

Zihan Hu

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University, 2017-present

Master (by Research), Economics, National University of Singapore, 2014-2017.

A.B., Economics, Peking University, 2009-2014.

RESEARCH FIELDS

Labor Economics in developing countries

AWARDS AND GRANTS

Sadov Graduate Student Fellowship, College of Arts and Sciences, Cornell University, 2021

Excellence in Research Fellowship, Department of Economics, Cornell University, 2021

Tapan Mitra Economics Prize for 3rd-year paper, Department of Economics, Cornell University, 2020

Red Wilson Excellence in Economics Medal, Department of Economics, Cornell University, 2019

Small Grants in Labor Economics, Department of Economics, Cornell University, 2019

Gregory Chow Best Paper Award, Chinese Economists Society, 2018

PUBLICATIONS

Hu, Z., & Li, T. (2019). Too hot to handle: The effects of high temperatures during pregnancy on adult welfare outcomes. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, 94, 236-253.

WORKING PAPERS

How Competition Shapes Peer Effects: Evidence from a University in China (with Siyu Chen)

Abstract: Competition is widely used to motivate effort and increase performance. However, in many domains, performance is aided by cooperation between agents in addition to their own efforts. In this case, competition may impose costs on helping each other since the chance of winning is decreasing in the success of peers. Education is a natural setting where peer interactions and help from others enhance individual performance. This paper examines how competition changes peer effects and peer interactions using administrative data from a university in China. Exploiting randomly assigned roommates, we find that high ability students have detrimental effects on the performance of their high ability roommates. More importantly, this negative peer effect increases significantly along various dimensions of competition intensity within a dorm room. The follow-up survey we conduct reveals that this is likely driven by competition discouraging help and interactions among roommates.

Presentation: SOLE (2021); AAFP (2021); NEUDC (2020); CES North American (2020); Beijing Normal University (2019)

Nutrition, Labor Supply, and Productivity: Evidence from Ramadan in Indonesia (with Zhiwen Wang)

Abstract: This paper studies the short-term effects of nutrition deficiency on labor supply and productivity. Using high-frequency administrative data from a retail chain in Indonesia, we exploit the nutrition shock induced by Ramadan fasting among Muslim salespersons, a non-physically demanding occupation. Based on an event study approach and comparing Muslim and non-Muslim salespersons, we show immediate, adverse effects of nutrition deficiency on labor supply and productivity. Specifically, we find a 30% decrease in productivity for Muslim salespersons during the two hours before sunset, when they experience the most energy deficiency. Their productivity recovers immediately after sunset, when they can break their fast. They leave work 32 minutes earlier during the hours of greatest energy deficiency. These effects are in line with the nutrition mechanism and are not likely driven by major competing explanations such as demand shocks, fast-breaking events, dehydration, and sleep deprivation.

Presentation: AEA (2021); AASLE, Singapore (2019); NEUDC, Chicago (2019); WEA, San Francisco (2019); ASHEcon, D.C. (2019); WEA International, Tokyo (2019); Cornell Health Economics Seminar (2019); Peking University (2019); Beijing Normal University (2018)

WORK IN PROGRESS

Why Her? The Morale and Incentive Effects of the "Unfair" Promotion (with Zhiwen Wang)

Technology Adoption, Land Market, and Structural Transformation: Evidence from China (with Peng Wang)

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS EXPERIENCES

2018.6 - 2021.1, Professor Michael Lovenheim and Professor Nicholas Sanders

2014-2017, Professor Jessica Pan

2015-2017, Professor Davin Chor

2012-2015, Professor Yuyu Chen

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

2016.6-2016.8, Statistics, Part-time Instructor for MBA

2013.2-2014.1, Econometrics, TA for Professor Qingjie Xia

2012.9-2013.1, Topics on Development Economics, TA for Professor Pengfei Zhang