

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

2018 – 2022

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Substantive: Artificial Intelligence, Social Media Platforms

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

RESEARCH

Job Market Paper

- “[Generative Augmented Inference of LLM-generated Data for Market Research: Theory and Empirical Evidence](#)”, Cheng Lu, Mengxin Wang, Dennis J. Zhang, and Heng Zhang
– First Prize in Buchan Prize Paper Competition (Co-Authored, Quantitative category)

Publication

- “[Generative Augmented Inference](#)”, Cheng Lu, Mengxin Wang, Dennis J. Zhang, and Heng Zhang, Forthcoming at **ICML** (2026)

Working Papers

- “[A New Estimator for Encouragement Design in Randomized Controlled Trials When the Exclusion Restriction Is Violated](#)”, Guangying Chen, Cheng Lu, Tat Chan, Zhengling Qi, Dennis J. Zhang, and Industry Collaborators, Major Revision at **Marketing Science**
– Runner-up for the 2024 INFORMS Information Systems Cluster Best Paper Award (Top 5%)
- “[Evaluating Reactivation Referral Programs at Scale: Evidence from A Large Social Media Platform](#)”, Meng Liu, Cheng Lu, Xiang Hui, and Dennis J. Zhang, submitted

Work in Progress

- “The Role of LLMs in Ads Personalization”, with Raphael Thomadsen, Song Yao, and Dennis J. Zhang
- “Enhancing the Power of Instrumental Variables with Higher-order Variation”, with Guangying Chen, Tat Chan, Zhengling Qi, and Dennis J. Zhang

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Generative Augmented Inference of LLM-generated Data for Market Research: Theory and Empirical Evidence”

INFORMS Annual Meeting (scheduled), San Francisco, CA	2026
ISMS Marketing Science Conference, Lisbon, Portugal	2026
Annual POMS Conference	2026

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

INFORMS Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA	2025
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
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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

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Research Intern, Kwai Inc.	2023-Present
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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

REFERENCES

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