

CHENG LU

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EDUCATION

Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis

Ph.D. Candidate in Marketing Science

2023 – Present

London Business School

M.A. in Management

2022 – 2023

Tsinghua University

B.S. in Economics and Finance

2018 – 2022

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Substantive: Artificial Intelligence, Social Media Platforms

Methodological: Causal Inference, Econometrics, Machine Learning, Field Experiment

RESEARCH

Working Papers

- Cheng Lu, Mengxin Wang, Dennis J. Zhang, and Heng Zhang. “Generative Augmented Inference” [Link]
 - Preliminary version accepted at International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML) 2026
 - First Prize in Buchan Prize Paper Competition (Co-Authored, Quantitative category)
- Guangying Chen, Cheng Lu, Tat Chan, Zhengling Qi, Dennis J. Zhang, and Industry Collaborators. “A New Estimator for Encouragement Design in Randomized Controlled Trials When the Exclusion Restriction Is Violated” [Link], Major Revision at **Marketing Science**
 - Runner-up for the 2024 INFORMS Information Systems Cluster Best Paper Award (Top 5%)
- Meng Liu, Cheng Lu, Xiang Hui, and Dennis J. Zhang. “Evaluating Reactivation Referral Programs at Scale: Evidence from A Large Social Media Platform” [Link], submitted

Work in Progress

- Cheng Lu, Raphael Thomadsen, Song Yao, and Dennis J. Zhang. “The Role of LLMs in Ads Personalization”
- Meng Liu, Cheng Lu, Shilei Luo, Xiang Hui, and Dennis J. Zhang. “Unexpected Consequences in Recommender-Based Content Moderation”

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“A New Estimator for Encouragement Design in Randomized Controlled Trials When the Exclusion Restriction Is Violated”

INFORMS Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA

2025

Conference on Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and Business Analytics, New Haven, CT

2024

INFORMS Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA

2024

“Evaluating Reactivation Referral Programs at Scale: Evidence from A Large Social Media Platform”

ISMS Marketing Science Conference, Washington, DC

2025

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant - Washington University in St. Louis

Applied Marketing Research (Undergraduate)

FL 2024, FL 2025

Marketing Research Analytics (Master)

FL 2024, FL 2025

Understanding & Conducting Business Experiments (Undergraduate)

SP 2025

A/B Testing in Business and Social Science (Master)

SP 2025, SP 2026

HONORS AND AWARDS

INFORMS Marketing Science Doctoral Consortium Fellow	2026
Hubert C. and Dorothy R. Moog Scholar Award	2026
First Prize in Buchan Prize Paper Competition (Co-Authored, Quantitative category)	2026
Runner-up for the 2024 INFORMS Information Systems Cluster Best Paper Award (Top 5%)	2024
Doctoral Fellowship, Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis	2023
Outstanding Student Scholarship, Tsinghua University	2018