Yulin Hao

Simon Business School
University of Rochester
Rochester, NY, 14627

Email: yhao12@simon.rochester.edu
Homepage: yulinhao.net
Phone: +1 585-732-4595

Last updated on June 20, 2025

Education

Simon Business School, University of Rochester, *USA*   2020 – 2026 (expected)
- Ph.D. in Quantitative Marketing
- M.S. in Business Research
- Committee: Yufeng Huang (Co-Chair), Mitchell J. Lovett (Co-Chair), Hana Choi, Ronald Goettler

Sciences Po (Paris Institute of Political Studies), *France*   2018 – 2020
- Research Master in Economics

Sichuan University, China   2014 – 2018
- B.A. in Economics (*Summa cum laude*)
- Exchange program at National Sun Yat-sen University, *Taiwan*

Research Interests

Substantive: Digital Platforms, Creator Economy, Salesforce, Marketing for Social Good
Methodological: Structural Model, Machine Learning, Causal Inference

Working papers

1. Yulin Hao, Jingcun Cao, Zengxiang Chen, and Yufeng Huang, "Time Cost Illusions: Purchase-Usage Gap in Online Education," **Job Market Paper**

2. Yulin Hao and Dai Yao, "Store Visits, Locations, and Customer Perceptions: Market Structure Analysis with Customer Trajectories in Shopping Malls"
- Reject and Resubmit at **Marketing Science**

3. Yulin Hao and Xiaojie Li, "Shaping the Influencers: The Role of Multi-Channel Networks"
- Second-Year Paper; Revise and Resubmit at **Journal of Marketing Research**

4. Hongye Sun, Yulin Hao, Mitchell Lovett and Kun Peng, "Informal Ties and Sales Agent Turnover: Evidence from Randomized Dormitory Assignment"
- Prepare for submission

Selected Work-in-Progress

5. "Influencer Collaborations (tentative title)," (with Guang Zeng and Liuyi Ye)
- Status: Data collected, analysis in progress

6. "Information Transparency and Teamwork: Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Indian Schools," (with Anuj Kumar and Xinzhi Rao)
- Status: RCT data collected, analysis in progress

Teaching

Core Statistics Using python (Master), Lab Instructor for Hana Choi	Fall 2024

- Rating: 4.50

Core Statistics Using R (Master), Lab Instructor for Hana Choi	Fall 2021-2023

- Rating: 4.83/4.96/4.28

Prescriptive Analytics with Python (Master), Teaching Assistant for Elizabeth Mohr	Spring 2023
Marketing Research (MBA), Teaching Assistant for Andrew Ainslie	Fall 2021

Selected Honors and Awards

AMA-Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium Fellow	2025
ISMS Doctoral Consortium Fellow	2024
Doctoral Fellowship, *University of Rochester*	2020 – 2025
The Best Master Thesis, *Sciences Po*	2020
Emile Boutmy Scholarship (First class), *Sciences Po*	2018-2020
First class Scholarship, *Sichuan University*	2017
National Scholarship of China, *Ministry of Education of China*	2015

Conference Presentations

2025 Marketing Science Conference
2024 Marketing Science Conference

Skills

Softwares: Python, R, Stata, SQL, LaTeX

Languages: English (Proficient), Chinese (Native)

Selected Graduate Coursework

Course	Instructor
Core Research Topics In Quantitative Marketing	Mitchell Lovett
Advanced Topics in Quantitative Marketing Research	Simon Marketing Faculty
Advanced Causal Inference and Machine Learning	Paul Ellickson
Machine Learning	Daniel Gildea
Research in App Econometrics	Lisa Kahn
Micro-Econometric Modeling: Static Approaches	Takeaki Sunada
Micro-Econometric Modeling: Dynamic Approaches	Takeaki Sunada
Numerical Methods	Florian Oswald
Industrial Organization Theory	Greg Shaffer
Microeconomics I	Sidartha Gordon
Microeconomics II	Emeric Henry
Microeconomics III	Eduardo Perez
Econometrics I	Jean-Marc Robin
Econometrics II	Nicolas Legrand
Econometrics III	Denis Fougere

References

Yufeng Huang (Co-Chair)
Associate Professor of Marketing
Simon Business School
University of Rochester
yufeng.huang@simon.rochester.edu

Hana Choi
Assistant Professor of Marketing
Simon Business School
University of Rochester
hana.choi@rochester.edu

Mitchell J. Lovett (Co-Chair)
Senior Associate Dean of Education and Innovation
Benjamin Forman Professor of Marketing
Simon Business School
University of Rochester
mitch.lovett@simon.rochester.edu

Ronald L. Goettler
Professor of Economics, Marketing, and
Entrepreneurship
Simon Business School
University of Rochester
ronald.goettler@simon.rochester.edu

Selected Abstracts

Time Cost Illusions: Purchase-Usage Gap in Online Education
with Jingcun Cao, Zengxiang Chen, and Yufeng Huang

Using proprietary data containing complete consumer purchase and usage records from a large farmer education platform in China, we document a substantial purchase–usage gap: on average, consumers complete only 30% of the content they buy, despite an average course price of $74. We trace this gap to a time cost illusion: consumers underestimate the time cost of learning at purchase and thus choose courses that demand more effort than they can commit. More importantly, marketing messages that downplay effort amplify this bias. Over successive purchases, consumers partially correct the bias by shifting toward shorter, easier courses and becoming less susceptible to marketing messages. We build a structural model of purchase and usage in which marketing messages affect perceived time cost. Estimates imply that, at purchase, perceived cost is only one-third of the true cost and that marketing-induced illusion reduces consumer surplus by $48 per enrollment. Disabling effort-downplaying marketing messages lowers purchases by 12 percentage points but raises usage by 21 percent, as consumers self-select into lower-cost courses. Counterfactual simulations show that either (i) splitting long courses into shorter modules or (ii) disclosing historical completion rate reduces the purchase–usage gap by aligning ex-ante expectations with ex-post usage.

Store Visits, Locations, and Customer Perceptions: Market Structure Analysis with Customer Trajectories in Shopping Malls
with Dai Yao

This paper conducts market structure analysis in retail agglomerations using unique trajectory data from 10 million customers across two shopping malls. We use a scalable deep embedding method to construct "store co-visit similarity" based on co-visitation patterns. This metric captures both consumer brand preferences and the impact of store locations, summarizing realistic inter-brand relationships for brick-and-mortar stores. We augment the trajectory data with consumer surveys and mall layouts, allowing us to decompose the store co-visit similarity into stated brand preferences (28%), store locations (22%), and other unobservables (50%). This decomposition suggests the substantial role of factors beyond stated preferences and location in shaping inter-brand relationships. We demonstrate our measure's effectiveness in capturing substitution patterns through two applications. First, we show how our measure captures consumer substitution in response to temporary store closures. Second, we conduct a counterfactual analysis of changing store locations, showing that co-visit similarity better predicts transition probabilities between stores compared to a model that simply combines perception and location data.

Shaping the Influencers: The Role of Multi-Channel Networks
with Xiaojie Li

Social media influencers are increasingly affiliating with multi-channel networks (MCNs), also known as influencer agencies. These MCNs recruit influencers and help them monetize their content. More importantly, MCNs are rumored to be directly involved in content creation. This paper provides the first empirical examination of the effects of MCN affiliation on influencer content. To this end, we construct a unique dataset tracking influencers' changes in their MCN affiliation on TikTok in China. Using a difference-in-differences strategy, we compare influencers who switched their affiliation status with observably similar non-switchers. The findings reveal that MCN affiliation enhances content engagement and leads to more homogeneous and focused content, steering influencers towards topics with higher advertising prices. However, the content quantity does not change. When influencers affiliate with MCNs, these influencers also have more sponsorships and charge a higher advertising price, which is predominantly driven by changes in content resulting from the affiliation. These results suggest that platforms and influencers can benefit from improved engagement and sponsorships resulting from MCN affiliation. Although advertisers face higher advertising prices charged by MCN-affiliated influencers, these prices are justified by more engaging and focused content, which may also be beneficial to the advertisers.

Informal Ties and Sales Agent Turnover: Evidence from Randomized Dormitory Assignment
with Hongye Sun, Mitchell Lovett and Kun Peng

Salesperson turnover poses significant challenges for firms that rely on sales agents to maintain customer relationships and generate revenue. This paper offers the first causal evidence on how informal ties—friendships among agents—affect turnover. Partnering with a leading Chinese medical-equipment firm, we construct a unique data that tracks roughly 2,000 agents from hire to exit. New hires are randomly assigned to company dormitories, giving us exogenous variation in exposure to peers who share background traits such as hometown, dialect, or alma mater. Overall, we find that stronger informal ties reduce turnover. Agents initially placed to dorms with more same-background roommates remain with the firm significantly longer. Yet these ties also carry a cost: when a strong-tie roommate departs, the likelihood that others quit rises—a cascading effect. We show that the retention benefit stems from psychological support, not productivity gains due to peer learning. Our findings suggest that cultivating friendships among new hires help curb early turnover at little cost, but firms also need to guard against cascades when a key friend quits.