajectory methods to enable cross-treatment comparison (n=10 studies). Performance varied substantially, with Area Under the Curve (AUC) values ranging from 0.59 to 0.95 for classification tasks and accuracies between 62% and 95.1%. Only 4 studies (26.7%) conducted external validation on independent datasets. Depression severity was assessed using standardized scales in 86.6% of studies, though response and remission definitions varied considerably.

Conclusions: Despite promising individual results, current AI models for antidepressant selection face critical limitations for clinical translation. Most studies lack the capability to provide patient-level comparative predictions needed for treatment selection, whether using clustering-based or drug-specific approaches. Key barriers include limited external validation, overreliance on few established datasets, absence of explainability, and methodological heterogeneity preventing evidence synthesis. Future research should prioritize unified comparative frameworks with calibrated individual-level predictions, rigorous external validation, and transparent methodologies aligned with clinical workflows.

Ayman Ajaj



Ayman Ajaj is a PhD student in Digital Transformation and Innovation (DTI) at the University of Ottawa, where his research focuses on the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI), expertise and organizational practices. Alongside his doctoral studies, he has over two decades of experience in technology, having held senior leadership roles within global financial institutions across Europe, the Middle East, and North America. He has worked extensively within large, complex, and highly regulated environments, driving enterprise-scale digital transformation initiatives, advancing cybersecurity and risk management practices, and shaping the design and implementation of robust governance frameworks. His professional background spans payments, financial infrastructure, and mission-critical platforms operating at global scale. This combination of academic research and professional practice enables him to connect theoretical insights with real-world applications, and to examine artificial intelligence not only as a tool but as a socio-organizational phenomenon embedded in everyday professional routines, governance structures, and decision-making processes. Drawing on his leadership experience, he can critically assess how AI reshapes professional expertise, redistributes authority and reconfigures the work boundaries, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the evolving nature of work.

Catch Me If You Can: The (A)synchronous Interplay of Technology and Expertise

Abstract: Objectives and Research Question

My research will investigate how technology and human expertise shape each other over time, with a particular focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI). Instead of assuming that AI simply replaces or augments expert work, my thesis examines moments when technology and expertise move in sync (reinforcing each other) or out of sync (creating gaps and disruptions), along with the underlying impacts. The central research question is: How and why do AI technologies and human expertise co-evolve through mutual interactions?

Methods and Theoretical Foundation

I am leveraging scholarship on expertise, occupations, sociotechnical systems, and organizational theory. Empirically, I am currently conducting a qualitative study in the higher education domain to explore how both professors and students experience their evolving relationships in the era of GenAI-driven knowledge. Data includes interviews, documents (such as ChatGPT prompts), and groups observations. Complementing this study, a theory paper will examine how social evaluations -mainly stigma- towards AI shape experts' willingness to adopt or distance themselves from it. Finally, a systematic

literature review of the management research domain will summarize the most relevant relationship patterns between technology and expertise.

Results (proposed) and Theoretical Contribution

The thesis aims to identify recurring patterns through which expertise and AI alternately align, diverge, and realign. It proposes a framework explaining how professional identity, legitimacy, boundary claims, and social evaluation mechanisms shape this co-evolution.

Conclusion

Through this project I am hoping to offer a clearer understanding of how expertise evolves in the age of algorithmic-driven technologies, and provides tools for helping experts and technologies better communicate with each other.

Shaista Jaffer

Shaista Karim Sadrudin Jaffer is a doctoral candidate in finance at the Telfer School of Management. Her research focuses on the intersection of corporate finance and labour economics, exploring how financial strategies influence workplace equity and dynamics. She is supervised by Dr. Ali Akyol, under whose guidance she is examining the strategic use of share repurchases and their implications for labour relations. During her studies to earn an MSc in Finance from Telfer, Shaista published a book chapter in CryptoFinance and explored Bitcoin's role as a hedge during the COVID-19 pandemic. Last summer, she published two chapters in an open educational resource, The FinTech Explorer. She has also designed and taught an undergraduate course, "FinTech," and created a junior high level mini-course, "AI & Business: What's the Link?" to introduce young learners to the transformative role of technology in business. Outside of the university, Shaista is a founding member of All Seasons Indian Catering, Tree of Africa Foods, and SKJ Superior Solutions Ltd. Her drive to connect rigorous academic research with real-world applications continues to shape her academic journey and entrepreneurial pursuits.

Buying Leverage: The Strategic Use of Share Repurchases in Union Negotiations

Abstract: Imagine a company preparing to negotiate wages with its unionized workforce. While employees hope for a fair share of the profits, the company aims to minimize costs. The central objective of my research is to uncover whether firms use financial engineering to position this negotiation in their favor. Specifically, I investigate whether companies intentionally "empty their bank accounts" by purchasing their own stock—known as share repurchases—right before sitting down to bargain. The goal is to

determine if this is an opportunistic behavior used to signal that the company has limited cash available for wage increases.

To explore this, I analyze the financial history of unionized public companies over several years. I track the specific timing of their share buybacks and compare them against the dates of their labor contract renewals. By mapping these financial movements, I assess whether there is an abnormal spike in cash leaving the company to shareholders in the distinct period leading up to wage discussions.

The analysis reveals a clear strategic pattern: firms tend to significantly accelerate share buybacks shortly before entering negotiations. By channeling liquid cash to shareholders first, these companies artificially lower their visible resources. This creates a "financial constraint" that strengthens management's bargaining power, allowing them to argue they cannot afford higher wage demands.

This research concludes that corporate financial decisions are not isolated from the workforce; they are tactical moves that directly shape the size of an employee's paycheck. By exposing how financial tools are weaponized to shift wealth from workers to shareholders, this study offers vital insights for labor leaders and policymakers. Ultimately, identifying this behavior is a crucial step toward addressing income inequality, ensuring that corporate growth translates into sustainable livelihoods rather than just stock market gains.

Danielle Cruise

Danielle Cruise is a doctoral student in management, with a specialization in health systems under the supervision of Dr. Mirou Jaana. Danielle is interested in exploring organizational resilience and performance in long-term care homes, and is a recipient of the Ontario Graduate Scholarship. In her previous studies, Danielle obtained a bachelor's degree in public health from the University of Waterloo and an MSc in health systems from the Telfer School of Management. Her master's thesis explored the factors that managers consider to inform their decision to adopt health information technology in long-term care homes. Danielle has presented her work at several conferences, including the Canadian Association on Gerontology, the Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research, and the AGE-WELL Annual Conference, among others. She was also a finalist in the SSHRC's Storytellers Competition, where she communicated the impact and relevance of her research in a 300- word infographic. Danielle also attended the 2024 CIHR Summer Program on Aging, held in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Mapping Digital Health Services for Older Canadians: A GIS-Based Analysis of Interest, Usage, and Workforce Distribution

Abstract: Objectives

With population aging, digital health (DH) services can help alleviate system strain. Understanding older adults' interest in/access to DH services is essential to identify existing gaps and inform targeted interventions. Therefore, this research aims to: 1) Geographically map Canadian older adults' interest in/access to DH services and healthcare human resources (HHR); and 2) Analyze provincial variations in DH services in relation to older adults and HHR distribution.

Methodology

Secondary data were analyzed on DH services (i.e., personal health information (PHI), virtual consultations (VC), remote patient monitoring (RPM), digital mental health tools (DMH)) using: 1) 2023 Canada Health Infoway Community Digital Health Survey (n = 10,130); 2) HHR-2023 Canadian Institute for Health Information Health Workforce Database; and 3) older adults-2023 Statistics Canada Population Estimates Dataset. Employing geographic information systems (ArcGIS Pro), attribute data were combined with geographic units and then layered with HHR and DH services data to generate choropleth maps.

Results

Canada has 7.5 million older adults, mostly reporting a regular provider (>72%); 97,384 physicians and 477,980 nurses are employed nationwide. No significant association was found between interest in/access to DH services and the number of physicians/nurses. Seven choropleth maps revealed provincial disparities in DH services and eHealth literacy. Interest in accessing PHI was high (>67%), but lower for other DH services i.e. VC (<59%), RPM (<58%), DMH (<43%). eHealth literacy was moderate across provinces (median: 23 to 26/40) and correlated significantly with digital PHI use. Maritime provinces and Manitoba had lowest PHI use (<33% and 13%). Few older adults use VC (0%-12%), RPM (1%-7%), and DMH (0%-8%).

Conclusion

Provincial variations in DH services use among older adults highlight systemic barriers nationally. Provincial patient portals availability may explain the higher prevalence of PHI use. Targeted interventions (provider training; public education; funding) are needed to better leverage DH services.

Maryam Mahmoudi Mesineh

Maryam Mahmoudi Mesineh is a Ph.D. candidate in Management at Telfer, specializing in Strategy and Organization. Under the supervision of Dr. Jose-Carlos Marques and Dr. Daina Mazutis, she conducts research at the intersection of strategic foresight and corporate sustainability. Maryam earned a master's degree in Industrial Engineering, specializing in Systems Optimization, from the Isfahan University of Technology (IUT). She also completed her bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering at IUT. She ranked first in her cohort in both her bachelor's and master's programs and received an honorary admission to her master's degree.

During her master's research, Maryam studied green innovation in developing countries. She also worked as a research assistant at the Business Administration Lab at IUT, where she contributed to several projects and published in the International Journal of Innovation Management. In addition, she served as a teaching assistant for multiple courses during her studies.

In her free time, she enjoys hiking, exploring nature, reading, and learning about astronomy.

Strategic Foresight and Corporate Sustainability: A Systematic Literature Review

Abstract: Organizations increasingly turn to strategic foresight to navigate uncertainty and support sustainability, yet strategic foresight role in corporate sustainability remains underexplored in the literature. Existing research either examine sustainability without unpacking foresight tools, map foresight without a sustainability focus, or link foresight mainly to innovation and competitiveness. As a result, we still know little about how different foresight methods contribute to sustainability-focused strategic processes, which tools are used at which levels of analysis, and how they relate to different sustainability aspects. This makes it difficult for firms and policymakers to know which tools to use for which sustainability purposes.

This study examines how strategic foresight tools support corporate sustainability by addressing three questions: (1) How do foresight tools contribute to corporate sustainability? (2) Which tools are used at different strategic levels? (3) How do these tools relate to environmental, social, and economic outcomes? I conducted a systematic literature review of empirical studies published since 2010 that explicitly link foresight tools to corporate sustainability. Following PRISMA 2020 guidelines, I searched Scopus, Web of Science, and Business Source Complete, applied inclusion and exclusion criteria, and analyzed qualifying studies using an interpretive thematic approach.

The findings identify seven contribution areas of foresight to corporate sustainability: anticipating sustainability challenges, building long-term visions and pathways, engaging stakeholders, integrating sustainability into strategies and business models, enabling sustainability-oriented innovation, managing risks and uncertainties, and improving decision-making. The review also maps tools such as scenario planning, backcasting, Delphi, and collaborative foresight across six strategic levels—organizational, sectoral, policy, ecosystem, product/portfolio, and socio-technical systems—and links them to the three pillars of corporate sustainability. Overall, the study conceptualizes strategic foresight as a dynamic capability that helps organizations sense, learn, and reconfigure for sustainability transformation, while highlighting gaps in social sustainability and the need for more inclusive and longitudinal empirical research.

Maryam Vahabi

Maryam Vahabi is in her third year of a doctorate in health systems management at the Telfer School of Management, under the supervision of Dr. Rafid Mahmood and Dr. Christopher Sun. Maryam is working on leveraging vision-language models for object detection in medical images. She is also conducting research on real-time prediction of in-hospital cardiac arrest through the adoption of deep learning methods. She has coauthored a paper published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. Prior to joining Telfer, Maryam earned a master's degree in systems optimization from the Iran University of Science and Technology (IUST). Before that, she completed her bachelor's degree in industrial engineering at IUST. In her previous research, Maryam used machine learning methods to predict the risk of death in COVID-19 patients. Additionally, she collaborated with the Iranian Cancer Control Center on a comprehensive survey assessing the quality of life among cancer patients.

Same Model, Different Care: The Impact of Noise on Privileged and Unprivileged Patients in Medical LLMs

Abstract: Large language models (LLMs) are increasingly used to answer complex medical diagnosis questions. However, the information they are shown before answering a question can be affected by noise, and this noise is often unevenly distributed across patient groups. In this work, we study medical question answering settings where some patient groups are privileged and others are unprivileged. We ask: (1) in the presence of noise, which group of patients is affected more; (2) how the impact changes when the incorrect example comes from the privileged versus the unprivileged group; and (3) which strategies for choosing example cases are most reliable, regardless of which group is being asked about. We run experiments with several LLMs on multimodal medical diagnosis tasks that combine images and clinical descriptions. Before answering each

question, the model sees a small number of example patient cases with their outcomes. We introduce noise by deliberately making some of these outcomes incorrect. We systematically vary which group the incorrect example belongs to and which group the question is about. We compare strategies for selecting example cases, and model performance and gaps between groups are used as measures of bias and fairness. We show that even a single noisy example case can disproportionately harm unprivileged patients, and that simply removing group labels does not fully prevent this harm. As part of this work, we build a dataset of medical cases and questions, including medical images, which we plan to make publicly available. We derive principles for choosing example cases that are more robust to noise and reduce unfair gaps between groups. This work clarifies how noise in medical data interacts with social privilege in the behaviour of LLMs and provides practical guidance for medical AI use that is both reliable and fair to unprivileged patient groups.

Tarek Khalil

Tarek Khalil is a PhD candidate in the Digital Transformation and Innovation program at the University of Ottawa. His research focuses on the facilitators, barriers, and impacts of social robots in older adults' care organizations, with particular attention to how these technologies can improve the quality of care in long-term care settings and the factors that influence their successful implementation.

Tarek holds a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering, which he completed with distinction and under a full scholarship. He also earned a Master's degree in Business Analytics, further strengthening his analytical skills and his ability to address complex challenges at the intersection of business and technology.

With significant experience as a Technical Consultant, Tarek has developed expertise in digital transformation, robotic platform integration, and business technologies that enhance productivity and patient care. His research interests span Health Informatics and Healthcare Management, particularly the digitalization of healthcare and telehealth applications.

In 2025, Tarek was selected as a Top 20 finalist in the SSHRC Storytelling Competition, recognizing his ability to communicate complex research to broad audiences. He is dedicated to leveraging his expertise in data analytics and technology to create innovative solutions that contribute to more efficient, compassionate, and technology-driven healthcare environments.

Social Assistive Robots (SARs) Adoption in Canadian LTC Homes: Market Analysis and Toolkit for Implementation

Abstract: Canadian long-term care (LTC) facilities face critical challenges including catering to the complex needs of residents (e.g., isolation, depression), staff shortages, and adopting sustainable care models. Social Assistive Robots (SARs) show potential to enhance companionship, support daily living, and reduce caregiver burden. However, their adoption in LTC remains limited.

This research bridges the gap between innovation and practice by examining how organizational readiness, stakeholder collaboration, and ethical user-centered design can enhance SARs adoption in LTC settings.

This mixed-methods research integrates three interrelated studies. First, an umbrella review is conducted to synthesize global published evidence on SARs' impacts, barriers, and facilitators in LTC, providing the conceptual foundation for the subsequent studies. Second, a SARs adoption toolkit is developed and validated (in progress), informed by findings from the umbrella review and a market analysis using secondary data (grey literature, online news, and social media). The toolkit will incorporate evidence-based recommendations across technological, human, and ethical domains and will be validated through semi-structured interviews with LTC managers (n = 20-30). Third, grounded in the resource-based theory, a province-wide survey of Ontario LTC facilities is underway to assess organizational characteristics and technological capacities, and examine how these factors influence SARs adoption.

The umbrella review highlights that SARs can improve resident psychosocial outcomes and reduce caregiver burden, yet challenges persist related to infrastructure, training, costs, and ethics. Preliminary market analysis findings show minimal SARs penetration in Canada, with pilot initiatives mostly in ON and BC. The toolkit includes best-practice recommendations and a six-dimensional SARs assessment checklist addressing user types, applications, availability, and technical specifications. Together, these resources support effective collaboration between technology vendors and LTC organizations.

This research contributes evidence, tools, and organizational insights that can support responsible and sustainable SARs adoption in LTC, addressing social isolation and depression among residents and promoting workforce well-being.

Manal Chakra

Manal holds a BSc in Pure Mathematics from the American University of Beirut and an MSc in Industrial-Organizational Psychology from the University of London. She is currently a PhD candidate in Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management at the Telfer School of Management under the supervision of Jane O'Reilly and A.J. Corner. Her research interests include workplace relationships, the outcomes of dark personalities, as such her dissertation focuses on Machiavellianism in the workplace, with an emphasis on understanding the prosocial behaviors of individuals high in Machiavellian traits. She is also interested in the application of Artificial Intelligence and technology in employee selection and within negotiations. Manal is currently running an experiment in the Triple I Lab examining the emotional patterns of negotiation partners using advanced audio/video analysis tools, including state-of-the-art FaceReader technology.

Helpful Machiavellians: When and Why Machiavellians Engage in Prosocial Behavior

Abstract: Objectives / Research Questions

This dissertation examines when and why individuals high in Machiavellianism (those known for cynicism, manipulation, and strategic self-interest) sometimes act helpfully toward others. It asks two central questions: (1) How do Machiavellians behaviorally respond to witnessing exemplary acts of moral excellence? and (2) Under what interpersonal conditions do Machiavellians choose to help colleagues at work? Together, these questions address the broader problem of understanding how dark personality traits can produce seemingly helpful (prosocial) behavior, particularly in organizational contexts where such individuals often attain positions of power.

Methods / Theoretical Foundation

The research integrates Socioanalytic Theory (Hogan & Holland, 2003) and Mimicry–Deception Theory (Jones, 2014) into a unified socioanalytic–mimicry framework (Marbut et al., 2025).

Project 1 Will contain three studies to test whether Machiavellians experience weaker moral elevation (a warm, uplifting emotion felt when witnessing moral excellence) and whether they imitate helping behavior when they observe acts of moral excellence.

Project 2 Will contain three studies to test a moderated-mediation model linking Machiavellianism, the motives of getting along and getting ahead, and perceptions of a colleague's instrumentality in predicting helping behaviour, in particular, individual-directed organizational citizenship behavior (OCB-I).

Results / Theoretical Contributions (proposed)

Findings are expected to show that although Machiavellians' helping behaviors are not rooted in moral emotions, they are prevalent in moral environments due to calculated impression management. And in contexts where helping enhances reputation or personal advancement, Machiavellians will engage in helpful and cooperative actions.

Conclusion

This dissertation reframes Machiavellians as strategic rather than uniformly antisocial individuals. It contributes to management research by identifying when dark traits, such as Machiavellianism, yield positive cooperative outcomes; clarifying the emotional boundaries of moral elevation, and illustrating how prosocial conduct can emerge from self-interested motives. This is pertinent insight relevant to leadership, ethics training, and workplace climate design.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS:

Maria Adams

Maria Adams is a doctoral student at the Telfer School of Management, specializing in Organizational Behaviour and Human Resources, under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Dimoff. Her research interests include mental health and leadership, with her current work focusing on leaders' mental health disclosure in the workplace. Maria holds a SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship (2025-2028) and received the SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarships – Master's (2024-2025).

Maria earned her Master of Science in Management from Dalhousie University in 2025 and her Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) in Human Resources Management from the University of Ottawa in 2023.

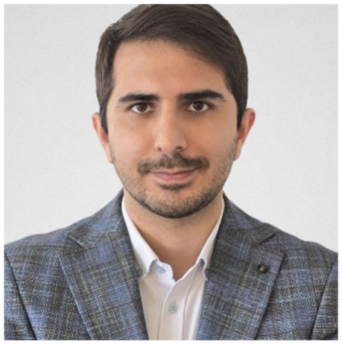
In her free time, Maria volunteers as the social media coordinator for the Canadian Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Outside of academia, she enjoys travelling, baking, and taking walks with her dog, Lexi.

Weighing Costs and Benefits: Leader and Employee Mental Health Disclosure at Work

Abstract: With the growing focus on mental health in the workplace, occupational health researchers have begun exploring (a) the factors that predict whether employees will disclose their mental health conditions to their leaders (i.e., managers or supervisors), and (b) the often positive effects of such disclosures on employee outcomes, such as

increased social support (Hastuti & Timming, 2021) and improved access to employer resources and benefits (e.g., Kelloway et al., 2023). Yet, comparatively little research has examined leaders' experiences in sharing their own mental health experiences with employees – and the associated risks and benefits. We address this gap through a two-study research design that draws on implicit leadership theory (Lord et al., 2020), hypothesizing that mental illness conflicts with the normative image of an "ideal leader", making leaders less willing than employees to disclose their mental health conditions at work (Cloutier & Barling, 2023). In Study 1, we found support for this hypothesis – compared with employees, leaders showed significantly less willingness to disclose their own mental health issues to the people they supervise. In Study 2, we plan to use an experimental design to expand upon these findings by examining the personal and situational factors that influence when, why, and to whom leaders may be more likely to disclose. Data collection will be completed by January 2026. This research contributes academically by extending disclosure theory to leaders, showing that mental illness conflicts with the "ideal leader" prototype and reduces leaders' willingness to disclose. Practically, it highlights the need for organizational practices that reduce stigma and support leader disclosure to foster healthier, more open workplaces.

Ali Esmaeili Aftabdari



Ali Esmaeili Aftabdari is a PhD candidate in management with a specialization in strategy and organization at the Telfer School of Management. Under the supervision of Dr. José Carlos Marques and Dr. Sarah Ben Amor, his research explores business–state relations under conditions of geopolitical uncertainty.

Before joining Telfer, Ali earned both his master's and bachelor's degrees in industrial engineering from the Iran University of Science and Technology (IUST). His earlier work focused on the dynamics between industries and governments, with a particular emphasis on Iran's steel industry.

Ali has presented and co-authored papers at conferences such as the Administrative Sciences Association of Canada (ASAC)—where his work earned the Best Student Paper Award in the Strategy Division and first place in the Spark Tank Pitch Competition—and the European Working Group on Multiple Criteria Decision Aiding.

Political Ideologies of CEOs: A Typological Overview of Their Impact on Organizational Configurations

Abstract: CEOs are no longer mere business strategists; they are political actors whose deeply held values shape the very DNA of their organizations. While substantial research confirms that executive ideology influences isolated outcomes—such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or risk-taking—it often overlooks how these beliefs coalesce

with internal and external forces to form stable, long-term organizational designs. This study bridges that gap by addressing a critical research question: How do CEO political ideologies interact with organizational culture and national political climates to create distinct organizational configurations?

Drawing on the intersection of Upper Echelons Theory and Configurational Theory, this paper moves beyond linear cause-and-effect analysis to propose a holistic typology. We argue that an organization's structure and strategy are not random, but are the result of specific alignments—or frictions—between a leader's values and their environment.

The study identifies six distinct organizational configurations, ranging from the harmonized "Institutional Progressives" and "Pragmatic Traditionalists," where ideological alignment drives clear authority and strategic focus, to complex forms like "Strategic Navigators" and "Contrarian Advocates." In these latter configurations, leaders must maneuver through conflicting internal cultures and national regimes, often resulting in unique structural adaptations. For instance, we highlight how liberal CEOs in conservative environments may curb innovation to survive (threat response), while conservative CEOs in liberal climates often adopt "instrumental" advocacy to protect shareholder value.

Ultimately, this research demonstrates that political ideology is a fundamental architect of corporate form. By revealing the "political architecture" of firms, this typology offers a powerful framework for predicting how organizations will adapt, govern, and compete in an era of increasing global polarization.

Carolyn Arner

Carolyn Arner is a master's candidate in Organizational Behaviour and Human Resources at the Telfer School of Management, working under the guidance of Dr. Lance Ferris. Her research examines how behavioural variability in servant leadership influences leader burnout, with the broader goal of advancing workplace mental health, and translating research insights into industry practice. Carolyn completed her BA in Psychology, with a minor in Management at the University of Ottawa. Drawing on seven years' experience in sport and recreation across a variety of workplaces, Carolyn has developed a deep appreciation for the complexities of workplace dynamics. These professional experiences have shaped her interest in identifying root causes of organizational challenges, and informed her academic perspective on leadership, well-being, and employee experience. Her background in sport and recreation highlights her adaptability, forward-thinking approach, and ability to take multiple perspectives as both leader and

follower. Beyond her academic work, Carolyn enjoys swimming, painting, reading, and volunteering, all of which support her well-being and provides inspiration.

The Impact of Servant Leadership Style Variability on Burnout

Abstract: Objectives & Hypothesis. Modifying or varying one's leadership style prevents leaders from establishing routines and demands active problem solving, which may increase burnout. The purpose of this study is to investigate if servant leadership behavioural variability (SLBV) increases burnout.

Methods & Theoretical Foundation. Servant leadership is the desire to serve others first through leadership. Servant leaders vary their behaviour across the day's tasks to better meet their followers' needs. Given that leadership requires adaptability to function effectively in various contexts it is critical to examine variability.

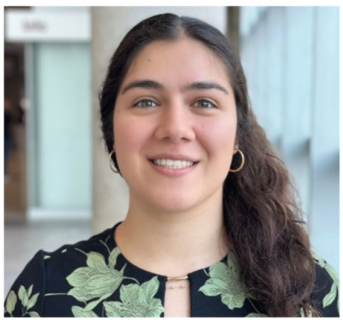
The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework suggests that variability in servant leadership behaviour contributes to increased burnout, due to job demands requiring high effort, cognitive processing, and skill (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). SLBV represents the situational and interpersonal adjustments leaders make through varying behaviours, specifically when empowering and developing people, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship.

A sample of 200 leaders will be recruited using Prolific. They then will complete an initial survey and a daily survey over five workdays. The initial survey will collect demographics, and control variables of pre-existing burnout levels, work unpredictability, collectivism, and identity as a servant leader. Daily surveys 1-4 will capture daily servant leadership behaviour, with the final survey additionally assessing weekly burnout. Servant leadership variability will be assessed using the standard deviation of daily scores, between-individuals. Hypotheses will be tested using RStudio.

Proposed Results & Theoretical Contribution. We propose that SLBV is positively related to burnout. This research will contribute to reconceptualizing servant leadership as a variable style, introducing variability as a demand within the JD-R framework, and positioning variability as a construct.

Conclusion. The proposed study is expected to clarify the relationship between SLBV and burnout.

Yasaman Gheidar



Yasaman Gheidar is a PhD candidate in the Digital Transformation and Innovation (DTI) program at the Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Dr. Lysanne Lessard and Dr. Yao Yao. She won first prize for her poster presentation at the 2024 Telfer Student Thesis Competition.

Yasaman is passionate about human-centered design in digital services. Her doctoral research investigates the design of trustworthy peer support systems for high-risk occupational groups—a critical topic for the digital transformation of human services. She has actively presented her work at international conferences, including DESRIST, RE, and AMCIS.

Prior to her doctoral studies, Yasaman obtained a Master's degree in Information Technology Management and a Bachelor's degree in Entrepreneurship from the University of Tehran. She ranked first in her cohort for both degrees and received an award for her Master's thesis at the 29th University of Tehran Research Festival. Professionally, she has contributed to significant digital transformation projects in Iran, working with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and several national banks.

Beyond her research, Yasaman has served as the DTI and GSAED Representative for the Telfer School of Management and volunteers with the ISAUO club. In her free time, she enjoys squash and Zumba.

Towards Trustable Peer Support Systems for High-risk Occupational Groups: A Theory-Driven Approach

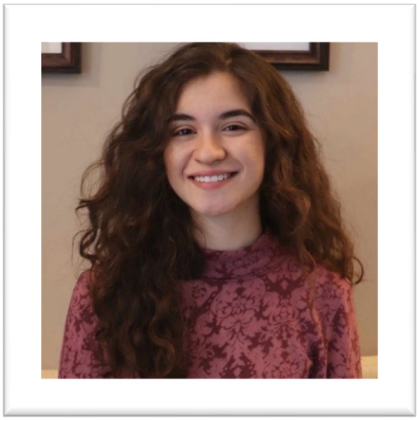
Abstract : This research aims to support the design of peer support systems (PSS) for high-risk occupational groups (HOGs), focusing on enhancing trust. Peer support programs (PSPs) are validated interventions for mitigating HOGs' burnout and are increasingly delivered through information and communication technologies (ICT). While ICT-enabled programs offer convenience, they also present challenges related to communication barriers, perceived safety concerns, and low participation rates. Central to these challenges is the lack of trust in technology and participants. Thus, the research question is, "How can PSS be designed to address HOGs' lack of trust towards technology and other participants when participating in PSPs?" Research objectives will answer this question, including developing an information system design theory (ISDT) composed of meta-requirements and design principles.

The methodology follows design science research and will be conducted in three phases. The first phase involves identifying the challenges of ICT-enabled PSPs and developing a trust framework with multiple dimensions. In the second phase, the trust framework is integrated with PSS functionalities to develop a guiding framework. The guiding

framework is then refined through expert interviews, and meta-requirements and design principles are derived from it. Based on them, a prototype is developed that will be refined iteratively by getting feedback from HOGs in multiple cycles. Finally, a pre-post experiment is conducted with another group of HOGs to validate the meta-requirements and to refine the design principles.

The key result is the validated meta-requirements for trustable PSS. The secondary results are the refined design principles instantiated as a prototype and the refined guiding framework. Theoretically, this research enhances the knowledge of trust in information systems by identifying the specific trust types that impact activities within information system design. Practically, the findings offer valuable insights for system designers on creating trustable PSS and help administrators in selecting or adapting such systems.

Amanda Kutenski



Amanda Kutenski is a first-year PhD student in the Health Systems specialization, under the supervision of Dr. Mirou Jaana. Her research interests lie in how information technologies transform health care delivery, with a particular focus on their implications for quality of care, patient safety, and system efficiency. In her previous studies, Amanda completed both an Honours Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Health Sciences degree and MSc in Health Systems at the University of Ottawa. She was awarded the CIHR Canada Graduate Scholarship – Master's (2024–2025) and placed second in the 2025 Telfer Thesis Oral Competition. She has presented her work at several conferences including the Canadian Association on Gerontology, the Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research, and the AGE-WELL Annual Conference. Outside of academia, Amanda loves cooking with family and friends. She also enjoys running, climbing and camping.

From Data to Better Care: A Multi-Phase Exploration of Enablers and Barriers to Unlocking the Hidden Value in Hospital EMR Systems

Abstract: Institutional logics theory can provide a lens to understand how competing clinical, managerial and system logics shape the intended vs. actual use of electronic medical records (EMR) data. We propose a three-phase project that seeks to analyze and understand how competing logics influence our capacity to drive practical insights from patient data embedded in EMR systems, notably from Epic systems (i.e., #1 system used for ongoing Canadian multi-hospital implementations). Guided by the PRISMA-ScR guidelines, study 1 consists of a scoping review examining the breadth and depth of the literature on planned vs. realized uses of hospital EMR systems for QI, analytics and

organizational/clinical decision-making. Findings will be mapped employing institutional logics (clinical, managerial, professional, data/analytics). Leveraging an existing network of collaborators from Ontario hospitals, study 2 will involve interviews with 30-45 managers, directors, QI leaders and clinical leads across Ottawa currently using or seeking to implement Epic. Recruitment will continue until we reach thematic saturation across roles, determined by employing reflexive thematic analysis (i.e., how logics shape expectations, workflows, and actual data practices) across two coders. Last, study 3 will employ secondary data analysis of Epic data-access logs and reporting metrics from 3 hospitals in Ottawa at different stages in their Epic system implementation to quantify the discrepancy between analytic capabilities, real-world usage patterns, and identify opportunities for practical improvements. The mixed-methods approach will enable identification of systematic gaps between organizational visions of data use and frontline practices. The findings will contribute to the information systems literature and to generate practical insights for optimizing patient data use within a learning health system. As Epic implementation rapidly grows across Canada, the findings will inform strategies to realign implementation goals across the various logics, improve analytic readiness and enhance the effective use of Epic data across Canadian hospitals for data-driven care.