

My City My University

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Abstract:

This paper studies the influence of cities on distance education outcomes in Turkey. Previous literature has shown that exposure to cities indeed affect several outcomes of individuals, including access to higher education, intergenerational social mobility both in terms of occupation and income. However, given the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon and lack of proper experimental design, to date, the literature has been limited to general correlation discussions. In this paper, I exploit the semi-natural experimental environment that is created by the pandemic. I use a full-population university register data to follow students for 4 semesters from 2018-2019 academic years to 2019-2020 academic years, which then include also COVID-19 period. In addition to the records of educational activities such as the department of study, curriculum and grades, the dataset also includes demographic information of students and their city of parental residence. By a multilevel model approach, I estimate the best linear unbiased prediction (BLUPs) of random effects for four periods to see how much of the variation in students' final exams is explained by the city of residences. The findings indicate that the city effects on the final grades have increased almost 6 times during the pandemic compared to the same academic term of the last year.

Keywords: COVID-19, Higher Education, Multilevel Models, City Effects

JEL Codes: R230, I230, I240