

Zhikun Lu

PhD Candidate
Goizueta Business School
Emory University, Atlanta GA, USA

Email: zhikun.lu@emory.edu
Website: <https://zhikun.lu>
Phone: +1 (404)934-8908

Education

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| Ph.D. in Operations Management , Goizueta Business School, Emory University
Doctoral coursework in economics from 2018 to 2021; transferred to the business school in 2021 | 2021 – 2025 |
| M.A. in Economics , China Center for Economic Research, Peking University | 2015 – 2018 |
| B.A. in Law , Shanghai University of Finance and Economics | 2010 – 2014 |

Research Expertise

Causality-Driven Decision Making, Causal Machine Learning, Causal Inference and Econometrics, Causal Reinforcement Learning, Identify-then-Optimize, Uplift Modeling, Structural Modeling

Honors and Awards

1. Runner-up, 2024 POMS College of Supply Chain Management Student Paper Competition
– “The Value of Last-mile Delivery in Online Retail”
2. Finalist, 2023 MSOM Student Paper Competition
– “Sooner or Later? Promising Delivery Speed in Online Retail”
3. Winner, 2021 ICIS Best Paper in Track Award (Digital and Mobile Commerce)
– “Sooner or Later? Promising Delivery Speed in Online Retail”

Research

PUBLICATION

1. Cui, Ruomeng, Zhikun Lu, Tianshu Sun, and Joseph M. Golden, 2024. “Sooner or Later? Promising Delivery Speed in Online Retail.” *Manufacturing & Service Operations Management*, 26(1), pp.233-251.
2. Fohlin, Caroline, and Zhikun Lu, 2021. “How Contagious Was the Panic of 1907? New Evidence from Trust Company Stocks.” *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, 111: 514-19.

WORKING PAPERS

3. Zhikun Lu, Ruomeng Cui, Tianshu Sun, and Lixia Wu, 2023. “The Value of Last-mile Delivery in Online Retail.” Major revision at *Management Science*.
4. Kaiji Chen, Yuxuan Huang, Xuewen Liu, Zhikun Lu, and Yong Wang, 2024. “Preferential Credit Policy with Sectoral Markup Heterogeneity.” Major revision at *Journal of International Economics*.
5. Caroline Fohlin, Zhikun Lu, and Nan Zhou, 2022. “Short Sale Bans May Improve Market Quality During Crises: New Evidence from the 2020 Covid Crash.” *Under Review*.
6. Xi Li, Xuewen Liu, Zhikun Lu, and Yong Wang, 2024. “A Model of China’s Economic Vertical Structure.” *Under Review*.
7. Zhikun Lu, Wenchang Zhang, and Ruomeng Cui, 2023. “Food Delivery Platform Expansion Strategies: A Structural Approach.”
8. Zhikun Lu, Ruomeng Cui, and Yang Su, 2024. “Incentives in Online Gaming: Optimal Policy Design with Dynamic Causal Machine Learning.” *Job Market Paper*.

Industry Experience

Academic Consultant at Cainiao, Alibaba Group, Remote

Aug 2022 – Present

Data Scientist Intern at Tencent, Palo Alto, CA Jan 2024 – Jul 2024

- Build and implement causal machine/deep/reinforcement learning models for causality-driven decisions, improving user engagement in a dynamic context at Tencent IEGG’s Advanced Data Group

Applied Scientist Intern at Amazon, Bellevue, WA May 2023 – Sep 2023

- Develop identify-then-optimize models using causal machine learning and optimization to drive Amazon’s inventory placement decisions at the Supply Chain Optimization Technology (SCOT) group

Algorithm Engineer Intern at Cainiao, Alibaba Group, Hangzhou, China Jun 2021 – Aug 2022

- Evaluate the value of last-mile delivery; work with the CFO office on a special report which was presented to the CFO of Alibaba; results cited by the CEO of Cainiao in his annual public speech
- Design and implement large-scale field experiments to improve operational decisions; use causal machine learning and optimization algorithms to design optimal targeting policies
- Over one year of full-time, on-site consulting experience at Cainiao’s AI Department to support various operations teams; using data-driven models to simulate last-mile delivery cost, enhance customer experience, assess online advertisement impacts, quantify the market potential of new business models, etc.

Research Assistant, Alibaba Innovative Research (AIR) Program, Alibaba DAMO Academy Jun 2020 – May 2021

- Develop and evaluate causal inference and machine learning models that combines observational and experimental data; offer personalized coupon targeting strategies

Presentations

Wharton Empirical Operations Management Workshop (2023, 2020); INFORMS Annual Meeting (2024, 2023, 2022, 2020); POMS Conference (2024, 2022); Conference on Information Systems and Technology (2022, 2021); American Economic Association Annual Meeting (2021); International Conference on Information Systems (2021)

Professional Service

Session chair for INFORMS Annual Meeting (Causal Machine Learning in OM, 2023, 2024);
Paper evaluation for the INFORMS BOM Best Working Paper Competition 2022, 2023, 2024;
Referee for *Manufacturing & Service Operations Management*, MSOM SIG Conference

Teaching Experience

EMORY UNIVERSITY: Principle of Macroeconomics (ECON 112, UG, co-teach & head TA, 2020 & 2021); Process and Systems Management (ISOM 551, MBA, TA, 2020 & 2021); Machine Learning II (ISOM 676, MSBA, TA, 2023)

PEKING UNIVERSITY: Monetary Theory (UG, TA, 2016); Macroeconomic Theory (UG, head TA, 2016); Advanced Topics in Economic Growth (PhD, guest lecture, 2019); Advanced Macroeconomics I (PhD, guest lecture, 2019)

Skills

Python (Scikit-learn, PyTorch, Jax, NumPy, SciPy, Pandas, etc.), SQL, R, Stata, Julia, MATLAB, Mathematica

Selected Training

UDACITY NANODEGREES (project reports and code available at [GitHub](#))

- [1] Machine Learning [2] Data Analyst [3] AI Programming with Python
[4] Machine Learning Engineer [5] Deep Learning [6] Deep Reinforcement Learning