

RUTHNANDE KESSA
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EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

May 2024 PhD Public Affairs
University of Central Florida
Doctoral Program in Public Affairs
Track: Public Administration

Dissertation: Exploring the Influence of Cultural Complexity on the Risk Perceptions and Natural Disaster Preparedness among Hispanic/Latino Families Living with Individuals with Developmental Disabilities in Central Florida

December 214 Master of Public Administration
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Department of Public Administration

December 2012 Bachelor's in Environmental Studies and Policy
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Department of Environmental Study

May 2007 Associate Degree in Applied Science: Water Management
Fox Valley Technical College

ACADEMIC POSITION

Assistant Professor (tenure-track) Tennessee State University (2024-Present)
Department of Public Administration
College of Public Service

RESEARCH INTERESTS AND FOCI

- Natural Disaster Response and Preparedness
- Public Safety
- Risk Analysis
- Disaster Risk Communication
- Nonprofit and NGO management
- Intergovernmental relations
- Collaborative governance

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Teaching Experience| Tennessee State University

Graduate Courses:

Fall 2024

- PADM 6950: Introduction to Nonprofit Organizations
- PADM 6210: Seminar in Public Administration

Spring 2025

- PADM 6210: Seminar in Public Administration
- PADM 6960: Resource Development for Non-Profit
- PADM 6420: Conflict Management and Resolution

Summer 2025

- PADM 6930: Qualitative Methods
- PADM 7301: Seminar in Public Organization Theory

Teaching Experience | University of Central Florida

Undergraduate Courses:

- Primary Instructor: PAD 3040 – Ethics and Value in Public Administration (Summer 2024)
- Primary Instructor: PAD 4390 – Hazard Mitigation and Preparedness (Fall 2022-Spring 2024)

Graduate Courses:

- Teaching Assistant: PAD 6335 Graduate Teaching Assistant – Strategic Planning (Summer 2023)
- Guest Lecture: Strategic Planning (PAD 6335) (Summer 2023)

Professional Development Training:

- Teaching Assistant/Technical Assistant: Capacity Building- Graduate Teacher Assistant (Summer 2021-2023)
- Technical Assistant (teaching assistant): Financial management (Fall 2023)

Research Experience | University of Central Florida

- Research assistant: NSF grant: Collaborative Research: Assessing the impact of lead agency cross-functional authority on city sustainability outcomes, Fall 2020 to Spring 2022
- Junior Researcher: Collaborative research proposal, "Forging Panethnic Allegiances: Hispanic Caribbean Communities in Three Gateway Cities—Miami, New York City, and Orlando," Fall 2022 to Summer 2023

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- State of Florida: Human Services Program Specialist | Community Affairs: Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Orlando, Florida, November 2015 to February 2021
- Internship | Office of Public Health: Winnebago County, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, June 2014 to September 2014
- Consultant | United States Agency for International Development/Sun Mountain International, Haiti, August 2009 to August 2010
- Coordinator | United States Agency for International Developments/Organization of American States, Haiti, March 2008 to July 2009

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

1. **Kessa, R.**, Sadiq, A. A., & Yeo, J. (2021). The importance of vertical and horizontal collaboration: United States' response to COVID-19 pandemic. *Chinese Public Administration Review*, 12(1), 61-71.
2. Sadiq, A. A., & **Kessa, R.** (2020). US procurement in the age of COVID-19: challenges, intergovernmental collaboration, and recommendations for improvement. *American Review of Public Administration*, 50(6-7), 635-641.

WORK IN PROGRESS

1. **Kessa, R.** Exploring the influence of cross-functional collaboration on sustainability initiatives in local government settings. This study aims to highlight how different departments can work together to promote sustainability and will be submitted to the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*.
2. **Kessa, R.** Exploring Hurricane Risk Communication to Latino Individuals with Developmental Disabilities in Central Florida: A Qualitative Study
3. **Kessa, R.** Navigating Caregiving Challenges and Family Burden for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities During Hurricanes: A Qualitative Exploratory Study.

UNDER REVIEW

1. **Kessa, R.**, Sokolowski, S., Krigsman, A., Ilesanmi, I., Concha, M., Lee, Y. J., (2024). Exploring the benefits of graduate students providing technical assistance to non-new nonprofits organizations in terms of capacity building/service learning. This paper is being submitted to the *Journal of Nonprofit Education and Leadership*.
2. **Kessa, R.**, Sadiq, A. (2024) Exploring Hurricane Risk Communication to Latino Individuals with Developmental Disabilities in Central Florida: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Public Integrity*

PRESENTATIONS/CONFERENCES

1. **Kessa, R.** Understanding Risk Perceptions of Hispanic/Latino Families with Developmental Disabilities based on Culture. *American Society for Public Administration virtual, April 2023.*
2. **Kessa, R.** Understand the influence of culture on decision making of Hispanic/Latino families with individuals with developmental disabilities during natural disasters. *Southeastern Conference for Public Administration (SECoPA), Atlanta, GA, September 2023.*
3. **Kessa, R.,** Sokolowski, S., Krigsman, A., Ilesanmi, I. Exploring the benefits and drawbacks of Graduate students providing technical assistance to new nonprofit organizations through capacity building/Service learning. *ARNOVA, Orlando, Florida, November 2023.*
4. **Kessa, R.** Communicating Risk to Hispanic/Latino Individuals with Developmental Disabilities: Insights from Emergency Managers in Central Florida. *American Society for Public Administration virtual, April 2024.*
5. **Kessa, R.** Navigating Caregiving Challenges and Family Burden for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities During Hurricanes: A Qualitative Exploratory Study. *Southeastern Conference for Public Administration (SECoPA), Memphis, TN, September 2024.*
6. Brow, J., Mannaa, R., Sokolowski, S., **Kessa, R.,** Ilesanmi, I., Capacity Building Seminar as a Service-Learning Experience. *Southeastern Conference for Public Administration (SECoPA), Memphis, TN, September 2024.*
7. Kim, C., & **Kessa, R.,** Private Jails and the Quality of Correctional Services. *Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 2025*

ACADEMIC AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- SEED Grant Award: \$5000.00 allocated to your project, titled “Exploring the lived experience of public-school administrators with students with developmental disabilities during lockdown and active shooter drills in Clarksville-Montgomery County School System.”
- College of Communication Innovation and Education (CCIE) Doctoral Student Travel Funding (\$1,350) Initiative for Spring 2024
- Golden Key, Spring 2023
- ASPA Founder’s Fellowship, Spring 2023 to Spring 2024

- Crossing Latinidades/Mellon Fellowship, Fall 2022 to Summer 2023
- Crossing Latinidades Summer Institute Fellowship, Summer 2022
- Pi Alpha Alpha, Spring 2022
- Public Administration Excellence Award for outstanding performance during graduate studies (GPA 4.00) from the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Wisconsin
- Top of Dean's list at Fox Valley Technical College, Spring 2006
- Member of Phi Theta Kappa at Fox Valley Technical College, Spring 2006

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Ad Hoc Student Academic Appeals Committee at the University of Central Florida
- Graduate Vice-President for Central Florida ASPA
- ASPA Section on Emergency and Crisis Management (SECM) Webinar Committee Member
- NASPA Self-Study
- Tennessee State University Library committee

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Midwest Political Science Association
- ARNOVA
- American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)
- Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM)
- ASPA Section on Emergency and Crisis Management (SECM)
- Ad Hoc Student Academic Appeals Committee at the University of Central Florida

MANUSCRIPT REIVIEWER

- Public Administration Conference (PARC) (2022- present)
- Public Performance & Management Review (2024- present)
- Journal of Nonprofit Education and Leadership (2024- present)
- Merlot (2025- present)

SKILLS

GIS, SAS, SPSS, Dedouse, NVivo and Microsoft office

LANGUAGES

Haitian Creole, French, basic Spanish, and English