

Edem Kwame Mensah Klobodu

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Employment

Assistant Professor
Smith School of Business
Queen's University, Kingston, ON
(July 2023-Date)

Postdoctoral Research Associate
The Carolina Postdoctoral Program for Faculty Diversity
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC
(July 2021 – June 2023)

Education

Ph.D. in Marketing

The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), San Antonio (2017-2021)

Dissertation title: *Two essays on Mobile Money*

Master of Science in Business Administration (Finance)

Ghana Inst. of Management & Public Administration (GIMPA), Ghana (2013-2016)

Thesis title: *Financial Development, Institutional Quality and Economic Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa*

Bachelor of Science (Statistics and Computer Science)

University of Ghana (Second Class Upper) Legon, Ghana (2007-2011)

Dissertation title: *Diabetes Health Care Patient Management System (DHCPMS)*

Research Interests

Substantive Areas: Marketing Strategy with an emphasis on financial inclusion and technology, transformative services and consumers at the base of the pyramid.

Methods: Descriptive causal models applied to observational data and natural experiments.

Working Papers

1. "The Economic Inequality of Lockdowns: A Study of COVID-19 and Mobile Money in Ghana," with Rajdeep Grewal and Suman Basuroy (Dissertation Essay 1)
2. "Reducing Disparities in Digital Financial Marketplace through Platform Interoperability: Micro Evidence from Mobile Money," with Francis Annan. Working Paper.

Work in Progress

1. “Microloans and Consumption: A Study of Ghana,” with Rajdeep Grewal and Suman Basuroy (Dissertation Essay 2)
2. “Gambling and defaults,” with Breagin Riley

Academic Awards and Achievement

Toulouse School of Economics, FIT IN Initiative (amount: \$20,000), May 2021
UTSA PhD Excellence Fund (amount: \$2,200), May 2019
UTSA PhD Excellence Fund (amount: \$1,350), August 2018
Member, ISBM Camp, MIT Sloan School of Management, August 2018
3rd Place UTSA International Education Week Photo Contest, November 2017
The University of Texas at San Antonio, College of Business Fellowship, 2017-2019
Best Student, Master of Science in Business Administration Finance option, 2016
GIMPA Business School Graduate Assistant Scholarship, 2013-2016

Work Experience

Research Assistant, UTSA, 2017- May 2021
Administrative Officer, 2016-2017
Research Assistant, GIMPA, 2013- 2016

Teaching Experience

International Marketing, Spring 2020, Class of 32 students (no evaluations taken due to COVID-19)
International Marketing, Fall 2019, Class of 22 students (teaching evaluation: 4.3/5.0)
Statistics and Financial Management teacher, 2017
IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL®) foundation teacher, 2012-2013
GIMPA Computer Proficiency teaching assistant, 2011-2013

IT Professional certification

Microsoft Certified Office User Specialist 2007-Word, Excel, PowerPoint, 2012
ITIL v3 Foundation, 2012
Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA), 2010

Computing

Conversant with these applications and programming languages: R, Stata, and Microsoft Office Suite

Leadership/Membership

Hurricane Harvey Volunteer, 2017
Member of the House of Lords Commonwealth Hall, University of Ghana, 2010-2011

Related Coursework

Substantive

Seminar in Marketing Theory
Seminar in Experimental Design
Seminar in Marketing Strategy
Seminar in Cultural Consumer Research
Behavioral Seminar

Methods

Applied Econometrics
Advanced Statistical Learning/ Data Mining
Causal Structural Modeling
Advanced R Programming
Econometrics/Forecasting
Game Theory & Business Strategy

REFERENCES

Rajdeep Grewal
The Townsend Family Distinguished Professor of Marketing
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University of North Carolina
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Suman Basuroy
Professor of Marketing
Broad College of Business
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Francis Annan
Professor of Economics
Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics
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Research Abstracts

1. The Economic Inequality of Lockdowns: A Study of COVID-19 and Mobile Money in Ghana, with Rajdeep Grewal and Suman Basuroy (Dissertation Essay 1). Job Market Paper

To define the economic impact of the COVID-19 lockdown in Ghana, the current research relies on a large data set that details consumption and user characteristics linked to mobile money (a financial service that allows people to use their mobile phones to send, receive, and store money electronically), as well as regional poverty indices, using a difference-in-difference specification. Whereas the lockdown substantially reduced transaction amounts, cash-out, cash-in, and net transfers, it increased spending on communications. Yet the effects differ across income strata, with the steepest declines for the poorest 10% of the population. Although the results do not indicate gender differences, they reveal, consistent with coping theory, diminished transaction amounts by older compared with younger people. These findings have national and global policy implications related to lockdowns in emerging markets.

2. Reducing Disparities in Digital Financial Marketplace through Platform Interoperability: Micro Evidence from Mobile Money, with Francis Annan (Working Paper). All authors contributed equally.

Markets for digital financial services (DFS) have the potential to reduce poverty and improve welfare, yet vast and significant disparities exist. Many digitization and interoperability initiatives are transforming the DF marketplace. A first-order policy question is, “When and how does interoperability influence gender disparities?” We leverage a unique customer-level administrative dataset on mobile money and the first DF interoperable policy experiment in 2018 in sub-Saharan Africa to explore these issues in Ghana. In this environment, cashless payments and digital banking are essential subjects in financial access and banking discourse. Platform interoperability — a gender neutral— (i) increases adoption (+122%), (ii) but eliminates gender gaps in DFS only when combined with digital literacy, and (iii) increases aggregate firm profits (+52%). We show that gender differences in sensitivity to transaction cost and baseline phone ownership are relevant channels through which interoperability effects may operate. The results have important implications for interoperability initiatives in DFS markets.

3. Microloans and Consumption: A Study of Ghana with Rajdeep Grewal and Suman Basuroy (Dissertation Essay 2)

In developing economies, many consumers cannot access mainstream financial services; therefore, they cannot access loans, purchase insurance or open an interest-bearing account. Recently, these consumers rely on mobile money on cellular phones to access a wide range of financial services that traditional banking fails to supply. As a result, when one owns a cellular phone (common in developing regions) and is registered for mobile money, one can participate in mainstream finance. Further, in partnership with financial technology firms (fintech), mobile money providers have recently launched loan programs on their mobile money platform, giving credit at a monthly rate of 6.9%-7.5%. We examine the consumption patterns of mobile money loans employing millions of financial transactions obtained from the largest telecommunications company in Ghana. In addition, we exploit a discontinuity in an eligibility criterion to examine the impacts of mobile money loans. We find that increases in total consumption stem predominantly from betting, cash-out and peer-to-peer transfers. Additionally, we provide descriptive evidence that mobile money loan recipients are likely to default. Loan defaults imply that customers are more likely to churn and, as a result, loan product is more likely to crowd out other innovations. A way to counteract such an effect involves introducing variable interest rates or changing the duration of the loans, such as reducing the 30 days to two weeks.