

Masoud Jabbari

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Education

Ph.D. in Economics, Rice University, 2019–August 2026 (Expected)

M.Sc. in Economics, Sharif University of Technology, 2016

B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering (Minor in Economics), Sharif University of Technology, 2013

Employment

Lecturer in Marketing, Rice University (Jones Graduate School of Business), 2026–2027

Research Fields

Quantitative Marketing, Empirical Industrial Organization, Information Economics, Matching and Market Design
Digital Markets, Platform Economics, Influencer Marketing, AI and Marketing

Job Market Paper

Influencer–Brand Partnerships: A Matching Approach [\[Draft\]](#)

Publications

“Welfare Gains from Trade: Weak Links and Complementarity of Intermediate Goods,” with S. A. Madanizadeh, *Review of World Economics*, 2026.

“Business Cycle Accounting: Iran’s Stagflation,” with M. H. Rahmati, S. A. Madanizadeh, and A. Karimirad, *The Journal of Planning and Budgeting*, 20(3), 41–65, 2015. (in Persian) [\[English Abstract on RePEc\]](#)

“Modeling the Impacts of MENA Unrest on Global Oil Price,” with M. RafieiSakhaei, *Proceedings of the International System Dynamics Conference*, St. Gallen, 2012.

Work in Progress

- The Quality of Influencer-Generated Demand: Evidence from Sales and Product Returns (with Maximilian Beichert)
- The Ads vs. Content Tradeoff in Influencer Marketing: Understanding Consumer Limits (with Arun Gopalakrishnan)
- From Bids to Values: Estimating Sponsored-Link (GSP) Auctions with Modern Numerical Tools
- How Does ChatGPT Affect Cheating Among Undergraduate Economics and Business Students?

Policy Notes

“Optimal Nutrition Protocol for Iranians,” *Donya-e-Eqtasad*, Issue 3047, (in Persian)

Seminars, Conferences, and Invited Talks

- Workshop on “Teaching with AI & Digital Tools: Practical, Ethical, and Actionable,” [Center for Teaching Excellence, Rice University](#); and part of [Rice University AI Week: Innovate, Explore, Learn](#) organized by the Office of Information Technology (OIT), Rice University, Nov. 2025 [\[Slides\]](#)
- Workshop on Frontiers of Online Advertising (part of the Twenty-Sixth ACM Conference on Economics and Computation [ACM, EC 2025]), Stanford University, July 2025, [\[Accepted Papers\]](#)
- INFORMS Marketing Science Conference (ISMS), Washington, D.C., June 2025
- Ph.D. Economics Virtual Seminar ([PhD-EVS](#)), Feb. 2025
- Brown Bag Series, Department of Economics, Rice University, 2023, 2024, 2025
- Graduate Seminar, Sharif University, School of Management and Economics (Virtual), Nov. 2024
- Workshop on Business Cycles, Institute for Management and Planning Studies, Tehran, Iran, 2017
- Iranian Economy Conference on Sustainable Growth, Tehran, Iran, 2015

Teaching and Research Experience

Lecturer, Rice University (Jones Graduate School of Business) — Customer Lifetime Value (Graduate, MBA), 2026

Instructor, Rice University — Urban Economics (Undergraduate), 2022

Teaching Assistant, Rice University, 2019–2025

Courses: Microeconomics I, Econometrics II (Graduate, Ph.D.), Customer Lifetime Value, Marketing Analytics (Graduate, MBA), Game Theory, Applied Econometrics, Microeconomics, Principles of Economics (Undergraduate)

Teaching Assistant, Sharif University of Technology, 2013–2015

Courses: Macroeconomics I, Economy of Iran (Graduate), Macroeconomics, Principles of Economics (Undergraduate)

Teaching Assistant, Institute for Management and Planning Studies, 2016–2017

Course: Macroeconomics II (Graduate, Ph.D.)

Research Assistant to Prof. M. Nili, Sharif University of Technology, 2014–2016

Research Assistant to Prof. Madanizadeh and Prof. Rahmati, Sharif University of Technology, 2014–2015

Honors and Awards

- CTE Graduate Fellowship, Center for Teaching Excellence, Rice University, 2025–2026
- ISMS Doctoral Consortium Fellow, 2025
- Graduate Fellowship, Rice University, 2019–2024
- Office of Exceptional Talents Graduate Fellowship, Sharif University of Technology, 2013–2014
- Ranked 1st in M.Sc. Entrance Exam in Economics (9,000+ participants), Iran, 2012
- Ranked 9th in Iran Economics Olympiad (9,000+ participants), 2012
- Ranked 154th (out of 500,000+) in Iran's Nationwide University Entrance Exam for B.Sc. (Konkour), Mathematics and Engineering Track, 2008
- Best Paper Award, Iranian Economy Conference on Strategies for Achieving Sustainable Growth, 2015 (joint with S.A. Madanizadeh, M.H. Rahmati, and A. Karimirad)

Previous Professional Experience

Research Fellow, Monetary and Banking Research Institute (Central Bank of Iran), 2014–2015, 2017

Research Fellow, Institute for Management and Planning Studies, Iran (under Chief Economic Advisor to the President), 2015–2016

Research Fellow, Institute of Science, Technology and Industry Policy-Making, Iran, 2013–2014

Academic Service and Leadership

Referee: *Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance*

Ambassador: Center for Teaching Excellence, Rice University, 2025–2026

Graduate Ambassador: Doerr Institute for New Leaders, Rice University, 2025–2026

Columnist: *Sharif Daily*, Economy Page, 2013–2014

Editor-in-Chief: *Kimlik* Student Magazine, 2010–2012

Co-Founder and Vice President: Azerbaijani Students' Association, Sharif University, 2008–2012

Other Information and Skills

Certifications:

- Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning, Center for Teaching Excellence, Rice University (2026)
- Leadership Foundations Digital Badge, Doerr Institute for New Leaders, Rice University (2025)
- Udacity Nanodegrees in AI Programming, Marketing Analytics, Business Analytics, Digital Marketing
- Certificates in Statistics, Python, and R for Data Science and Machine Learning

Technical: Julia, Python, R, MATLAB, STATA, E-Views, SQL, LaTeX, HTML/CSS, Tableau, Spreadsheets

Languages: English (Fluent), Azerbaijani (Native), Persian (Native), Turkish (Fluent), Arabic (Basic)

References

Professor Jeremy Fox (Advisor), Department of Economics, Rice University, fox@rice.edu

Professor Arun Gopalakrishnan (Advisor), Jones Graduate School of Business, Rice University, agopala@rice.edu

Professor Yunmi Kong (Committee Member), Department of Economics, Rice University, Yunmi.Kong@rice.edu

Professor James Brown, Department of Economics, Rice University, Jim.Brown@rice.edu

Research Summary

Job Market Paper – “Influencer–Brand Partnerships: A Matching Approach”:

Influencer marketing is one of the fastest-growing areas of digital advertising, yet brands and platforms face two unresolved questions central to both practice and scholarship: (i) how do brands trade off between partnering with mega-influencers who offer scale versus micro- and nano-influencers who provide engagement and targeting precision, and (ii) how do platform allocation rules affect the efficiency of these matches? My job market paper provides the first empirical study to address these questions, using a large-scale dataset covering more than 11,000 campaigns, 22,000 listings, and 100,000 ads across six market segments defined by campaign type (CPM, Reach, Influence) and content format (Post or Story). The analysis reveals how brand preferences systematically vary across goals, budgets, and business categories, and how these preferences interact with platform allocation mechanisms.

The identification strategy builds on the pairwise stability framework of Fox and Bajari (2013), which requires that no two brands should both prefer to swap a single influencer between their assigned bundles. This revealed preference approach allows me to recover how brand preferences over influencer bundle characteristics—such as scale, engagement, and thematic focus—systematically vary with observed campaign goals, business categories, and budgets, all without observing the full choice set or latent influencer quality. The model accommodates asynchronous campaigns and non-exclusive, non-rival digital inventory, using a maximum score estimator to compare observed bundles with feasible one-for-one swaps. I extend the framework to incorporate posted influencer prices using a hedonic pricing equation and a control function approach, addressing price endogeneity under unilateral price posting rather than equilibrium transfers.

Estimation reveals distinct patterns in brand preferences across campaign goals and market segments: follower count is most valued in follower growth campaigns, while engagement intensity matters more for sales and lead generation. Brands consistently prefer bundles with greater thematic concentration in influencer page categories, especially as budgets increase, reflecting a shift toward targeting precision. The model fits brand-selected matches well but explains CPM assignments poorly, suggesting that the platform’s allocation in CPM campaigns is driven by objectives beyond short-term brand preferences—possibly promoting underbooked influencers or supporting long-term marketplace health. Counterfactual analysis shows that removing Micro and Nano influencer tiers in the Influence–Story market reduces brand welfare by up to 14%, with effects reaching 16–17% for follower growth and brand awareness campaigns. Allowing preference-based reallocations in CPM markets can increase match stability from 52% to 91% and raise predicted brand welfare by more than 69%, highlighting inefficiencies in current platform-assigned matching rules.

More broadly, this matching framework offers a scalable and flexible approach for empirical marketing settings where choices are made over bundles, the full consideration set is unobserved or very large, and transactional data are limited. The method is well-suited not only to influencer marketing, but also to digital marketplaces such as freelance platforms, professional service teams, and other contexts where traditional discrete choice models face scalability and identification challenges.

From Bids to Values: Estimating Sponsored-Link (GSP) Auctions with Modern Numerical Tools:

This project revisits bidding behavior in generalized second-price (GSP) auctions, which are widely used by platforms such as Google and Yahoo for sponsored search advertising. Earlier empirical work (e.g., Varian, 2007; Börgers et al., 2013) typically relied on complete information models, which fail to explain observed bidding patterns in real-world data. Motivated by these shortcomings, I adopt an incomplete information framework (Gomes and Sweeney, 2014; Mohri and Medina, 2015), in which bidders submit bids based on private values drawn from a known distribution. This approach transforms the estimation problem into a first-kind Volterra integral equation, which is inherently ill-posed and numerically unstable.

Using Yahoo (Overturn) ad auction data, I nonparametrically estimate bidder value distributions and examine optimal reserve price design—a key issue in platform auctions. To address the numerical challenges, I compare techniques from applied mathematics and machine learning, including spectral methods, Tikhonov regularization, and physics-informed neural networks (PINNs). This comparative analysis aims to identify stable, feasible methods for structural estimation in large-scale search auctions. More broadly, the project advances empirical testing of auction theory in digital advertising and demonstrates how modern numerical tools can help bridge theory and data in platform markets.

Research Summary (Works in Progress)

The Ads vs. Content Tradeoff in Influencer Marketing: Understanding Consumer Limits (with Arun Gopalakrishnan):

This project studies consumer utility and disutility from influencer advertising. While traditional theories of advertising utility (Becker & Murphy, 1993; Tellis, 1988) emphasize both complementarity and annoyance, the influencer setting is distinct: users voluntarily follow influencers, derive positive utility from organic content, and often see them as role models, which makes ads feel more like endorsements than interruptions. We design a two-stage randomized feed experiment. Stage 1 involves baseline surveys of demographics, influencer and page categories preferences, alongside recording organic and ad content from nominated influencers. Stage 2 (Fall 2025 & Spring 2026) exposes participants to simulated Instagram-style feeds with randomized ad loads and exposure types (favorite influencers, category-based feeds, or irrelevant pages). Outcomes include unfollowing behavior, dwell time, skips, and likes. This design allows us to quantify consumer limits on the ads–content ratio and how authenticity and role-model effects shape tolerance of influencer ads.

How Does ChatGPT Affect Cheating Among Undergraduate Economics and Business Students?:

This project explores ChatGPT as a potential cheating tool in economics and business courses. While many recent papers document ChatGPT's role in academic integrity, almost all rely on self-reported survey evidence, which is vulnerable to social desirability and underreporting biases—students may not truthfully admit to using ChatGPT when doing so violates integrity rules. I design a classroom experiment that circumvents these biases. Two sections of the same economics/business course, taught by the same instructor, are assigned exams with randomized versions: Version A contains questions ChatGPT answers correctly, while Version B contains questions it typically fails. One section takes the exam in-person under proctoring, while the other takes it at home with access to ChatGPT. A difference-in-differences design isolates the effect of ChatGPT on student performance, providing the first causal, behavioral evidence on its impact on cheating and academic integrity in economics and business education.