Application for the Digital Economics and AI Tutorial

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Contact Information

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Graduate Study

I am a fourth-year PhD candidate in Marketing at the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business, where I have been enrolled since Fall 2023. My doctoral training spans quantitative methods, economics, marketing models, and consumer behavior, and my research employs both theoretical and empirical methods.

Before joining USC, I earned an M.S. in Statistics and Operations Research from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, as well as an M.A. in Business Administration (Marketing), a B.A. in International Studies, and a B.B.A. in Business Administration from Ewha Womans University.

Research Interests and Current Projects

My research interests are in consumer search, platform design, and word of mouth. Broadly, I study how platform design shapes consumers' search behavior and understanding potential biases in the consumers' word of mouth. The Digital Economics and AI Tutorial aligns closely with my research on information design and consumer behavior on digital platforms and will help me incorporate emerging AI research into this work.

Dissertation

Essays on Consumer Search and Word of Mouth on Digital Platforms

Essay 1: Noisy Signals and Consumer Search: How Platforms Trade Off Engagement and Conversion

Essay 2: Controlling for Double Self-Selection in Online Reviews

Essay 3: The Impact of Social Network on Word of Mouth Generation

Committee

Dina Mayzlin (Chair)
Robert E. Brooker Professor of Marketing
Marshall School of Business
University of Southern California

Lan Luo
Neely Chair Professor of Marketing
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Stephanie Tully
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Tom Chang
Associate Professor of Finance and Business Economics
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Odilon Câmara
Associate Professor of Finance and Business Economics
Marshall School of Business
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Working Papers

The Impact of the Unionization Process on Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality: Evidence from U.S. Coffee Chains

With Isamar Troncoso (HBS), Minkyung Kim (CMU), and Ishita Chakraborty (University of Wisconsin–Madison)
Second-Round Revise and Resubmit at the Journal of Marketing Research

> We examine how unionization affects customer satisfaction and perceived service quality using online reviews from 10 U.S. coffee chains. We find that ratings decline following union certification but recover after contract ratification. The initial decline is primarily driven by increased negative sentiment toward service-related attributes, particularly employee interactions.

Noisy Signals and Consumer Search: How Platforms Trade Off Engagement and Conversion

With Dina Mayzlin

Essay #1 in Dissertation

> Despite increasingly sophisticated recommendation systems, consumers report spending more time searching online. We propose that this may reflect platforms' incentives: because advertising revenue grows with the time consumers spend searching, a platform's revenue model shapes the information it provides to consumers. We use a sequential search model with a fully rational, forward-looking consumer who searches for products on a platform. The consumer infers the quality of each product from a signal whose noise the platform chooses, pays a search cost for each product she inspects, and may leave the platform at any time. We show that expected search duration is non-monotonic in noise: moderate noise lengthens search because

the consumer waits for a signal that clearly reveals a good match, but beyond a critical threshold she lowers her standards and purchases products of uncertain quality, so search shortens. The platform chooses its noise level based on the relative value of engagement, sales, and well-matched sales. Engagement-oriented platforms add noise up to the consumer's threshold to prolong search; premium-conversion platforms, which profit from good matches, add no noise; and mass-conversion platforms add enough noise that the consumer accepts products of uncertain quality, raising purchases at the expense of match quality. Our findings suggest that advertising-driven revenue models give platforms an incentive to make search harder than it needs to be.

Work in Progress

Controlling for Double Self-Selection in Online Reviews

With Dina Mayzlin and Tom Chang

Essay #2 in Dissertation

Online ratings reflect two layers of self-selection: which products consumers choose to consume, and whether they choose to review them. Using an online experiment that independently varies choice over consumption (assigned, forced, or free choice with opt-out) and the review requirement (mandatory vs. optional), we measure how each layer distorts observed ratings relative to a benchmark of experienced satisfaction, and test whether selection corrections can recover it.

The Impact of Social Network on Word of Mouth Generation

Essay #3 in Dissertation

I examine how the structure of a word-of-mouth generator's network shapes the content they produce. Specifically, I study how review behavior changes as the network broadens—either by encompassing more diverse preferences or by more closely resembling the generator's real-world social network. I analyze effects on the decision to write a review, as well as on its valence and extremity. This research shows how network structure may generate systematic biases in observed word of mouth.

Coursework

Economics and Quantitative Methods: Probability and Statistics for Economists; Econometric Methods; Economic Theory I and II; Experimental Methods; Causal Inference.

Quantitative Marketing: Strategic and Marketing Mix Models; Marketing Models in Consumer and Business-to-Business Markets; Advanced Quantitative Models in Marketing.

Consumer Behavior: Consumer Behavior and Decision Making; Consumer Behavior Theory and Research.