

Donald Ryan Gaffney

Owen Graduate School of Management
Vanderbilt University
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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Owen Graduate School of Management, Vanderbilt University

Senior Researcher, 2022 – *present*.

Postdoctoral Scholar, 2021 – 2022.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Marketing, University of Cincinnati, 2021.

Dissertation Title: “The Duality of Subjective Uncertainty.”

Chair: Dr. Frank R. Kardes, **Committee:** Dr. Robert S. Wyer, Jr., Dr. Susan Powell Mantel, Dr. Peter Chiu.

M.Sc., Marketing, University of Cincinnati, 2017.

B.B.A., Marketing, International Business, University of Cincinnati, 2016.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Consumer Inference.
- Uncertainty Variants.
- Artificial Intelligence.
- Judgment and Decision Making.

JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

Posavac, Steven S., **Donald R. Gaffney**, and Frank R. Kardes (2024), “On the Robustness of the Brand Positivity Effect: Is Impulsivity a Moderator of Overly Favorable Judgments and Choices of Focal Options,” *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*.

Wu, Ruomeng, **Donald R. Gaffney**, Frank R. Kardes, Shaobo Li, and Meng Liu (2023), “As Good as New: Embarrassment and Consumers’ Preference for Used versus New Products,” *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*.

Hernandez, José Mauro C., Murilo Carrazedo, **Donald R. Gaffney**, and Frank R. Kardes (2023), “The effects of delaying the purchase decision on choice deferral, omission detection, and decision confidence,” *Judgment and Decision Making*.

Posavac, Steven S., Heidi D. Posavac, **Donald R. Gaffney**, and Frank R. Kardes (2022), “Toward a Clinical Consumer Psychology,” *Frontiers in Psychology*.

Posavac, Steven S., Frank R. Kardes, Heidi D. Posavac, and **Donald R. Gaffney** (2022), “The Utility of Clinical Psychology Concepts for Judgment and Decision Making Research: The Case of Histrionic Features,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

Kellaris, James J., Karen Machleit, and **Donald R. Gaffney** (2020), “Sign Evaluation and Compliance under Mortality Salience: Lessons from a Pandemic,” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding*.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Gaffney, Donald R., Steve S. Posavac, and Frank R. Kardes (*forthcoming*), “Epistemic Inference Theory,” in *Advancing Consumer Psychology*, eds. Sasha Fedorikhin, Dawn Iacobucci, Frank Kardes, and Paul Herr. *Dissertation essay.

Kardes, Frank R., Steven S. Posavac, and **Donald R. Gaffney** (*forthcoming*), “Consumer Inference and the Illusion of Knowledge,” in *Handbook of Social Psychology and Consumer Behaviour*, eds. Eric R. Spangenberg and Katie (Quinn) Spangenberg, London, U.K.: Elgar.

Kardes, Frank R., Steven S. Posavac, and **Donald R. Gaffney** (2022), “Omission Neglect and Consumer Judgment and Inference Based on Limited Evidence,” in *APA Handbook of Consumer Psychology*, eds. Lynn Kahle, Tina M. Lowrey, and Joel Huber, Washington, D.C.: APA.

EDITORSHIP

***Gaffney, Donald R.,** and Susan Powell Mantel* (2023), "Sustainable Consumption in the Digital World: The Role of Social Media and Technology in Consuming towards a More Sustainable Society," *Sustainability*. *Equal co-editors.

UNDER REVIEW

Gaffney, Donald R., Joshua J. Clarkson, and Frank R. Kardes, "A Tale of Two Theories: The Role of Need for Cognitive Closure in Defining Conservatism and Political Extremism,"

Gaffney, Donald R., Bryan M. Buechner, Susan Powell Mantel, Y. David Wu⁺, Catherine Touchton⁺, Emma Sittenauer, Steven S. Posavac, and Frank R. Kardes, "When AI Speaks, Do We Listen? How Conversational Norms Shape Consumer Aversion and Preference for AI," ⁺Undergraduate students mentored.

SELECT WORKS IN PROGRESS (Full list available upon request)

***Gaffney, Donald R.,** Frank R. Kardes, and Steven S. Posavac (collecting data), "Whose Bias do you Seek? An Epistemic Inference Theory Explanation of Base-Rate Neglect," Target: *Journal of Consumer Research*. *Dissertation essay.

Y. David Wu⁺, and **Donald R. Gaffney** (collecting data), "To Know Thyself, is to Protect Thy Privacy," Target: *Journal of Consumer Research*. ⁺Undergraduate student mentored.

SELECT PRESENTATIONS (Full list available upon request)

Gaffney, Donald R., Bryan M. Buechner, Susan Powell Mantel, Y. David Wu, Catherine Touchton, Emma Sittenauer, Steven S. Posavac, and Frank R. Kardes, (2026), "Beyond Words: The Role of Conversational Norms in AI Aversion and Hybrid Acceptance," presented at the Society for Consumer Psychology, San Diego, CA.

Gaffney, Donald R., Bryan M. Buechner, Susan Powell Mantel, Y. David Wu, Catherine Touchton, Emma Sittenauer, Steven S. Posavac, and Frank R. Kardes, (2025), "Consumer AI Aversion and Expectations in Human-AI Communications," presented at the American Marketing Association Winter, Phoenix, AZ.

Gaffney, Donald R., Joshua J. Clarkson, and Frank R. Kardes (2023), "In Uncertain Terms: Distinguishing Ideology & Uncertainty Avoidance," presented at the Annual Association for Consumer Research Conference, Seattle, WA.

Gaffney, Donald R., Bryan M. Buechner, and Noah VanBergen (2022), "Inference in Times and Types of Uncertainty: The Case of COVID-19 and Free Will," presented at the Annual Association for Consumer Research Conference, Denver, CO.

Gaffney, Donald R., Bryan M. Buechner, and Noah VanBergen (2021), "Subjective Uncertainty and the Belief-Behavior Link for COVID-19 Countermeasure Compliance," presented at the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Association for Psychological Science, Digital.

Gaffney, Donald R., Frank R. Kardes, and Robert S. Wyer, Jr. (2019), "Does Feeling Ignorant Give Us More Control?" presented at the Annual Association for Consumer Research Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Gaffney, Donald R., Emma Sittenauer, Frank R. Kardes, and Robert S. Wyer, Jr. (2019), "Seeing the Unseen: The Role of Distrust in Considering Missing Information," presented at the Annual Association for Consumer Research Conference, Atlanta, GA.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

West Virginia University (2026)

- Rules of Engagement: The Role of Conversational Norms in AI Resistance and Hybrid Acceptance.

Stanford University (2024)

- Consumer Inference & The Illusion of Knowledge.

TEDxUCincinnati (2020)

- Omission Neglect: Out of Sight, Out of Mind.

University of Louisville (2019)

- As Good as New: Cross-Cultural Differences in Losing Face and Preference of New versus Used Products.

HONORS, AWARDS AND GRANTS

Vanderbilt University:

- Provost's Faculty Grant for Immersion Vanderbilt (2024 – 2025).

The City of Nashville:

- Nashville Business Journal 40 under 40 nominee (2025)
- The Nashville Public Library's Eskind Family Writer's Room award (2022 – 2023).

University of Cincinnati:

- Lindner Summer Research Grant (2020 – 2021).
- University of Cincinnati Marketing Department Research Grant (2016 – 2021).
- Siddall Research Fund Grant (2016 – 2021).

DOCTORAL STUDENTS

Stephanie L. Flout | Research Assistant (2018 – 2020); Dissertation Committee Member (2020 – 2025).

Interest: Consumer Inference | **Placement:** Assistant Professor at École de management de Normandie.

SERVICE TO THE FIELD

Ad Hoc Reviewer (Conferences)

- Society for Judgment and Decision Making (SJDM): 2022 – *present*.
- Society for Consumer Psychology (SCP): 2019 – *present*.

Committee Member (Conferences)

- Graduate Student Outreach Committee (SJDM): 2025.
- Travel Scholarship Committee (SJDM): 2025.
- Demographic Tracking Committee (SJDM): 2025.

SERVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT, COLLEGE, AND UNIVERSITY

Vanderbilt University

- Co-Organizer of the Behavioral Research at Vanderbilt – Owen (BRAVO) Lab, 2024 – *present*.
- Founder and Director of the Faculty Research Assistance Program (FRAP), 2024 – *present*.
- Owen Behavioral Insights Lab Manager, 2022 – *present*.
- Advisor for Owen's American Marketing Association, 2023 – 2024.
- Institutional Review Board Committee Member, 2022 – 2024.

University of Cincinnati

- Behavioral Lab Manager, 2020 – 2021.
- Grievance Review Committee, 2019 – 2021.
- College Hearing Panel, 2019 – 2021.
- President of the Graduate Student Association (Business), 2020 – 2021.

AFFILIATIONS

- American Marketing Association (AMA).
- Association for Consumer Research (ACR).
- Society for Consumer Psychology (SCP).
- Society for Judgment and Decision Making (SJDM).
- American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).
- Association for Psychological Science (APS).

SELECT INDUSTRY WORK EXPERIENCE

Academy of Cinematic Arts | Cincinnati, Ohio

Consumer Insight Analyst and Lead Website Design. Leveraged consumer insights from platforms like Google Analytics and Wix to create a streamlined and visually appealing website. Responsibilities encompassed a range of tasks including website development, optimization, design, user testing, and search engine optimization (SEO), among others.

Hope For Kabingo | Cincinnati, Ohio

Consumer Insight Analyst and Lead Website Design. Leveraged consumer insights from platforms like Google Analytics and Wix to create a streamlined and visually appealing website. Responsibilities encompassed a range of tasks including website development, optimization, design, user testing, and search engine optimization (SEO), among others.

Academic Advisory Council for Signage Research and Education | Cincinnati, Ohio

Consumer Insight Analyst and Lead Website Design. Crafted a comprehensive marketing strategy for a young non-profit organization and translated its objectives and tactics into an engaging, interactive website. Played a pivotal role in website development, optimization, design, user testing, and search engine optimization (SEO), while also contributing to the formulation and execution of the overarching marketing strategy.

Idealine | Cincinnati, Ohio

Consumer Research Analyst. Served as the lead market research analyst for six startup ventures, specializing in market penetration strategies and quantitative consumer insights. Core responsibilities encompassed diverse areas such as website development, devising market penetration strategies, providing consultation, identifying potential investors, conducting both external (secondary) and internal (primary) research, and leveraging insights gleaned from research findings to drive actionable outcomes.

References provided upon request.