

XIN ZHANG

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I am a PhD student in Economics recently graduated from Monash University. My research interests focus on studying the relationship between social network and various education policies such as private tutoring and early childhood intervention. During my research career, I developed analytical skills in providing rigorous analysis and identify causal effects of educational policies using large scale field experiments. I also worked as a research and teaching assistant for Monash Center and Monash Business School. I am responsible for assisting running large scale RCTs related to education interventions; Merging and cleaning primary data from field experiments; Conducting quantitative research using various softwares such as Stata, Matlab and R.

Research Interest

- Policy implications of education interventions · Social Network analysis · Cross sectional and panel data analysis · Longitude, Time series and Fixed effects · Causal inference in Applied Economics

EDUCATION

Monash University

2017-2021

Ph.D. in Economics

Research area: Spillovers in education policy, Effect of education interventions

Thesis title: The Effect of Social Network in Economic Activities using Field Experiments

Overall WAM: High Distinction(89/100)

Monash University

2016-2017

Honours in Economics

Research area: Applied Economics in education, Network Economics

Overall WAM: High Distinction (82/100)

University of Melbourne

2014-2016

Master of Finance

Specialization: Derivatives, Diversified Portfolio Investment, Project Evaluation

Monash University

2011-2014

Bachelor of Economics and Econometrics

Specialization: Data Modelling, Longitude and Time series analysis

WORKING PAPERS

Centrality-Based Spillover Effects (w/Asad Islam, Michael Vlassopoulos, Yves Zenou)

Abstract: One neglected aspect of the large literature on spillover and peer effects in education is the role of the social network structure in which students are embedded within schools. In this paper, we report the findings of a two-year field experiment in primary schools in rural Bangladesh that investigates this issue. Our findings indicate large gains in terms of cognitive and non-cognitive skills for treated students and more importantly for their untreated classmates. We then show that the gains for untreated students are larger when their treated classmates are more central, which provides first causal evidence that network structure is important for educational spillovers, and suggesting that targeting central students can be a cost-effective way to introduce early childhood interventions.

The Value of Information in Technology Adoption (w/Asad Islam, Phillip Ushchhev, Yves Zenou, Vox Column)

- Abstract: Adoption of new tecWe develop a theoretical model in which technology adoption decisions are based on the information received from others about the quality of a new technology and on their risk attitudes. We test the predictions of this model using a randomized field experiment in Bangladesh. We show that the share of treated farmers who receive better training in System of Rice Intensification (SRI) technology have a high positive impact on the adoption rate of untreated farmers. We also find that untreated farmers who are more risk-averse tend to adopt the technology less and are less influenced by their treated peers. Our results thus indicate that spillover effects are important in technology adoption and that information transmission about the quality of the technology matters.

The Role of Peers in Education

- Abstract: We use a large scale field experiment to provide private tutoring and home visits to randomly selected students. We examine how the educational outcomes (both in terms of cognitive and non-cognitive skills) of treated students affect that of untreated students. We find that being exposed to treated peers in the same classroom creates positive peer effects on untreated students. An increase in one standard deviation of treated students' test score (English or Math) is associated with a 0.1 to 0.4 increase of a standard deviation of an untreated student's test score. Similar results are found for non-cognitive skills. We also show that peer effects do not operate through students education effort and are stronger between friends.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Monash University

2018-2021

Research Assistant

Monash Centre for Development Economics and Sustainability

- Private tutoring intervention
- Early childhood intervention and parental involvement
- Innovative financial interventions to disadvantaged women

Monash University

2018-2020

Teaching Associate

Monash Business School

- Advanced Network Economics & Intermediate Microeconomics & Macroeconomics
- Awarded a purple letter for being the best tutor in Monash Business School

Monash University

2017- 2018

Research Assistant

Monash Business School

- Proficiency in STATA, SPSS, Matlab, R and Eviews
- Proficiency in L^AT_EX and Lyx

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Australasian Development Economics Workshop, 2021 (Australian National University.)

Conference on Randomized Controlled Trials [Poster presentation]: Awarded **Best Poster**' prize

South Asia Business and Economic Workshop (South Asia Research Network &Centre for Development Economics and Sustainability)

Monash University **PhD Seminar**, Applied Young Economist Webinar

HONORS, AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Awarded '**Best Poster Prize**' the paper 'The Value of Information in Technology Adoption' at Conference on Randomized Controlled Trials, Monash University

Unit Prize of being the best student for BEX5660 (**Macroeconomic Theory**), Monash Business School Awards Night, Monash University

Awarded Purple Letter being the best tutor, Monash Business School, Monash University

Dean's Honor List (for being top 2% students), Monash Business School Awards Night, Monash University

Monash International Postgraduate Research Scholarship; Monash Department Scholarship

TECHNICAL SKILLS

STATA, R, SPSS, MATLAB, Eviews, L^AT_EX, Excel

REREFERENCES

Professor Asad Islam: Department of Economics, Monash University.

Email: Asad.Islam@monash.edu

Professor Yves Zenou: Richard Snape Chair in Business and Economics, Monash University

Email: Yves.Zenou@monash.edu

Asso Prof. Arthur Campbell: Department of Economics, Monash University

Email: Arthur.Campbell@monash.edu