Summary

Name: Mehrdad Alikhani

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Institution: Old Dominion University

Department: Strome College of Business

Program: PhD in Business Administration (Strategic Management)

Primary Research Areas:
Entrepreneurship and innovation; entrepreneurial finance (crowdfunding and venture capital); investor decision-making under uncertainty; AI and technology adoption in firms and investment contexts

PhD Entry Year: 2024

Expected Year of Completion: 2028

Faculty Recommender: Dr. Jay O'Toole, Old Dominion University

CV

Mehrdad Alikhani
PhD Student in Business Administration (Strategic Management)
Old Dominion University, Strome College of Business

EDUCATION

Old Dominion University Aug.2024-Present
- PhD in Business Administration, Strategic Management

University of Science and Technology Sep.2016-Nov.2018
- Master of Art in Management of Technology
  Dissertation Title: *Investigating factors affecting the success of social entrepreneurship with emphasis on the development of technology platform in support of vulnerable groups.*
- Received the Top Student Awards (2017 and 2018)

Azad University Sep.2004-Feb.2009
- Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering

RESEARCH INTRESTS

- Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- Crowd Wisdom and Decision-Making under Uncertainty
- Entrepreneurial Finance (Crowdfunding & Venture Capital)
- AI and Technology Adoption in Firms and Investment Contexts

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, USA Aug.2024-Present
- Conduct literature reviews and theoretical synthesis in strategic management and entrepreneurship
- Support empirical projects involving AI adoption, crowdfunding, and firm disclosure analysis

Mentor and Tutor, Crouse Co. (Private Company) Jul.2022-Jul-2024
- Organized regular workshops to develop factory design methods and logistics.

Research Assistant, University of Science and Technology Feb.2017-Sep.2017
- Analyzed entrepreneurial supply chain research and innovation management literature.

BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

Layout Designer, Crouse Co. (Private Company) Jul.2022-Jul.2024
- Developed standardized engineering and logistics layout methodologies
- Improved the factory design projects through a structured project management process.

Lead Project Engineer, Bühler Sep.2015-Mar.2019
- Coordinated and managed more than 20 mill factories from contract to handover.
- Controlled the preparation processes of detailed drawings and calculations of machine elements.
- Regular meetings with the technology, sales, and manufacturing departments.

Project Manager, Bühler Group, Switzerland & Iran Oct.2014-Mar.2019
- Managed 20+ industrial factory projects from contract to handover
- Led cross-functional coordination among engineering, sales, and manufacturing teams
- Supervised and mentored 15+ technical staff in R&D and innovation initiatives

ACHIVEMENTS / AWARDS

- Top Student Award (2017, 2018), University of Science and Technology
- Semifinalist, LG Global Challenge (2018)
- Finalist, Bühler Innovation Challenge (2016, 2018)
- Patent: Mechanical clock design using rotating faces and spur gears

PUBLICATIONS / PRESENTATIONS

Conference Presentations

- Alikhani, M. (2025). Big Data Analytics for Strategic Export and Production Decisions in Multinational Enterprises. Southern Management Association.
- Alikhani, M., & Anil, N. (2025). Founders' Orientation and Backers' Risk Propensity in Crowdfunding. Midwest Academy of Management.
- Alikhani, M., Zarinmakan, F., & Ford, J. B. (2025). A conceptual model for eye-tracking backer attention to creator and crowd signals with demographic moderation in crowdfunding. Society for Marketing Advances.

Working Papers

- Alikhani, M, Doukas, J. (2026), AI Adoption and Stock Performance in S&P 500 Firm Disclosure
- Alikhani, M, Zhang, J. (2026), Artificial Intelligence in Venture Capital Investment: A Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Agenda
- Alikhani, M., Zarinmakan, F., & Ford, J. B. (2026). Visual Attention to Signals in Crowdfunding Decisions: An Eye-Tracking Experiment
- Alikhani, M., Chen, L. W. Crowdfunding Success Rate in Impact-Oriented Projects
- Scannell, Sh. Toole, J, Alikhani, M. (2026), Recursive Gen AI Transforming Design Thinking

Earlier Publications

- Lecturer of "Seminar on Introduction to Business Models and Business Model Patterns", Nov.2017, University of Science and Technology
- Shavalpour, S. Alikhani, M. Fotouhi, M. Forouzanmehr, M. (2017), Identifying and prioritizing factors affecting creativity and innovation in the organizations, accepted manuscript, the 3rd annual Conference on Business Management and Economics.
- Alikhani, M. (2017), "Development of a Decision Support System (DSS) for identification, evaluation and response to risks (Risk Management) in business models" 1st National Conference on Progress Management and Engineering.

SPECIFIC TECHNICAL EXPERTISES / SPECIALIST COURSES

- Excel Skills for Data Analytics and Visualization, 48 hours, Macquarie University, Coursera Inc. Mar.2022
- Python Data Structures, 19 hours, University of Michigan, Coursera Inc. Dec.2021
- Teamwork Skills: Communicating Effectively, University of Colorado Boulder, Coursera Inc. Dec.2020
- English Business Communications, 16 hours, Chamber of Commerce Jun.2017
- Innovation Challenge 2016 Business Model Training, ~40 hours, Zurich, Switzerland Apr.2016
- GM Basic Project Leader, 40 hours, Uzwil, Switzerland Aug.2015
- Project Management Module 2, 20 hours, Hotel Wolfensberg, Degersheim, Switzerland Aug.2015
- Commercial Basics II for Project Managers (advanced), 16 hours, Uzwil, Switzerland Jun.2015
- Basics on Business Economics, 12 hours, Uzwil, Switzerland Jan.2015
- Commercial Basics I for Project Managers, 12 hours, Uzwil, Switzerland Nov.2014
- One Year Project Management Course, 1 year, Switzerland Oct.2014-Sep.2015
- Project Management Module 1, 24 hours, Hotel Roessli, ZBUZ, Switzerland Aug.2013

FOREIGN LANGUAGES / SKILLS

- **English:** Fluent (speaking, reading, writing)
  IELTS: 7.0 (Listening: 7.0, Reding: 6.5, Writing: 6.5, Speaking: 7.0)
  Duolingo English Test: 120 (Literacy: 120, Comprehension: 120, Conversation: 115, Production: 120)
  GRE General Test: 330 (Verbal Reasoning: 160, Quantitative Reasoning: 170, Analytical Writing: 4.0)
- **French & German:** Basic (Speaking, Reading)
- **High proficiency in:** Office Package, EndNote, Mendeley
- **Moderate proficiency in:** SmartPLS, Python, R, Office Package (Project, Visio)

Research Essay

My research examines how information frictions and technological change shape entrepreneurial finance and early-stage firm growth. I am particularly interested in how investors evaluate young ventures when traditional financial indicators are limited or unavailable. Across my work, I study digital platforms, alternative data, and AI-enabled decision environments to understand how capital is allocated to new ventures and which entrepreneurs gain access to resources.

My current projects focus on investor decision-making in crowdfunding markets. In one study, I combine a large-scale Kickstarter dataset with experimental eye-tracking data to examine how backers allocate attention to different signals of venture quality. I analyze how narrative content, visual presentation, and social proof influence funding outcomes under conditions of high uncertainty. This project contributes to understanding how non-expert investors process information and how attention constraints shape capital allocation in entrepreneurial settings. In related work, I investigate how cultural distance between founders and backers affects funding dynamics in global crowdfunding markets, highlighting how cross-border information frictions influence entrepreneurial finance.

My future research agenda develops along two complementary tracks that connect innovation, finance, and entrepreneurial growth. In the earlier stages of my PhD, I plan to work on projects using large-scale patent data to study patterns of innovation, knowledge diffusion, and the technological positioning of firms and startups. These projects will help me build a macro-level perspective on how innovative activity is distributed across industries and regions, and how new technologies emerge and evolve over time.

Building on this foundation, my dissertation will focus on the role of corporate venture capital (CVC) as a key intermediary between established firms and entrepreneurial ventures. I aim to examine how corporations select startup investments, how these relationships influence startups' innovation and commercialization trajectories, and how CVC activity shapes the broader allocation of capital and innovative effort in the economy. Together, these research streams connect micro-level investment decisions with macro-level outcomes such as technological change, industry evolution, and long-run economic growth.

The NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp would be invaluable for sharpening the economic framing of my research and deepening my understanding of frontier empirical approaches in entrepreneurship. Exposure to leading scholars working on entrepreneurial measurement, capital markets, and innovation would help me better position my work within the economics of entrepreneurship and refine my long-term research agenda.

OLD DOMINION
UNIVERSITY

February 9, 2026

Brett Maranjian
National Bureau of Economic Research

Mr. Maranjian:

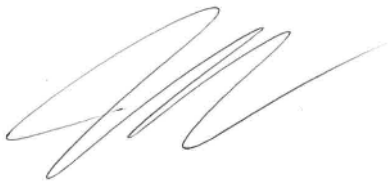
It is my pleasure to recommend Mehrdad Alikhani for the 19th annual Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp (ERBC) in Cambridge, MA, in July 2026. Mehrdad is a second year PhD student in our Management PhD Program at the Strome College of Business at Old Dominion University. Mehrdad shows exceptional promise as an entrepreneurship scholar and has, since the day he arrived, displayed curiosity and humility.

Curiosity is the hallmark of a life-long learner and scholar. Mehrdad is constantly asking questions. He maintains a list of research ideas and regularly solicits input from others. He comes well prepared to his seminars, ready to offer his insights and to listen not only to his professor's ideas but also to his fellow students. Rather than establishing firm beliefs that lead to pre-conceived notions of how the world works, he gives himself the latitude to let theory and data drive his decision making.

Mehrdad does these things with the utmost humility. He brings considerable work experience to his practice but is also aware that earning a PhD is a new challenge that requires a new way of thinking. He listens attentively to advice and implements suggestions quickly, demonstrating he is not afraid to try something new.

I know Mehrdad will benefit greatly from participating in the ERBC, and I know the others who participate will benefit as well.

Sincerely,



Jay O'Toole, Ph.D. (he/him/his)
Associate Professor & PhD Program Coordinator
Provost's Fellow for Faculty Development
Department of Management
Strome College of Business
Old Dominion University
2047 Constant Hall
Norfolk, VA 23508