

Research Statement

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My primary field of interest is labor economics. In addition to this, my current research also extends to the fields of applied econometrics, development and education. Two essays in my dissertation focus on the impact of differences in firm or worker behavior on labor market outcomes. The third essay lies in the field of education and development. Below is a description of the three papers I am currently working on and a brief overview of my future plan of research.

Does Internet Job Search Result in Better Matches? (*Job-Market Paper*)

The first chapter in my dissertation investigates the effect of internet job search on the quality of job matches. The advent of internet has had huge impacts on the way in which information is disseminated. Both employers and workers have much more information than what was available earlier. This internet induced information efficiency suggests that the quality of job matches should improve. Drawing from past research, the paper uses job duration as a proxy for job match quality. Applying the Meyer (1990) proportional hazard model, I find that exit rates from employment are approximately 28% lower for workers who used the internet as a job search tool. I also implement the Hausman and Woutersen (2014) proportional hazard model to further investigate job match quality. This newer methodology relaxes the distribution assumption imposed by the Meyer (1990) paper, while allowing for discrete durations and time-variant controls. Employing the pattern-search algorithm from Matlab, exit rate from employment is estimated to be approximately 18% lower for workers who used the internet as a job search tool. Multiple robustness tests indicate consistency of estimates across different specifications.

Scarring Effects of Unemployment - A Quantile Approach

The second chapter of my dissertation focuses on the lower wages received by workers who faced a recent spell of unemployment. Using the panel structure of the Current Population Survey (CPS) data, I estimate this difference between workers who were previously unemployed and workers who have not had a recent spell of unemployment. The paper employs the Machado and Mata (2005) quantile decomposition technique to decompose the wage difference between the two groups of workers. This decomposition is in the spirit of the Oaxaca-Blinder (1973) technique, except that, rather than identifying the sources of the differences at the means of two distributions, they are now identified at each quantile. Results indicate that

for male workers, almost the entire wage difference in the higher quantiles (beyond the 60th quantile), cannot be explained using observable characteristics.

Primary School Enrollment in India

The third chapter of my dissertation is a joint paper with Rishabh Sinha (ASU). Using large sample extensive data from the Indian Household Development Survey on household income and resources, child health and cognitive ability, school availability and quality, we intend to isolate the relative importance of the different factors governing low levels of primary school enrollment. For example, one area of interest is to find if borrowing constraints are an important factor affecting school enrollment in India. We plan to develop a structural model, which would also allow for policy analysis.

Future Research

My future research is focused on extending the scope of my current analyses. The positive impact of the internet on job match quality has significant implications on the frictional employment rate of an economy. This is especially true for rural areas and developing economies, where internet is not easily available. Hence, one of the key areas of research is to investigate the effect of improved search introduced by the internet on the overall unemployment rate in an economy. This study has some major policy implications, as a negative relation between internet job search and unemployment, would call for government intervention in providing internet access to remote areas.

Additionally, I am also interested in extending the school enrollment paper. The current paper is more of an investigation into the various elements, which lead to low levels of primary school enrollment. Using the factors discovered in the current paper, the next analysis would focus on the resulting policy impacts and investigate the role of the government in resolving some of these concerns.

References

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