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Research Statement

I work in household finance, studying how attention, memory, and information choice shape investment decisions. When does access to more information lead to better investments? This question runs through my research on retail trading, financial information, and AI. Information is costly and attention is limited (Grossman and Stiglitz 1980; Sims 2003). Digital tools change those costs, but their value depends on what people investigate, what brings them back, and how they act. I study these decisions together to explain how information becomes demand and when it improves household financial outcomes.

My research follows investors from their first interest in a stock through learning, purchase, and sale. I built it on proprietary data from a research collaboration that I initiated in 2023 and run independently with a large Chinese online trading platform. The trading records let me follow the same person from first interest, through the news articles they read, to what they buy and sell. Following one person through all these steps lets me connect information choice to investment outcomes, which are usually studied separately. As the platform changes how people find information and act on it, the collaboration keeps opening new questions.

ATTENTION, MEMORY, AND RETAIL DEMAND

What role does stock following play in retail investing? My solo-authored job market paper, **The Watchlist Trap: Stored Attention and Recalled Rallies**, starts from the natural prior of deliberation. Following a stock gives an investor time to learn before committing money, so it should lead to a better purchase. Information-choice models, such as Van Nieuwerburgh and Veldkamp (2010), give this prior economic content: investors learn about assets they expect to hold. Reference dependence offers a rival account. Prices encountered while following a stock can become benchmarks against which the investor judges a purchase. I bring these accounts to records that connect the start of an investor's interest to the eventual investment.

I link dated, priced watchlist additions, news readings, and first purchases on a large Chinese online trading platform. I compare *warm* purchases, of stocks watchlisted on an earlier day, with the same investors' *cold* purchases, of stocks never watchlisted or added on the purchase day. Instead of outperforming, warm purchases *underperform* cold purchases by 213 bps over 180 trading days, Chinese four-factor-adjusted. The gap concentrates in stocks added on a *limit-up close*, when a stock closes at China's daily upper price limit: these purchases underperform by 681 bps under the same adjustment and horizon. For additions on other days, no return difference is detected.

Even after holding investors' established buying patterns fixed, purchases made after a longer wait still underperform. Yet neither deliberation, measured by opening stock-related news articles, nor reference dependence, measured through the addition price and subsequent highest and lowest closing prices, accounts for the gap. This is the trap: an opportunity to deliberate does not translate into better purchases. The distinction matters for household welfare. Following a stock and reading about it can look like informed participation; the purchase outcome gives a different assessment of that engagement.

Beyond these alternatives, the event that first drew an investor's attention matters for the later choice. Investors choosing among their watchlisted stocks favor a stock after a new limit-up close more strongly when they added it on a limit-up close. This pattern is consistent with

similarity-based recall, in which a present event brings similar past experiences to mind, as in Bordalo, Gennaioli, and Shleifer (2020) and Wachter and Kahana (2024). Separately, the return gap after a longer wait concentrates in purchases following a new limit-up close. The evidence connects the occasion of the original interest to subsequent demand. It puts information choice, reference dependence, and memory models against the same sequence of observed decisions: what investors read, what they buy, and what the purchases earn.

The paper establishes a new fact about retail demand: an investor's history of attention to a stock matters for what the investor buys and what those purchases earn. A rally today can reactivate demand formed at an earlier rally. This changes how attention-driven buying should be read in asset pricing: price pressure can reflect earlier encounters as well as current news. For firms, a salient event can attract retail followers whose demand returns at the next similar event. For platform design, the question becomes what prompts a productive reconsideration of an earlier interest. A tool that keeps a stock within reach also preserves a link between encounters. Evaluating that tool requires following the investor from initial interest through the decision to commit money. Watchlists are on every retail trading app, so the trap is not specific to China. The paper will be presented at the 2027 AFA Annual Meeting, PhD Student Poster Session.

INFORMATION ACQUISITION AND TRADING

Once an investor owns a stock, information must compete with the discomfort of realizing a loss. In **Does Information Reduce the Disposition Effect? Attention, Mobile Push, and Selling at a Loss**, with L. Huang and M. Massa, we ask when learning improves selling decisions. Investors acquire less information about losing positions. After a stock-page visit, the gap between their willingness to sell winners and losers is eight times as large as without a visit. Seeking information goes with a stronger disposition effect, the tendency to sell winners and retain losers.

Yet self-sought information also accompanies better selection among winning positions: the winners investors keep subsequently outperform those they sell by much more after a visit. Pushed news messages strengthen reluctance to realize losses without improving sale selection. The contribution is to separate willingness to realize a loss from the choice of what to sell. Information can reinforce the former bias while improving the latter decision. For disclosure research, the route to the investor matters: seeking information and receiving a pushed news message accompany different sale-selection outcomes. For platforms, engagement and investment quality are distinct objectives.

Does seeing that others have read a news article make investigating it more valuable, or signal that the opportunity has passed? My solo project **Push to Read and Trade** asks whether information acquisition is a strategic complement: others' learning raises the value of my own learning (Hellwig and Veldkamp 2009). News articles display counts of prior readers. I compare early and later readers' subsequent research and trading to study the tension between shared attention and a crowded opportunity. The project builds on my AFA 2025 poster. It will establish how reading order relates to further investigation and trading, addressing when a crowd draws investors into learning and when it discourages them.

AI AS AN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

An AI assistant can make information easier to obtain while changing what investors choose to read for themselves. In my solo project **Trading on the Chatbot's Clock**, presented in the FMA 2026 New Ideas Session, I ask how conventional news consumption and trading evolve around replacement of the model behind a platform's AI assistant. Account-level records connect assistant activity, news reading, and trades. I follow changes within accounts as well as differences across users. The project will establish how use of an interactive information source relates to investors' broader information diets and investment decisions. Platform features and

AI assistants are the information technology households now use; observing their use at account level makes these choices accessible to research.

The same tension extends to professionals. Machine forecasts should improve judgment, yet analysts with access produce less accurate forecasts. In **Do Machines Help Analysts? Evidence from AI-Augmented Equity Forecasts**, with B. Charoenwong, X. Kang, and X. Zhao, we study the forecasts analysts themselves produce alongside access to machine forecasts. The result makes the integration of machine output into professional judgment central to the value of AI assistance and to the quality of information reaching markets.

Disclosure introduces a further choice: producers decide whether audiences know they used AI. In **The Selection Behind the Penalty: Strategic and Mandatory AI Disclosure in Music Streaming**, with X. Kang, Y. Tan, W. Niu, and L. Huang, concealed AI songs attract roughly three times as many plays as the same artists' credited songs. A shift to mandatory disclosure separates artists' labeling choices from listeners' response. The mandate reveals a much smaller penalty, about five percent of plays, concentrated in discovery and borne mainly by less established artists. What looks like audience rejection largely reflects producers' disclosure choices. The paper received the Best Junior Faculty Paper award at the 2026 AI in Business Conference at Ohio State's Fisher College of Business. Together, the analyst and disclosure papers connect my information agenda to accounting questions about information production, credibility, and use.

RESEARCH AGENDA

Over the next five years, I will study how households allocate attention as financial information becomes cheaper, more personalized, and more interactive. My existing data relationships support three connected directions: how reminders change the return to an earlier interest, how other investors' learning enters information choice, and how AI assistance changes the information behind a trade. I plan to test designs that ask investors to revisit their reasons for following a stock after a later rally. I will extend the readership project to examine how shared attention relates to the incorporation of news into prices, and the chatbot project to compare information use under different forms of assistance. These questions move from documenting investment choices to evaluating designs that can improve them.

My work also asks how financial stakes themselves redirect attention. **When Consumers Become Investors (Investomers): Ownership Effects in Music Royalty Markets**, with L. Huang, X. Kang, and Y. Tan, shows that winning a music-royalty auction increases listening to the owned song and related songs. My published paper **Clientele Effect in Sovereign Bonds: Evidence from Islamic *Sukuk* Bonds in Malaysia**, with J. Cherian, Z. Li, Y. Shao, and M. G. Subrahmanyam, examines how investor clienteles shape sovereign yields. These papers connect preferences and ownership to the demand side of markets. My research on AI and investor information is supported by the Mirjam Staub-Bisang Research Fund. A new collaboration with a Chinese fintech firm whose AI research assistant serves institutional investors extends the agenda to how buy-side and sell-side analysts use the assistant and what it changes in their forecasts and recommendations.