LYDIA ASHTON

Madison, WI | lydia.ashton@gmail.com | 804-4000-0396 | www.linkedin.com/in/lydia-ashton-phd

SUMMARY

- Behavioral and experimental economist with 18+ years of experience applying causal inference, machine learning, and experimental design to solve complex problems in consumer behavior, health outcomes, and public policy. A creative thinker who thrives on developing innovative, evidence-based solutions to real-world challenges.
- Conveyed findings to key stakeholders through policy reports and published peer-reviewed articles (cited over 700 times). Delivered dozens of presentations at national and international conferences, effectively translating data-driven insights for diverse audiences.
- Directed cross-functional research projects, securing over $550K in competitive grants and establishing strategic partnerships across academia, industry (e.g., telehealth), and government.
- Dedicated educator and mentor, who has delivered $3M+ in instructional services to 2,000+ students and supported the growth of over 30 researchers through training, supervision, and career development in data analysis, experimental methods, and applied econometrics.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Wisconsin-Madison   Madison, WI
Assistant Professor (Principal Research Scientist)   Jul 2017 – Present
- Led cross-functional teams conducting high-impact research on federal program design, user experience, and the effects of information complexity and behavioral biases on decision-making.
- Spearheading industry collaborations, negotiating Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) and Data Transfer and Use Agreements (DTUAs), and securing Internal Review Board (IRB) approval for research involving protected health data from an app-based telehealth provider.
- Directed a research team to collect and analyze 150K+ online forum posts using natural language processing (NLP) and quantitative ethnography to extract insights. Provided stakeholders with actionable recommendations to improve the Social Security Disability Insurance user experience.
- Developed and implemented outreach initiatives that increased new hires eightfold, including creating a weekly workshop to support program growth, build community, and enhance professional development and public speaking skills.
- Delivered $2M+ in instructional services to 1,500+ students, revamping a microeconomics course to improve engagement and evaluation scores by 70% and launching a graduate seminar in behavioral economics, doubling capacity within two years to meet growing demand.

Postdoctoral Research Fellow (Research Scientist)   Jan 2015 – Jun 2017
- Integrated and analyzed large-scale administrative and private datasets, delivering actionable insights to federal agencies on the economic impact of foodborne illnesses.
- Designed and executed field experiments for a nonprofit, evaluating incentive strategies to promote healthier food choices among students in school lunchrooms, resulting in evidence-based recommendations for policy and program improvements.

Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA)   Berkeley, CA
Research Assistant (Policy and Behavioral Research Consultant)   Jul 2013 – Dec 2013
- Developed a framework to integrate behavioral economics into reproductive health interventions to improve outcomes, guide research efforts, and influence global policy.
- Synthesized evidence from field experiments and produced a comprehensive report to deliver actionable insights on family planning and maternal health services through behavioral economics.

National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)   Mexico City, Mexico
Research Assistant (Project Oversight Specialist)   Jun 2010 – Aug 2010
- Streamlined operations for a $1M-funded field experiment, optimizing recruitment and data quality processes to boost survey completion rates by 500% and improve data accuracy in a large-scale study (10,000 participants) in Mexico City.

University of California, Berkeley   Berkeley, CA
Graduate Researcher (Senior Research Associate)   Jul 2008 – Dec 2014
- Designed and led large-scale experiments examining the impact of hunger and fatigue on decision-making. Managed all phases of the research lifecycle, designing and piloting experiments, collecting and analyzing data (600+ participants), and presenting findings to stakeholders.
- Led data-driven quantitative analysis of consumer behavior using scanner data and developed visualizations and reports to deliver valuable insights to national grocery store chain executives.
- Provided technical support for junior researchers, resolving coding challenges in MATLAB and Stata and improving their data analysis and econometrics modeling proficiency.
- Managed operations for a 500+ student Microeconomics course and facilitated discussions for a 120+ student Behavioral Economics course, coordinating instructional teams and simplifying complex concepts to enhance learning outcomes.

Yale University   New Haven, CT
Research Associate   May 2007 – Jun 2008
- Analyzed large-scale datasets, including administrative records for 40M+ pension holders and grocery scanner data, to generate insights on consumer behavior and economic trends.
- Directed operations for an international study, managing survey design and translation, recruitment and training of researchers, and data collection (750+ surveys in three days), contributing to a report that secured $1M+ in NIH funding.

EDUCATION
University of California, Berkeley, *PhD, Agricultural and Resource Economics*   2015
Universidad de Monterrey, *BS, Economics*   2006

SKILLS
Programming & Data Analysis: R, Stata, MATLAB, SQL, Python
Causal Inference & Econometrics: Difference-in-Differences, Instrumental Variables, Regression Analysis
Machine Learning & Predictive Modeling: Classification, Logistic Regression, Factor Analysis
Experimental Design & Research Methods: Survey Development, A/B Testing, Randomized Controlled Trials, Quantitative Ethnography
Statistical Techniques: Hypothesis Testing (ANOVA, t-tests), Statistical Analysis

LANGUAGES
English (fluent**), Spanish (**native**)**