

ChatGPT and Corporate Policies

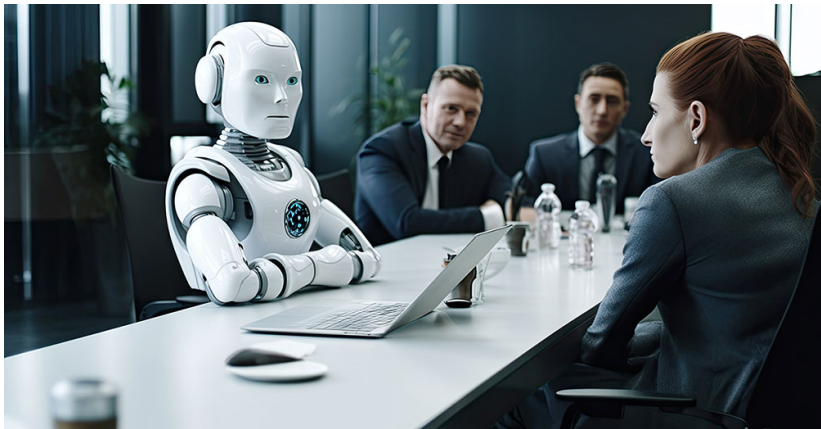
Manish Jha¹ Jialin Qian¹
Michael Weber² Baozhong Yang¹

¹Georgia State

²Chicago Booth, NBER

NY Fed FinTech Conference
September 2023

Motivation



Motivation

- Understanding corporate policies is central to corporate finance. **Investment policies**, in particular, are key to corporate growth and aggregate fluctuations.
- According to neoclassical q-theory (Hayashi, 1982; Peters and Taylor, 2017), **Tobin's q** should be a sufficient statistic for describing firms' investment opportunities and policies.
- Managers can convey their private information through quarterly **earnings conference calls**, which may not be fully incorporated in prices. Extracting complicated information such as **expected corporate policies** is **challenging**.
- **New Opportunity**: the advent of **ChatGPT**, which can take long, sophisticated questions and provide answers at the level of human experts.

Research Questions

- In this study, we utilize ChatGPT to extract **firm-level corporate expectations of future investment policies** and study the implications.
- We aim to answer the following questions:
 - Can an advanced AI model such as ChatGPT help understand **corporate policies**?
 - Does the ChatGPT-extracted expected investment policy provide **information beyond existing measures of investment opportunities**, such as Tobin's q or cash flows?
 - Does such information have further **implications on asset prices and returns**?

Data and Sample

- We extract firms' outlooks on corporate policies from companies' **earnings call transcripts** downloaded from SeekingAlpha.
- We obtain the quarterly **Duke CFO survey** firm-level data.
- Corporate accounting variables and stock returns are retrieved from Compustat and CRSP.
- The final sample consists of **74,586** firm-quarter-level conference calls from 2006 to 2020, representing **3,878** unique US public firms.

Constructing ChatGPT Investment Score

We provide the following prompt:

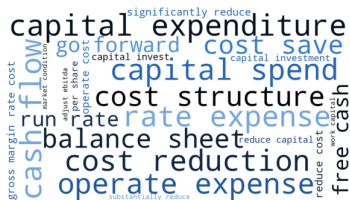
*"The following text is an excerpt from a company's earnings call transcripts. You are a finance expert. **Based on this text only, please answer the following question.** How does the firm plan to change its capital spending over the next year? There are five choices: **Increase substantially, increase, no change, decrease, and decrease substantially.** Please select one of the above five choices for each question and provide a one-sentence explanation of your choice for each question. The format for the answer to each question should be **"choice - explanation."** If no relevant information is provided related to the question, answer "no information is provided."*

[Part of an earnings call transcript.]

Aggregating at the Conference Call Level

- We split conference call texts into 2,500-word chunks to adhere to OpenAI token limits.
- We assign a score of -1, -0.5, 0, 0.5, and 1 for each of the given choices (Decrease substantially; Decrease; No change; Increase; Increase substantially), respectively.
- We then take the **average** of the scores across multiple chunks of one earnings call to obtain a **firm-quarter-level** measure, **ChatGPT Investment Score**.

Word Cloud with High/Low ChatGPT Investment Score



(a) Bigrams associated with low ChatGPT investment scores.



(b) Bigrams associated with high ChatGPT investment scores.

Examples of Texts with Predicted Investment Scores

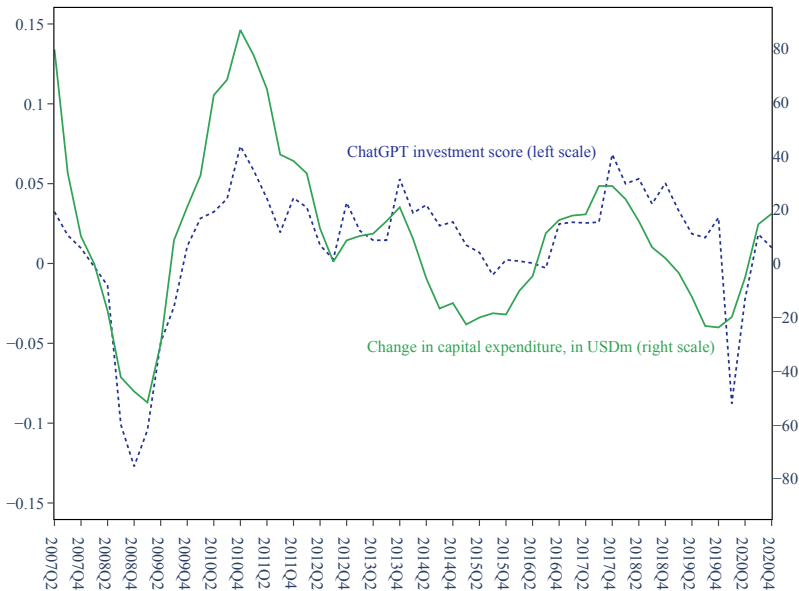
Increase Substantially (Score=1)

*“We have identified several key strategic initiatives for 2015 to **sustain the growth** rate of our business. We plan to make **significant capital investments** in our facilities and infrastructure, and we continue to strengthen our human capital in compliance, manufacturing and sales. We also have a solid slate of plan launches throughout the year.”*

Decrease Substantially (Score=-1)

*“After next year we will not have that roughly \$50 million to \$60 million spend that we’ll have this year and next year on El Dorado. So, our **CapEx will be down substantially**, which will affect - that’s a boost of \$50 million to \$60 million.”*

ChatGPT Investment Score vs. Realized Investment



Duke CFO Survey

- Initiated by Graham and Harvey (2001), the Duke CFO survey, is a comprehensive survey on **managerial outlooks** on the economy, firm performance, and corporate policies.
- We focus on the following survey question: *“Relative to the previous 12 months, what will be your company’s PERCENTAGE CHANGE during the next 12 months? _____%[Corporate Policy]”*
- We gather firms’ responses to this question on **“Capital Spending”** policies and create a variable **CFO Survey Investment** at the firm-quarter level.
- We are able to match **1,707** firm-quarters in the Duke CFO Survey data to the conference call data.

ChatGPT vs. CFO Survey Results

CFO Survey Investment and *ChatGPT Investment Score* are strongly **positively correlated**.

	(1)	(2)
	<i>CFO Survey Investment</i>	
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score</i>	30.83*** (4.36)	21.78*** (3.57)
Industry FE	N	Y
YearQtr FE	N	Y
R-squared	0.014	0.070
N	1338	1325

ChatGPT Investment Score and Future Investment

- A one standard deviation increase in *ChatGPT Investment Score* is associated with a 0.034 to 0.052 standard-deviation increase in capital expenditure in the calendar quarter following the earnings call.
- The magnitude is equivalent to 63.3% to 96.8% of the corresponding sensitivity of capital expenditure to the Total q .

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	<i>Capital Expenditure_{t+2}</i>			
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t</i>	0.966*** (15.64)	0.795*** (13.24)	0.683*** (12.16)	0.638*** (11.37)
<i>Total q_t</i>		0.379*** (12.44)		0.177*** (6.53)
<i>Capital Expenditure_t</i>			0.115*** (9.98)	0.114*** (9.92)
<i>Total Cash Flow_t</i>			0.889** (3.00)	0.535 (1.83)
<i>Leverage_t</i>			-2.795*** (-16.94)	-2.535*** (-14.97)
<i>Size_t</i>			-0.006 (-0.14)	-0.008 (-0.19)
Firm FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
YearQtr FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
R-squared	0.694	0.697	0.707	0.708
N	74,586	74,586	74,586	74,586

ChatGPT Score and Long-Term Investment

ChatGPT Investment Score is positively associated with future investment for up to **9 quarters** after the conference call.

	(1) (n=3)	(2) (n=4)	(3) (n=5)	(4) (n=6)	(5) (n=7)	(6) (n=8)	(7) (n=9)	(8) (n=10)
	<i>Capital Expenditure_{t+n}</i>							
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t</i>	0.804*** (13.88)	1.044*** (18.29)	0.998*** (16.48)	0.788*** (13.96)	0.626*** (10.86)	0.663*** (11.96)	0.493*** (9.05)	0.315*** (5.56)
<i>Total q_t</i>	0.184*** (7.12)	0.159*** (6.71)	0.241*** (8.41)	0.293*** (9.22)	0.256*** (8.24)	0.174*** (6.28)	0.187*** (6.29)	0.194*** (6.04)
<i>Capital Expenditure_t</i>	0.151*** (17.55)	0.445*** (40.06)	0.044*** (5.21)	-0.114*** (-12.28)	-0.032*** (-4.08)	0.257*** (20.61)	-0.051*** (-6.08)	-0.162*** (-18.68)
<i>Total Cash Flow_t</i>	1.034*** (3.56)	2.108*** (7.16)	1.146*** (4.22)	-0.037 (-0.13)	-0.286 (-0.96)	1.136** (2.85)	1.004** (3.08)	0.249 (0.74)
<i>Leverage_t</i>	-2.156*** (-13.19)	-1.274*** (-9.10)	-2.185*** (-12.61)	-2.420*** (-12.50)	-1.903*** (-10.47)	-0.911*** (-5.34)	-1.455*** (-7.87)	-1.472*** (-7.22)
<i>Size_t</i>	-0.033 (-0.83)	-0.059 (-1.74)	-0.121* (-2.56)	-0.172** (-3.23)	-0.195*** (-3.78)	-0.165*** (-3.63)	-0.195*** (-3.70)	-0.205*** (-3.57)
Firm FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
YearQtr FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
R-squared	0.712	0.774	0.707	0.710	0.709	0.732	0.708	0.717
N	73,437	72,354	71,003	68,215	65,393	63,267	60,437	57,799

ChatGPT Score and Various types of Investment

ChatGPT Investment Score significantly and positively predicts future investment measured in different ways, including Physical Investment, Intangible Investment, Total Investment, and R&D.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	<i>Physical Investment</i> _{t+2}		<i>Intangible Investment</i> _{t+2}		<i>Total Investment</i> _{t+2}		<i>R&D</i> _{t+2}	
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score</i> _t	1.362*** (17.71)	0.810*** (12.16)	0.261*** (12.31)	0.091*** (5.72)	1.659*** (20.19)	0.918*** (13.22)	0.288*** (8.84)	0.130*** (5.42)
<i>Total q</i> _t		0.490*** (13.40)		0.219*** (16.10)		0.850*** (20.82)		0.201*** (12.49)
<i>Physical Investment</i> _t		0.115*** (9.10)						
<i>Intangible Investment</i> _t				0.446*** (24.48)				
<i>Total Investment</i> _t						0.151*** (13.16)		
<i>R&D</i> _t								0.488*** (25.07)
Control Variables	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Firm FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
YearQtr FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
R-squared	0.693	0.712	0.859	0.899	0.658	0.692	0.855	0.906
N	74,586	74,586	74,586	74,586	74,586	74,586	39,029	36,631

ChatGPT Predicted Investment and Future Returns

- A one-standard-deviation increase in the ChatGPT investment score leads to a **decrease** of **1.80%**, **1.47%**, and **1.40%** in annualized return, FF5-adjusted return, and q5-adjusted return in the quarter subsequent to the earnings call, respectively.
- Abnormal returns continue for up to **9 quarters**.

Long-Term Returns

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	<i>Return</i> _{t+2}		<i>FF5-Adjusted Return</i> _{t+2}		<i>q5-Adjusted Return</i> _{t+2}	
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score</i> _t	-17.74*** (-8.33)	-9.795*** (-4.51)	-16.10*** (-7.15)	-8.002*** (-3.50)	-14.78*** (-6.65)	-7.634*** (-3.38)
<i>Total q</i> _t		-15.64*** (-19.51)		-13.10*** (-15.78)		-12.72*** (-14.99)
<i>Return</i> _t		-0.0156*** (-3.09)		-0.0395*** (-7.31)		-0.0252*** (-4.63)
Firm FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
YearQtr FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
R-squared	0.232	0.239	0.0864	0.0935	0.0824	0.0880
N	74,586	74,586	74,586	74,586	74,586	74,586

ChatGPT Investment Score and Information Environment

- **Managerial expectations and forecasts** for **more opaque** firms and firms operating in a dynamic, changing environment could be **more informative**, given that these firms are subject to higher uncertainty and unexpected changes.
- ChatGPT-based investment scores are expected to exhibit **greater power** in predicting firms' future investment plans for firms in a **more dynamic, changing information environment**.
- We consider **industry competition, firm size, and product life cycle stages** of firms as proxies of the environment in which a firm operates and conduct cross-sectional tests to explore the heterogeneity in the predictive power of ChatGPT.

ChatGPT Score and Information Environment

ChatGPT Investment Score has more incremental predictive power for future investment plans among firms subject to more changes and uncertainty.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	<i>Total Investment_{t+2}</i>					
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t</i>	1.244*** (10.99)	1.789*** (8.18)	1.287*** (4.78)	2.301*** (6.67)		
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × HHI_t</i>	-1.147*** (-4.85)			-0.942*** (-4.03)	-0.716*** (-3.08)	-0.511** (-2.25)
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × Top4Shares_t</i>		-1.456*** (-4.50)		-1.107*** (-3.41)	-1.398*** (-4.21)	-1.184*** (-3.61)
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × Size_t</i>			-0.0517 (-1.42)	-0.0635* (-1.72)	-0.113*** (-2.86)	-0.0797** (-2.07)
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × Life1_t</i>					1.876*** (3.32)	1.559*** (2.86)
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × Life2_t</i>					5.002*** (8.22)	4.037*** (6.73)
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × Life3_t</i>					0.271 (0.38)	0.603 (0.84)
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × Life4_t</i>					0.0930 (0.12)	-0.132 (-0.17)
Interactions with <i>Total q_t</i>	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Control Variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
YearQtr FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-squared	0.698	0.698	0.698	0.698	0.699	0.701
N	69,007	69,007	69,007	69,007	69,007	69,007

ChatGPT Score and Information Environment

ChatGPT Investment Score has more incremental predictive power for future investment plans among firms subject to more changes and uncertainty.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	<i>Total Investment_{t+2}</i>					
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t</i>	1.244*** (10.99)	1.789*** (8.18)	1.287*** (4.78)	2.301*** (6.67)		
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × HHI_t</i>	-1.147*** (-4.85)			-0.942*** (-4.03)	-0.716*** (-3.08)	-0.511** (-2.25)
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × Top4Shares_t</i>		-1.456*** (-4.50)		-1.107*** (-3.41)	-1.398*** (-4.21)	-1.184*** (-3.61)
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × Size_t</i>			-0.0517 (-1.42)	-0.0635* (-1.72)	-0.113*** (-2.86)	-0.0797** (-2.07)
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × Life1_t</i>					1.876*** (3.32)	1.559*** (2.86)
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × Life2_t</i>					5.002*** (8.22)	4.037*** (6.73)
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × Life3_t</i>					0.271 (0.38)	0.603 (0.84)
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t × Life4_t</i>					0.0930 (0.12)	-0.132 (-0.17)
Interactions with <i>Total q_t</i>	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Control Variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
YearQtr FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-squared	0.698	0.698	0.698	0.698	0.699	0.701
N	69,007	69,007	69,007	69,007	69,007	69,007

Additional Results

- Validation with **Analyst Forecast Changes**: Relate to changes in analyst forecasts of capital expenditure around earnings calls. Analyst Forecast
- **Alternative ChatGPT Measure**: Use chunk score with the maximum absolute value, rather than the average chunk score. Alternative Measure
- **Out-of-sample Tests for ChatGPT**: Tests using conference calls in 2022, outside the training sample of ChatGPT. Out-of-sample Tests
- **Other Corporate Policies**: Dividends and Employment. Other Policies

Conclusion

- We use the cutting-edge large language model, ChatGPT, to extract **managerial expectations of corporate policies** from corporate disclosure.
- The investment score bears **a strong, positive correlation with future investment** both in the short term and long term.
- Firms with high investment scores experience significant **negative future abnormal returns**.
- We demonstrate that ChatGPT can be used to **extract valuable information about corporate policies** that are not otherwise available to investors and provide a new application of AI that produces **interpretable outputs for humans**.

Thank You!

ChatGPT Investment Score and Long-Term FF-5 Alpha

The predictive power for FF-5 Adjusted abnormal Returns persists for up to **9 quarters** in the future.

	(1) n=3	(2) n=4	(3) n=5	(4) n=6	(5) n=7	(6) n=8	(7) n=9	(8) n=10
	<i>FF-5 factor Adjusted Alpha_{t+n}</i>							
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t</i>	-5.528** (-2.50)	-3.889* (-1.73)	-5.946*** (-2.71)	-6.648*** (-2.92)	-2.218 (-0.99)	-1.025 (-0.45)	-5.970** (-2.53)	-4.863** (-2.09)
<i>Total q_t</i>	-11.59*** (-14.55)	-10.51*** (-13.45)	-8.728*** (-10.67)	-7.089*** (-8.85)	-6.911*** (-8.52)	-7.679*** (-9.07)	-7.273*** (-8.72)	-6.323*** (-7.17)
<i>Return_t</i>	-0.0235*** (-4.31)	-0.0376*** (-6.85)	-0.0132** (-2.37)	-0.0294*** (-5.18)	-0.00203 (-0.36)	0.0148** (2.41)	0.00189 (0.31)	0.00134 (0.21)
Firm FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
YearQtr FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
R-squared	0.0867	0.0917	0.0896	0.0906	0.0892	0.0928	0.0967	0.0911
N	73,437	72,354	71,003	68,215	65,393	63,267	60,437	57,799

Back

ChatGPT Investment Score and Long-Term q-5 Alpha

The predictive power for q-5 adjusted abnormal returns persists for up to **9 quarters** in the future.

	(1) n=3	(2) n=4	(3) n=5	(4) n=6	(5) n=7	(6) n=8	(7) n=9	(8) n=10
	<i>q5-Adjusted Alpha_{t+n}</i>							
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t</i>	-8.329*** (-3.74)	-9.343*** (-4.22)	-8.413*** (-3.84)	-9.722*** (-4.20)	-8.764*** (-3.98)	-8.316*** (-3.62)	-9.012*** (-3.78)	-5.977** (-2.47)
<i>Total q_t</i>	-9.640*** (-11.72)	-8.606*** (-10.43)	-8.819*** (-10.43)	-7.923*** (-9.53)	-8.648*** (-10.22)	-9.215*** (-10.60)	-8.237*** (-9.08)	-6.830*** (-7.31)
<i>Return_t</i>	-0.0460*** (-8.31)	-0.0282*** (-5.07)	0.00228 (0.41)	-0.00958* (-1.68)	-0.00314 (-0.55)	-0.00683 (-1.11)	-0.0167*** (-2.72)	0.0119* (1.89)
Firm FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
YearQtr FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
R-squared	0.0838	0.0846	0.0829	0.0836	0.0871	0.0875	0.0903	0.0863
N	73,437	72,354	71,003	68,215	65,393	63,267	60,437	57,799

Back

ChatGPT Score and Analyst Forecasts

ChatGPT Investment Score is positively associated with changes in analyst forecasts of capital expenditure around earnings calls.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	<i>Change in Analyst Forecast_{t+1}</i>			
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t</i>	8.278*** (15.70)	7.825*** (14.78)	7.582*** (14.16)	7.332*** (13.70)
<i>Total q_t</i>		0.612*** (5.41)		0.525*** (4.40)
<i>Capital Expenditure_t</i>			-0.100** (-2.36)	-0.105** (-2.46)
<i>Total Cash Flow_t</i>			0.552 (0.38)	-0.732 (-0.49)
<i>Leverage_t</i>			-7.006*** (-6.25)	-6.152*** (-5.45)
<i>Size_t</i>			0.372 (1.25)	0.477 (1.63)
YearQtr FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Firm FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
R-squared	0.120	0.121	0.121	0.122
N	37435	37435	37435	37435

Out-of-sample Test

ChatGPT Investment Score is positively associated with capital expenditure in the calendar quarter following the earnings call in a sample consisting of earnings calls occurring after ChatGPT's trading periods (2021Q4-2022Q4).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
		<i>Capital Expenditure_{t+2}</i>		
<i>ChatGPT Investment Score_t</i>	2.278*** (5.19)	2.160*** (4.92)	1.268*** (4.45)	1.236*** (4.34)
<i>Total q_t</i>		0.0687*** (4.31)		0.0363*** (4.08)
<i>Capital Expenditure_t</i>			0.678*** (47.67)	0.677*** (47.49)
<i>Total Cash Flow_t</i>			-0.465*** (-3.04)	-0.500*** (-3.26)
<i>Leverage_t</i>			-0.399*** (-3.99)	-0.245** (-2.30)
<i>Size_t</i>			-0.00736 (-0.63)	-0.0106 (-0.90)
Industry FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
YearQtr FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
R-squared	0.248	0.251	0.545	0.545
N	10609	10609	10609	10609

Alternative Measure of ChatGPT Investment Score

Construct an alternative definition of the *ChatGPT investment score*, *ChatGPT Investment Alt. Score*, in which we take the *largest value of ChatGPT answers* among all chunks of an earnings call.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
		<i>Capital Expenditure_{t+2}</i>		
<i>ChatGPT Investment Alt. Score_t</i>	0.372*** (12.71)	0.329*** (11.57)	0.286*** (10.67)	0.275*** (10.30)
<i>Total q_t</i>		0.404*** (13.22)		0.190*** (6.98)
<i>Capital Expenditure_t</i>			0.112*** (9.80)	0.112*** (9.74)
<i>Total Cash Flow_t</i>			1.063*** (3.57)	0.669** (2.29)
<i>Leverage_t</i>			-2.898*** (-17.58)	-2.610*** (-15.42)
<i>Size_t</i>			-0.0126 (-0.29)	-0.0148 (-0.34)
Firm FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
YearQtr FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
R-squared	0.693	0.697	0.707	0.707
N	74,586	74,586	74,586	74,586

ChatGPT and Other Corporate Policies

ChatGPT Dividend Score and *ChatGPT Employment Score* are significantly and positively associated with the answers to the Duke CFO Surveys.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	<i>CFO Survey Dividend</i>	<i>CFO Survey Dividend</i>	<i>CFO Survey Employment</i>	<i>CFO Survey Employment</i>
<i>ChatGPT Dividend Score</i>	45.62*** (3.99)	30.46*** (3.93)		
<i>ChatGPT Employment Score</i>			22.64*** (3.00)	18.01*** (5.20)
Industry FE	N	Y	N	Y
YearQtr FE	N	Y	N	Y
R-squared	0.023	0.117	0.007	0.044
N	666	661	1322	1311

Back