Personal Statement
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With over 10 years of analytic experiences spanning across social research, digital marketing and business intelligence, I am still relatively new to the "Big Data" technology and the field of data science per se. From tracking data, building data pipeline, storing data, carrying out ETL (extract-transform-load) to streamlining, creating reporting solution, visualizing data in BI (business intelligence) tools, training offline models in R, productizing models and scaling up models' results in real time applications, I have been involved and familiar with majority of these processes. However, I only learn data science from scratch and often times I execute a process without fully understanding the logic or theory behind it. I dream of becoming a fully-capable data scientist in the future, where I can thoroughly understand and carry out each of the above processes effortlessly.

I graduated from college with an honor degree in psychology about 12 years ago. Back in 2006, I dreamed of becoming a social experimental psychologist. I spent the following six years in doing academic research and getting a master degree in psychology. Instead of spending additional five or more years in pursuing a PhD and a post-doc, I transferred my skill sets and passion into marketing research/digital marketing, i.e. I decided to join a global ecommerce company to do marketing research, e.g. managing an international consumer panel. Technology could be disruptive and inevitably changed how research and business models worked. For example, I used to collect hundreds of data point by hand (literally asking people to fill out survey and then inserting answers in Excel or SPSS); in my new research role, I slowly learned to manage million rows of customer data in BI applications (e.g. Pentaho, QlikView). I became increasingly fascinated by data and recognized its importance to a company as significant as oil or any source of energy to revolutionize a society.

After spending more than two years in digital marketing, I moved toward the engineering and analytic side of business. I joined the business intelligence (BI) team and I learned tremendously about BI and data infrastructure in the following two and a half years. From collecting and analyzing small data sets in Excel or SPSS, to conducting business analytic in R, building a customer fact table (using SQL) and subsequently connecting it to a dashboard (Looker), I steadily made my transition from a social scientist to a data "person". I found myself very interested in data science; however, I was still only a beginner in the field and there were many subjects waiting for me to learn and explore.

As a result, I decided to explore career opportunities in data science and I joined the data science and insights team within media from Bloomberg LP in April 2017. I have been learning greatly about the field and practicing data science by mainly focusing on managing the Bloomberg audience segments through first- and third-party data. My day-to-day experiences involve extensive use of R language and building Naive Bayes models in Apache Hive, Amazon S3 and Google Big Query. Although I enjoy and learn from my work, I am also increasingly frustrated by not having a solid foundation in the field. The frustration is come from my difficulty in connecting all the dots together to form a big picture of the entire process.

Therefore, I finally decide to apply for this wonderful CUNY master program in order to advance my knowledge as well as my career. Knowing how to write and execute R or hive scripts is not enough to be qualified as a data scientist. My goal is to connect dots together to paint a "Big Data" picture. The technology landscape is changing fast and data science is unquestionably the most in-demand profession in the next decade. I am looking forward to fully integrating my personal experiences and data science together in order to becoming fully-capable of handling the "Big Data" challenge and excitement ahead of us.