YUJUAN GAO

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

- Economist and data scientist with experience presenting research at academic conferences and collaborating with international teams across China, Nigeria, and the United States.

- Skilled in causal inference and machine learning methods, with experience analyzing large-scale datasets (80,000+ records) and managing randomized controlled trials across 130+ schools to inform policy decisions.

SKILLS

Programming: Python, R, ArcGIS, Stata, TensorFlow, PyTorch, scikit-learn, GitHub, LaTeX
Packages: EconML, AutoGluon, Causal ML
Research Methods: Causal Inference, Machine Learning, Randomized Controlled Trials, Difference-in-Differences, Instrumental Variables, Geospatial Analysis

EDUCATION

University of Florida, Food and Resource Economics Department   *August 2021 – Present*
Ph.D., Econometrics and Quantitative Economics

Shaanxi Normal University   *August 2016 – December 2020*
M.A., Economics

Shanxi University of Finance and Economics   *September 2012 – July 2016*
B.S., Statistics

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Florida, Food and Resource Economics Department   *August 2021 – Present*
Teaching and Research Assistant
Lead researcher on development economics and machine learning projects

- **Education Spillovers in Targeted Interventions**

  - Designed and executed cluster-randomized controlled trial across 130 schools in China with stratified randomization design

  - Developed standardized survey instruments and coordinated multi-stage data collection

  - Applied social network analysis to map peer relationships and measure spillover effects of an education program

- **3G Coverage & Fertility Outcomes in Nigeria**

  - Built geospatial pipeline linking 80,000+ survey records with mobile network data in Nigeria

  - Implemented staggered difference-in-differences to exploit causal effect of 3G rollout timing

- **Traffic Sign Classification Using CNNs**

  - Built a 9-layer CNN in TensorFlow with ReLU, Adam, and dropout, achieving 94% test accuracy

  - Improved accuracy by 12 p.p. via data augmentation (rotation, flipping, zooming)

  - Benchmarked against transfer learning (Xception) for performance comparison

Stanford Center on China's Economy and Institutions　　　*August 2018 – August 2019*
Visiting Graduate Research Fellow, supervised by Scott Rozelle
Conducted field research on educational interventions and behavioral economics applications in rural China.

- **Tips-by-Text Parenting Program Evaluation**
  - Designed randomized controlled trial with 1,096 mothers using text-message delivery system
  - Applied behavioral economics frameworks to identify effect of information intervention on parenting practices
- **Peer Effects and Network Formation Analysis** *(Under Review)*
  - Employed instrumental variables using classroom seating arrangements to address endogenous peer selection
  - Applied network theory to model study group structures among 2,956 students
  - Implemented two-stage least squares (2SLS) to evaluate peer effect within study groups

Save the Children Yunnan (China)　　　*July 2020 – January 2021*
Consultant – Early Childhood Development Project
Lead data analyst for multi-county early childhood development evaluation.

- Designed impact evaluation for early childhood development program serving 1,000+ families
- Built digital data collection infrastructure using Survey Solutions
- Delivered actionable insights to program managers
- Collaborated with government stakeholders to scale evidence-based intervention across 3 provinces

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (4/8)

Chen, Xuqi, Lisa House, Zhifeng Gao, **Yujuan Gao** (2024). "Do Color-Coded Nutrition Facts Panels Nudge the Use of Nutrition Information on Food Packaging?" *Food Policy.* [link]

Ma, Yue, Xinwu Zhang, Lucy Pappas, Andrew Rule, **Yujuan Gao**, Sarah-Eve Dill, Tianli Feng, et al. (2023). "Associations between Urbanization and the Home Language Environment: Evidence from a LENA Study in Rural and Peri-urban China." *Child Development.* [link]

Yujuan Gao, Derek Hu, Even Peng, et al. (2020). "Depressive Symptoms and the Link with Academic Performance among Rural Taiwanese Children." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.* [link]

Ma, Yue, **Yujuan Gao**, Jason Li, et al. (2020). "Maternal Health Behaviors during Pregnancy in Rural Northwestern China." *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth.* [link]

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Selected Conference Presentations: 2025: AERE@ASSA; AFE at Chicago; 2024: Global GLO-JOPE Conference; APPAM Fall Conference; PacDev at Stanford; 2023: NEUDC at Harvard

Service: Referee for BMC Public Health and PLOS ONE; Mentor for 2025 AEA Mentoring Program

AWARDS

University of Florida Graduate School Fellowship, University of Florida　　　*2021-2025*

J. R. Greenman Memorial Scholarship from CALS, University of Florida　　　*2022, 2024*

Best Paper Awards in 2021 Agricultural & Applied Economics Association Annual Conference　*2021*