Statement of Purpose

My name is Jiayi Xue, a student majoring in Economics at Renmin University of China. I am eager to pursue MA in Economics Department at Harvard University to deepen my understanding of economic policy evaluation, behavioral economics, and development economics.

My research explores how rural e-commerce affects household economic resilience, motivated by China's "E-Commerce in Rural Areas" policy. To quantify resilience, I constructed an index using the entropy-weighted TOPSIS method, incorporating cultural and social factors such as interpersonal gift exchange and social identity. To analyze the impact of e-commerce participation, I employed a mixed-path analysis framework, identifying key mechanisms through which e-commerce training programs enhance resilience. Specifically, I found that training participation facilitates non-agricultural employment, which diversifies income sources and strengthens households' ability to withstand financial shocks. This project was awarded a national-level grant under China's 2024 College Student Innovation Experimental Program.

My academic journey has led me to develop a strong interest in the intersection of economics and social structures. As an exchange student at the University of California, Davis, I took a public finance course with Professor Monica Singhal, whose research adopts an interdisciplinary approach to studying how social norms and cultural influences shape individual economic behavior. I was particularly inspired by her work *Social Policy Instruments and the Compliance Environment*, which demonstrates that social recognition remains a significant factor in shaping compliance behavior, even in low-enforcement environments. This finding diverges from traditional game-theoretic predictions and deepened my appreciation for experimental economic analysis. Engaging with Professor Singhal's work further solidified my aspiration to pursue advanced studies in economics.

Through these experiences, I have come to appreciate that economic theories gain their strongest applicability and predictive power when combined with rigorous empirical methods, particularly statistical and econometric tools. At Harvard University, I seek to receive systematic academic training that will equip me with the analytical skills necessary to evaluate policy interventions and understand economic behavior in complex social settings. I look forward to engaging with distinguished faculty and peers in an intellectually stimulating environment that will broaden my research perspective and prepare me for future academic or policy-oriented endeavors.