






# Mengying Peng

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 in [Mengying Peng](#)

## Education

<b>Ph.D. Candidate</b> , Economics	2021 - 2025 (Expected)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Hitotsubashi University</b></li> <li>Fields: <i>Applied Microeconomics, Development Economics, Economics of Education</i></li> </ul>	Tokyo, Japan
<b>Visiting Ph.D. Student</b> , MLF Teachers College	2023 - 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Arizona State University</b></li> </ul>	Tempe, AZ, USA
<b>M.A.</b> , Economics	2019 - 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Hitotsubashi University</b></li> </ul>	Tokyo, Japan
<b>BAdmin</b> , Accounting	2011 - 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Hunan University</b></li> </ul>	Changsha, China

## Grants and Awards

<b>Equity &amp; Inclusion Student Fellowship</b> , APPAM	2024
<b>Hitotsubashi International Fellow Program - Outbound</b> , Hitotsubashi University	2023 & 2024
<b>Student Travel Grant Award</b> , AEFP	2023 & 2024
<b>Travel Grant</b> , CSWEP Mentoring Workshop by AEA	2023

## Scholarship

<b>Scholarship for Graduate Students Studying Abroad</b> , Hitotsubashi University	September 2023 - May 2024
<b>Education Finance and Policy Outstanding Young Scholars Program Scholarship</b> , Peking University	2023

## Working Papers

**Peer Effects on College Choice: Evidence from Affirmative Action in China** (*Job Market Paper*) with Xiaoyang Ye (Amazon) [[Slides](#)]

**Abstract:** Affirmative action, implemented in higher education across many countries, aims to promote equal opportunity and improve the representation of underrepresented groups. This paper investigates causal evidence on the influence of peers on student participation in an affirmative action program - the Ethnic Minority Preparatory Classes (EMPC) for college - specifically targets ethnic minority students in China. Utilizing China's unique centralized admissions system and student-level administrative data from one of the poorest provinces, we employ a difference-in-differences framework to estimate the impact of peer success on college admissions. We define peers as ethnic minority students from the same school and registered residence who graduated in the previous year. Our findings show that successful college admissions of peers through affirmative action programs lead to a 2.49% increase in admissions for potential ethnic minority applicants. Additionally, male students and those in a non-STEM track benefit more, with admissions to the program increasing by 3.1% for both groups. Potential applicants whose national college entrance exam scores meet the tier 1 college application threshold experience an even greater influence from peers. These results highlight the substantial impact of peer networks in shaping higher education outcomes for disadvantaged groups and provide insights for enhancing the engagement of underrepresented communities in public programs.

**Unintended Consequences of Affirmative Action in Higher Education: Evidence from India** [[Slides](#)]

**Abstract:** While Affirmative action in India has predominantly addressed caste-based disparities, the specific impacts on "Other Backward Classes" (OBC) in higher education remain underexplored. This study examines the state-level implementation of reservation policies — quotas in higher education institutions — for the OBC population. It examines how these policies affect higher education attainment among the OBC, with a particular focus on gender differences. Using

a triple-difference strategy with data from the National Sample Survey of India, I find that state-level policies do not significantly improve the higher education attainment for the OBC, regardless of gender. Specifically, the event study shows an initial decrease in higher education attainment for OBC females, while no substantial shift is observed for OBC males. Further analysis highlights that reservation policies may benefit females from financially better-off families or those with highly educated household heads. These findings suggest social norms favoring sons in India may hinder educational opportunities for girls in resource-constrained households.

**From Classroom to Harvest: The Effect of Agricultural Price Shocks on Child Labor in China** with Jingcheng Jiang (Hitotsubashi University) [Poster]

**Abstract:** How do price shocks impact early-life human capital investments and subsequently influence child labor? Using county-level data and a shift-share approach, we answer this question by analyzing positive price shocks to 18 major crops, categorized by skill intensity for cultivation, and their effects on middle school enrollment as a proxy for child labor. Our results suggest that when international prices increase for crops requiring low to medium skills, school enrollment decreases, suggesting more children are being drawn into labor. In contrast, price increases for high-skilled crops do not affect school enrollment. A similar pattern was found in teacher numbers, corresponding to shifts in educational demand. Furthermore, heterogeneous analyses suggest that younger children are less affected by positive price shocks to low- and medium-skilled crops, possibly due to either the perceived necessity of basic education or the lower productivity of younger children in farm work. Regional heterogeneity suggests that counties with greater exposure to trade and transportation experience more significant effects from positive price shocks. In contrast, counties with higher agricultural automation face less disruption from positive shocks to low- and medium-skilled crops. Additionally, these counties may even see increased school enrollment under positive shocks to high-skilled crops associated with advanced technologies. Overall, we emphasize the role of crop skill intensity in shaping human capital investment dynamics in developing countries.

**Bridging the Gaps: How Teacher Diversity Shapes Student Achievement** with Margarita Pivovarova (ASU) [Poster]

**Abstract:** Raising the educational achievement of minority students and reducing racial/ethnic disparities remain critical challenges in education policy. This study explores the relationship between teacher racial and ethnic diversity and student performance on standardized tests, utilizing statewide data from Arizona public schools and employing fixed-effects models. The findings show that a higher proportion of non-White teachers is positively associated with improved student outcomes across mathematics, reading, writing, and science assessments. Specifically, a one percentage point increase in the share of minority teachers corresponds to a 4.36% improvement in mathematics scores and a 5% improvement in writing scores. In contrast, a higher proportion of White teachers is linked to lower student performance. Among minority teacher groups, Hispanic teachers exhibit a particularly significant positive effect on student achievement.

## Works in Progress

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**When Ramadan Meets the College Entrance Exam: The Effects on Student Outcomes in China** with Xiaoyang Ye

- DID results show that Ramadan has a strong negative effect on Muslim students' scores in the National College Entrance Exams

**Decision-Making in High School Subject Selection for the New College Entrance Exam: Experimental Evidence from China** with Xin Li (East China Normal University)

- Survey design completed and will be distributed soon

**Household Head Education and Children's Outcomes: A Cross-National Analysis** with Margarita Pivovarova  
**Gender and High School Track Choice in China** with Maria Paola Ugalde Araya (LSU), Xin Li and Xiaoyang Ye

## Presentations

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**2025:** AERA 2025 (Scheduled), AEA/ASSA 2025 (Poster, Scheduled)

**2024:** AASLE 2024 (Scheduled), SEA 2024 (Washington DC, USA), Workshop on Empirical Research in Developing Countries (Hitotsubashi U), AERA 2024 (Poster, Philadelphia, USA), 2024 CES North America (Lewisburg, USA), AEFPP 2024 (Poster, Baltimore, USA)

**2023:** APPAM 2023 (Atlanta, USA), AEFPP 2023 (Denver, USA)

**2022:** AASLE 2022 (Tokyo, Japan), Peking U (Poster, Online), Xiangjiang Forum 2022 at Hunan U (Online)

## Relevant Experience

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### Research Assistant, Hitotsubashi University

- For Prof. **Takashi Kurosaki** February - March 2021 & December 2023 - January 2024
- For Prof. **Nobuhiko Nakazawa** April 2022 - August 2023
- For Prof. **Meradee Tangvatcharapong** March & October 2022

### Teaching Assistant, Hitotsubashi University

- For Prof. **Nobuhiko Nakazawa** September 2021 - January 2022  
- Course: *Introductory Microeconomics* (181 undergraduates)

## Service

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**Conference Session chair:** SEA (2024), AASLE (2022)

**Conference Discussant:** CES (2024), APPAM (2023), Xiangjiang Forum (2022)

**Conference Reviewer:** AERA

**Journal Referee:** Research in Higher Education

## Software and Programming

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Stata,  $\LaTeX$ , Python, R

## Language

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English, Japanese, Chinese (Native), French (Basic)

## References

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[Takashi Kurosaki](#) (Supervisor)  
Professor  
IER, Hitotsubashi University

[Nobuhiko Nakazawa](#)  
Associate Professor  
Graduate School of Economics, Hitotsubashi University

[Margarita Pivovarova](#)  
Associate Professor & Associate Director  
MLF Teachers College, Arizona State University

[Xiaoyang Ye](#)  
Economist  
PXT Central Science, Amazon