

Kristina Lalova

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2023-Present Fixed-Term Assistant Professor in Finance: **Michigan State University, Eli Broad College of Business, East Lansing, MI**

EDUCATION

2023 **University of Connecticut, School of Business, Storrs, CT**
Ph.D. in Business Administration (Finance)

2017 **Drexel University, LeBow College of Business, Philadelphia, PA**
B.S. in Business Administration (Finance and Accounting, Summa Cum Laude)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Corporate and Behavioral Finance, Labor Market Interactions, Corporate M&As and Bankruptcies, Private Equity

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

[1] **“The Value of Employee Morale Similarity in Mergers and Acquisitions: Evidence from Glassdoor”** (Solo-Authored – [SSRN Link](#)) – *Presented at FMA European Meeting: Doctoral Student Consortium (2022), World Finance Conference (2022), Paris Financial Management Conference (2022), SGF Conference: Ph.D. Poster Session (2023), EFMA Annual Meeting (2023), MFS Conference (2023), ASFAAG Conference (2023), EFA Annual Meeting: Poster Session (2023), and FMA Annual Meeting (2023)**

Abstract: In this paper, I define employee morale as employees’ attitudes toward and perceptions of the tasks employees have in the companies they work for and various firm dynamics. I explore how employee morale affects merger probability, post-merger value, performance, integration, and merged firm employee morale using various proxies. The paper makes several novel findings. Firms with similar employee morale are more likely to merge, achieve greater short-run and long-run post-merger synergies, perform greater takeover restructurings, and exhibit a higher likelihood of completion and rate of completion. Firms with similar morale achieve better post-merger integration than those with dissimilar morale. The high morale of target employees enhances post-merger morale and subsequently enhances performance of the acquiring company. This finding points to the transmission of target employees’ morale to acquirer employees’ morale as a channel of improved performance. I find that acquiring companies value the employee morale profile of target companies and that they bid for target companies with high morale.

[2] **“Untangling Employee Morale Similarity in Private Equity Deals”** (Solo-Authored)

Abstract: The paper documents evidence of private equity’s focus on post-acquisition performance and their expertise in managing and integrating companies with different attributes. I make the following findings. Overall, private equity acquirers are more likely to merge with companies with similar employee morale. Following the acquisition, however, due to private equity’s experience with managing companies with great dissimilarities, they grow the companies they acquire, increase operating performance and efficiency of target companies following deals with companies with greater dissimilarities. For companies with great similarities, private equity hurts long-term performance. It is likely that private equity decides to let go of less efficient workers to achieve those performance goals in dissimilar firms where target employees fit in private equity culture less.

[3] **“Predicting Bankruptcy. Ask the Employees.”** (Co-Authored with John Knopf – [SSRN Link](#)) – *Presented at FMA Annual Meeting – New Ideas Session (2022), World Finance Conference (2023), and FMA Annual Meeting (2023)**

Abstract: The purpose of the paper is to show that employees have information on an upcoming bankruptcy years before actual bankruptcy filings. We test our model using employee information against other bankruptcy models from the literature using a dataset from 2008 to 2020. We build a new model to reflect employees’ attitudes before bankruptcy filings and include key variables from the already established bankruptcy models in the literature in our model. We find that our model more accurately predicts bankruptcy two to three years before the actual bankruptcy filing, while the other models are more accurate in the year prior to the bankruptcy. For two and three

years prior to a bankruptcy filing, the model outperforms the existing models in in- and out-of-sample tests. We create neural network models consisting of reviews and ratings separately and show that textual reviews provide additional predictive power for bankruptcy filings on top of rating and financial information.

**: Denotes upcoming presentations*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Fall 2023	Michigan State University: Instructor of Record: FI 312 – Introduction to Investments (3 sections)
Fall 2019, Fall 2020, Fall 2021, & Spring 2023	University of Connecticut: Instructor of Record: FNCE 3101 – Financial Management (Instructor Evaluation by Category for Fall 2019, Fall 2020, and Fall 2021 semesters, respectively: Mean (Median) 4.24/5.0 (4.29/5.0), 4.86/5.0 (5.0/5.0), and 4.83/5.0 (5.0/5.0), respectively)
Spring 2021, & Spring & Fall 2022	University of Connecticut: Teaching Assistant: FNCE 3101 – Financial Management (TA for Professors Alexander Amati and Kathleen Bailey – no TA reviews provided)

HONORS, AWARDS, AND CERTIFICATES

2023	Accounting Coding Camp, AI Enhanced Research
2022	UConn Finance Department Ph.D. Student Teacher Award
2022	Trade View Australia Algorithmic Trading Talks
2021	FMVA® Certificate
2021	Geno Auriemma UConn Leadership Series
2020	BYU Accounting Coding Camp
2020	IBM Data Science Certificate
2019-2022	UConn Dean's Summer Fellowship
2019-2022	UConn Finance Department Summer Ph.D. Fellowship
2016 & 2017	Coopers & Lybrand Achievement Award (Undergraduate)
2013-2017	Drexel University Pennoni Honors College (Undergraduate)
2013-2017	Drexel University Global Scholar Full Scholarship (Undergraduate)

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

2023	FMA Annual Meeting (Chicago, IL), Presenter, Discussant, and Chairperson; European Finance Association (EFA) Annual Meeting: Poster Session (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), Presenter; World Finance Conference, Presenter and Discussant (Virtual); Annual Conference of the Academy of Sustainable Finance, Accounting, Accountability, and Governance (ASFAAG) (Virtual), Presenter and Discussant; Multinational Finance Society (MFS) Conference, Presenter and Discussant (Paphos, Cyprus); European Financial Management Association (EFMA) Annual Meeting, Presenter and Discussant (Cardiff, The United Kingdom); SGF Conference: Annual Meeting of the Swiss Society for Financial Market Research: Ph.D. Poster Session, Presenter (Zurich, Switzerland); AFA Annual Meeting, Participant (New Orleans, LA)
2022	Paris Financial Management Conference, Presenter and Discussant (Paris, France); FMA Annual Meeting, Presenter, Discussant, and Chairperson (Atlanta, GA); World Finance Conference, Presenter and Discussant (Turin, Italy); FMA European Conference: Doctoral Student Consortium, Presenter (Lyon, France); FMA European Conference, Chairperson (Lyon, France); InsurTech Hartford Symposium, Volunteer (Hartford, CT)
2021	FMA Annual Meeting, Discussant (Denver, CO); EFA Annual Meeting, Participant (Virtual); FMA European Conference, Participant (Virtual)

CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS

2023	“How Do Firms Respond to Reduced Private Equity Buyout Activity“ by Yi-Hsin Lo (2023), To be discussed at FMA Annual Meeting; “Determinants of a Conservative Leverage Policy in Young Companies: Evidence on a Bank-Based System” by Vieira and
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	Sardo (2023), Discussed at the World Finance Conference; ‘Bad Reputation, Not Bad a Bad Conscience: Religiosity and the Ethical Behavior of Firms’ by Ullah (2023), Discussed at ASFAAG Conference (2023); ‘The Impact of CSR on M&A Performance – European Evidence’ by Brunner-Kirchmair and Wagner (2023), Discussed at MFS Conference; ‘M&As and Innovation: Evidence from Acquiring Private Firms’ by Farida et al. (2023), Discussed at EFMA Annual Meeting;
2022	‘M&As and Innovation: Evidence from Acquiring Private Firms’ by Farida et al. (2022), Discussed at Paris Financial Management Conference; ‘Responsible Investing: Upside Potential and Downside Protection?’ by Gao et al. (2022), Discussed at FMA Annual Meeting; ‘The Cultural Origin of Green Price Premium’ by Alam et al. (2022), Discussed at FMA Annual Meeting; ‘Religion and Income Smoothing’ by James et al. (2022), Discussed at FMA Annual Meeting; ‘M&A and Cybersecurity Risk: Empirical Evidence’ by Lattanzio and Taillard (2022), Discussed at World Finance Conference
2021	‘The Effects of Antitrust Laws on Horizontal Mergers: International Evidence’ by Chung et al. (2021), Discussed at FMA Annual Meeting

SERVICE

2023	UConn International Graduate Buddy Program, Mentor
2023	Eastern Finance Association Annual Meeting, Reviewer
2022-2023	UConn Doctoral Association for Business School, Public Relations Director
2022	UConn Business Ph.D. Program New Student Orientation, Panelist
2021	Southern Finance Association Annual Meeting, Reviewer

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

2021-Present	American Finance Association, Financial Management Association, European Finance Association, Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Candidate
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PROFESSIONAL AND NON-PROFIT EXPERIENCE

2019-2023	University of Connecticut, Graduate Research and Teaching Assistant
2019-Present	The Novak Djokovic Foundation Blog, Blog Writer
2015-2016 & 2017-2018	University of Pennsylvania – Facilities and Real Estate Services Department, Accountant

RELEVANT SKILLS AND OTHERS

Programming	Python, SAS, Stata, LaTeX, MS Suite
Languages	English (Full Professional Proficiency), Bulgarian (Native Proficiency), German (Limited Working Proficiency), Russian (Elementary Proficiency)

REFERENCES

John Knopf	Professor Emeritus of Finance, University of Connecticut – Stamford, Email: john.knopf@uconn.edu
Jaideep Shenoy	Associate Professor of Finance, University of Connecticut – Storrs, Email: jaideep.shenoy@uconn.edu
Joseph Golec	Professor of Finance, University of Connecticut – Storrs, Email: joseph.golec@uconn.edu