Applicant's Name: Xilan Zhang

Contact Information:
Phone: +1 312-477-1233
Email: lxz@stanford.edu
Website: https://xilan-zhang.github.io/
Address: 6 Comstock Cir, Stanford, CA 94305

School: Stanford University
Area of Interest: Organizations, Technology, and Entrepreneurship
Year of Entry into the PhD Program: 2024
Expected Year of Completion: 2029
Faculty Member Supplying a Letter of Recommendation: Charles Eesley (cee@stanford.edu)

Xilan Zhang

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lxz@stanford.edu
https://xilan-zhang.github.io/

Education

Stanford University — Stanford, CA
Ph.D. in Management Science and Engineering — 2024 - Present

- Advisor: Prof. Charles Eesley
- Research area: Organizations, Technology and Entrepreneurship

Tsinghua University — Beijing, China
BA in Economics and Finance — 2019 - 2024

The University of Chicago — Chicago, IL
Visiting Student at Booth School of Business — 2022 - 2023

Research Interest

Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Stakeholder Theory, Field Experiments

Working Papers

Zhang, C., Li, N., Deng, Y, & **Zhang, X**. A Paradox of Multiple Team Membership: Unpacking its Influence on Project Pacing Patterns.
Revise and Resubmit at *Acedemy of Management Journal*

Mikel-Hong, K., Li, N., **Zhang, X.**, & Pan, J. (2023). Turnover Sequences and Cascades. *Academy of Management Proceedings*.
https://doi.org/10.5465/amproc.2023.15064abstract

Works in Progress

Framing Process for Stakeholder Activist Mobilization: A Field Experiment
With Katherine DeCelles, Charles Eesley, Ananya Sen

Global Evidence on Gendered Hiring
With Letian (LT) Zhang

Conference Talks

"Turnover Sequences and Cascades in Social Network", 83rd Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Boston, MA, Aug 2023

Research Experience

Misallocation of Talent in State Sectors | Chicago, IL — Sep 2022 – Aug 2023
Research Professional for Prof. Emanuele Colonnelli and Prof. Tommaso Porzio

- Managed RCT on labor market biases towards state sectors, contributed to creating Python-based hypothetical job postings and intervention videos
- Analyzed administrative and job posting datasets to assess talent misallocation, supervised and coordinated a team of 12 part-time student RAs

Managerial Job Design in Global Hiring | Cambridge, MA — May – Dec 2023
Research Assistant for Prof. Letian (LT) Zhang at HBS

- Employed global Burning Glass and Revelio data to explore how democratic culture shapes managerial job design across countries
- Applied NLP methods to assess shifts in implicit gender bias in job descriptions following China's labor market policy banning stated gender preferences

Research Experience

Informal Lending Network | Los Angeles, CA — Dec 2021 – Sep 2022

Research Assistant for Prof. Erica Jiang at USC Marshall

- Constructed social network of Chinese entrepreneurs based on lawsuits data
- Collected name frequency by web scraping and bypassing CAPTCHA to identify dyadic relationships for each defendant and plaintiff

Behavioral Online Experiments | Los Angeles, CA — Dec 2021 – Mar 2022

Research Assistant for Prof. Hengchen Dai at Anderson Behavioral Lab

- Assisted in managing participants on Prolific, piloted and reviewed experiment settings on Qualtrics, and proofread manuscripts before submission

Internships

Knowledge Atlas Technology (Zhipu AI) | Beijing, China — May 2021 – Jan 2022

Data Science Intern

- Implemented A/B testing with $N = 120k$ subscribers of the AMiner website; created a MongoDB database to record user behavior metrics

Awards and Honors

Engineering Graduate Fellowship, Stanford University	2024
Short-term Overseas Scholarship, Tsinghua University	2023
Academic Excellence Scholarship, Tsinghua University	2021, 2022
Excellent Student Leadership Award, Tsinghua University	2021
Science and Innovation Scholarship, Tsinghua University	2021
Freshman Scholarship, Tsinghua University	2019

Skills

Languages: English, Mandarin, Japanese (Basic).

Programming: Python, R, Stata, JavaScript.

Academic Services

Reviewers for: *Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management*

STR Division Ambassador: 83rd Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management

Vice President: Science and Technology Association of Students, Tsinghua University

Last updated: Jan 2025

Current and Future Research Interests

As a doctoral student at Department of Management Science and Engineering at Stanford University, my research primarily employs experimental methods to probe how entrepreneurs mobilize resources and exploit technological innovations. My current research includes conducting field experiment that examines how strategic communications can be structured to enhance stakeholder engagement and drive resource mobilization, which is especially important for securing support in early startup settings.

Looking ahead, I am eager to broaden my research to encompass a variety of topics within the entrepreneurial realm. For example, I plan to design randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to investigate how startups can assimilate diverse knowledge from peers, their entrepreneurial ecosystems, and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence. Additionally, I am interested in exploring how early job and work design can aid entrepreneurs in retaining human capital during the crucial initial stages of business development. In both areas, my goal is to devise practical strategies that entrepreneurs can employ to gain a competitive edge and achieve sustainable growth.

Reason for Attending the Boot Camp

The NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp represents an exceptional opportunity to deepen my grasp of experimental methodologies in entrepreneurship research. Engaging with distinguished scholars like Professors Shai Bernstein, Nick Bloom, and Jorge Guzman, who bring a rigorous economics perspective to entrepreneurship studies, directly complements both my current research focus at the intersection of entrepreneurship and experimental methods, and my previous training in economics.

I am particularly enthusiastic about the prospect of participating in intensive discussions, gaining invaluable feedback on my experimental designs, and broadening my research network with fellow PhD students and established scholars in the field. This experience will be very helpful in shaping my future research trajectory and equipping me with the tools needed to make a meaningful impact in the study of entrepreneurship.

CHARLES EESLEY
Associate Professor
Management Science & Engineering
cee@stanford.edu
650 725-0550

School of Engineering
Jen-Hsun Huang Eng. Center
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305

February 14, 2025

Dear NBER Entrepreneurship Bootcamp Selection Committee,

I am writing to offer my strongest recommendation for Xilan Zhang's application to the 2025 NBER Entrepreneurship Bootcamp. Xilan is an exceptional researcher and one of the most promising PhD students I have had the opportunity to work with. Her analytical depth, intellectual curiosity, and strong research capabilities make her an outstanding candidate for this program.

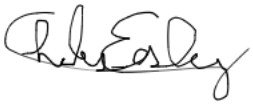
Xilan has distinguished herself through her impressive research trajectory even as a 1st year PhD student. She already has a revise and resubmit at a top journal**,** co-authored with one of her undergraduate faculty mentors from Tsinghua University—an impressive accomplishment at this stage of her career. In my doctoral seminar on entrepreneurship last Fall, she was the top performer, consistently producing the most insightful contributions to discussions and demonstrating an exceptional grasp of the literature and methodological rigor. She is as strong or stronger than past doctoral students I have worked with who have gone on to faculty positions at Oxford and Carnegie Mellon University**.**

Currently, Xilan and I are collaborating on an innovative digital experiment with the CheckMyAds.org platform**,** in partnership with Ananya Sen at Carnegie Mellon University. This project investigates the impact of digital ad transparency and accountability on online advertising markets, using a rigorous experimental design to evaluate how interventions can reshape consumer behavior in the digital advertising ecosystem. Xilan has played a critical role in the conceptualization and execution of this experiment, leveraging her strong quantitative skills and methodological expertise to ensure the project's success.

Her ability to apply cutting-edge econometric and experimental techniques to important questions in entrepreneurship and digital markets makes her a perfect fit for the NBER Entrepreneurship Bootcamp. The program's focus on advancing research in entrepreneurship and innovation aligns closely with her research agenda, and I have no doubt that her participation will contribute significantly to the intellectual community at NBER.

Please feel free to contact me for any further information about Xilan's qualifications or research.

Sincerely,



Charles Eesley
Associate Professor, Department of Management Science & Engineering
Stanford Technology Ventures Program (STVP)
School of Engineering
Stanford University