

Josh Manto (蘇福利)

Interested in Econometrics, Behavioral Science, and Data Science



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Josh Manto (蘇福利) is a freshman at Duke Kunshan University. He is interested in taking up Economics as his primary major; studying the possible applications of econometrics and data science in the business field.

As such, Josh previously set up and managed his own visa-processing company, working alongside Philippine government agencies and Chinese clients to process work permits for Chinese workers. With a professional-working proficiency in Mandarin Chinese, Josh is actively looking for opportunities to connect the world to China, and bring China to forefront of the 21st century. He is interested in forging strong connections with people, and hence is always on the lookout for opportunities to set up new businesses and, most importantly, make money (and donating to charity too).

Josh is looking forward to deepening his knowledge on Economics by participating in DKU's ECON101 course, and doing research with his professor and classmates.

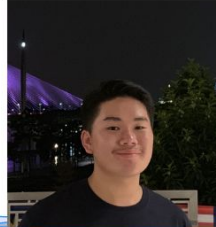
Programming (LUA & C), Data Science Certificates from Udemy, HarvardX, and Coursera

GYLA (Global Young Leaders Academy) business and finance attendee at the Wharton School of Business

Master Learner's Academy (Robotics and Engineering) attendee at Arizona State University's Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering

Undergraduate Class of 2024 | Duke Kunshan University

When Opportunity Costs Outweigh Accounting Costs



Josh Manto

My definition of an ‘opportunity cost’ is the “price” payed or what is “risked” when one decides to go for something. I only realized the role opportunity cost played in my life when, in the last summer of 11th grade, I was faced with a decision between choosing to stay at school to manage my organization’s finances, and walking my friend home from school -- I ended up choosing to stay at school. My other friend walked my friend home, and I later found out that during the walk, they had a new business idea that they discussed while walking, which has now grown to become a successful business.

Although my decision to stay at school to manage my organization’s finances reduces the accounting costs (because we do not need to hire another member), I realized that I could have walked my friend home, and become part of the successful business they launched; I could have found more business opportunities and ideas, and even be part of the business today.

Hence, if we all think that we can gain more on doing other activities, such as brainstorming ideas and looking for business opportunities, then the opportunity cost of managing finances certainly outweighs its accounting costs of delegating the task to someone else. Accounting costs can be beneficial to us in the short-run (because it may reduce salary and time costs), but most of the time, we should go for tasks that hold more significance in life because they usually result to better long-term results, like the business I could have been part of and the stronger relationships I could have made.





Problem Set 2: How Market Works

Remote ECON Student Group

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Summary

The sudden introduction of the COVID-19 pandemic in the early months of 2020 has resulted to massive changes, especially the recently-enforced lockdown in the cities of China. The food and restaurants sector witnessed a significant drop in consumer demand as the number of people who were going out to get food has lessened; a number of traditional restaurants were even forced to close down because of bankruptcy and other reasons.

In an effort to adapt to the new normal, food delivery services have experienced an overnight increase in demand as both consumers and merchants (restaurants) started using these online services as a platform to send food and receive payments. The food market's fluid response to the pandemic is certainly an aspect that is worth studying; the research question that now arises is: *"How did changes in supply and demand during the COVID-19 pandemic influence quantity change and equilibrium prices of food delivery services in Chinese cities?"*

It was concluded that the equilibrium prices of food delivery services remained the same, even though there was a significant increase in the quantity demanded. There was an initial drop in food supply, as a result of traditional restaurants closing down, but food delivery services has only motivated digitised restaurants to increase their food supply to satisfy the consumer demands.

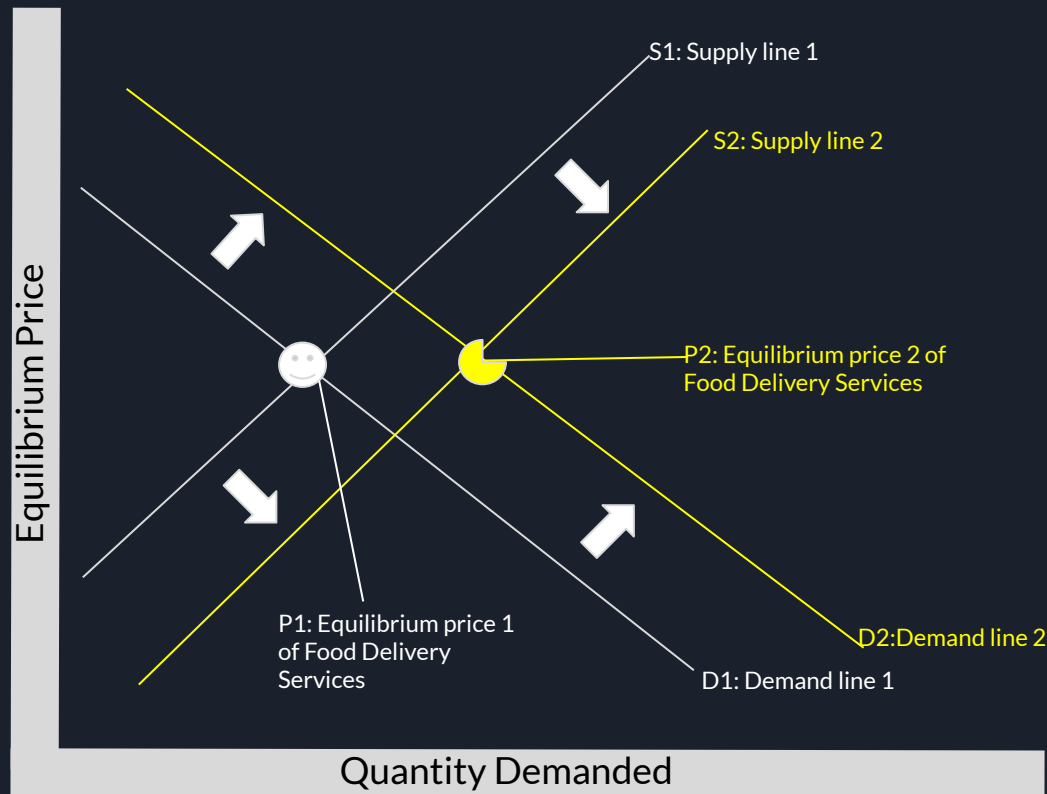
Methodology: A Supply and Demand Graph of the Economic Context

- White-depicted lines preview the initial supply and demand before the outside shock
- Yellow lines depict supply and demand after outside shock.

My Takeaways from Conversations:

“People fear a shortage in supply - they obviously want to survive the pandemic, which explains why there is an increase in food demand for both restaurant-cooked and processed foods.

“Meituan, the most popular delivery service in China, adapted to the new normal quite fluidly as they attempt to deliver foods without contact with customers. It is also evident that the equilibrium price was stagnant because they Meituan bases their delivery prices on the distance and not on consumer demand trends”



Conversations: Outside Shock

“The outside shock in this economic context is the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically the restrictions that the government set to reduce contact. People were unable to go out and buy food as usual, which is why there is an initial decrease in food demand, and is also why some traditional restaurants decided to close down.

“The economic effects are most evident in the largest populated cities in China, such as Shanghai, Wuhan, etc.”

“Because that is where most contact is made; provinces should be relatively safer because areas are significantly larger and wider”

“I concur, as most populated cities also contain the highest percentage of “working” people - the working population. They rely heavily on traditional restaurants as their main food source because it is more convenient”

“But since people do not have the ability to work anymore, they are forced to rely on food delivery services as their main source for food. This should explain why Meituan and other food delivery services suddenly rose to popularity”



Conversations: Supply and Demand Change

“Meituan’s registered orders increased from 80% to 95.1 % from January 26 to February 8 as a result of increased demand; it most evident in Wuhan city. Companies also witnessed a 70% increase in food delivery orders. “

“Companies also have to adapt not only to the growing demand, but also to the new imposed public health regulations. As an example, Meituan, the largest food delivery service in China, began to leave deliveries by the door, eliminating face-to-face interactions. This is an example of how government policies influence the economy.”

“There should also be an initial shortage of supply caused by the closure of traditional restaurants. But this should later be compensated as more restaurants become “digitised” as they use the food delivery service”

“We should also see an increase in generated revenue: in the first few months of the pandemic, a 20% increase in revenue is seen. And I suppose this 20% will grow exponentially as more people use the service, and merchants become digitised”



Conversations: Equilibrium Price and Quantity Change

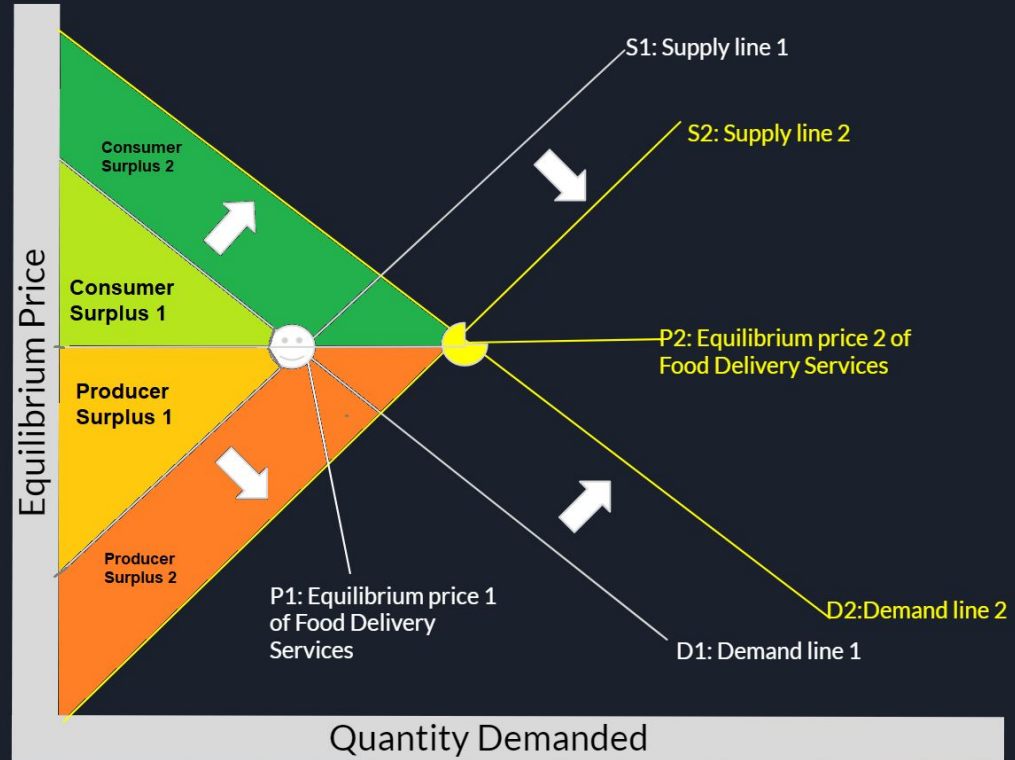
“Rather an increase in food production cost, it was the quantity of food being purchased that increased dramatically. The high revenue reflects a higher quantity of products being sold to customers, as a result of the new delivery service trend, rather than a change in its manufacturing cost”

“The price of the food and its production should not change. The agricultural sector should not even experience large effects as they are secluded and not covered by government policy. The stagnant equilibrium price of food delivery services should remain the same as they are depended on distance and not on consumer demand trends. But the “overall” price of the food+food delivery service also depends how much the merchant posts the price of the food as they are all added up”

“It can be asserted that merchants base their food prices on consumer demand, and an increase in the equilibrium price in the food industry only should be evident as merchants struggle to pay for large losses caused by the pandemic”

Consumer Surplus, Producer Surplus, and Total Surplus

It is only logical to conclude that, since there is an increase in both supply and demand, and since the economy depicted in this graph is in an expansion, both consumer and producer surplus should increase too in response to demand and supply shifts. Hence, the total surplus should also increase



Problem Set 3:

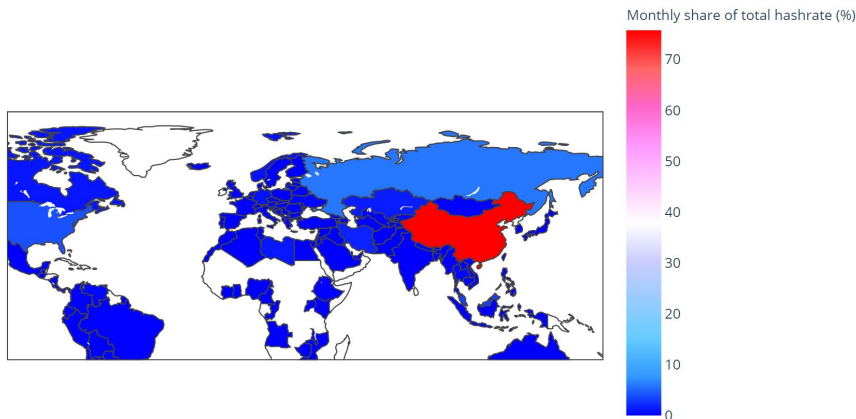
Links:

<https://www.linkedin.com/posts/activity-6715997082827804672-lbNe/>

Plot link:

<https://chart-studio.plotly.com/~Mafiolege/1/#/plot>

Monthly share of total hashrate



Josh Manto

Freshman at Duke Kunshan University

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Did you know that China accounts solely for 65% of the world's **#bitcoin** hash power? What this means is that more than half of the world's Bitcoin processing power is located in China!

In this week for my **#economics** class taught by Prof. **Luyao** at Duke, we briefly analyzed the Bitcoin **#hash** rates of each country. As referenced from this graph, it is evident that China's hash rate is steadily decreasing; initially starting at around 75% on 9/1/2019, its hash rate has dropped to an all-time low of 65% on the first few months of 2020.

Is this a good sign? For China, I don't think so. But for the rest of the world, their minimal increases in **#Bitcoin** hash rates, like how the US increased by 3.2%, Russia by 1%, show that other countries are constantly developing their **#Bitcoin** network, making it even more **#secure**.

As **#bitcoins** and **#blockchains** start to rise to popularity (I believe they already are!), it is of certainty that the job of an economist has only become more challenging and complicated as it was a hundred years ago. The definition of economics is constantly changing since more societal and political variables are added and accounted for. But this is also a good sign that **#economics** is growing, the same way that I, today, learned how to use data to my advantage.

Monthly share of total hashrate | choropleth made by Mafiolege | plotly

chart-studio.plotly.com



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My Takeaways from this Course:

I have a lot of words that describe the many lessons I learned from Prof. Luyao Zhang's course, but the one key takeaway that seems most significant to me is on how the course has aided me in my future decision-making skills, both in specific contexts and in my planned career. What I value the most, aside from the economic principles and deeper concepts, is on how my professor shares her life lessons alongside teaching; there was one time where Prof. Luyao was distinguishing between monetizing favors, and simply asking for favors as friends. I learned that asking people for favors out of friendship is a better way of interacting with people because monetizing favors would seem like one is placing a value on the relationship. I used to be someone who people come to for favors, and I realized that this happens several times because I don't ask anything for return. But Prof. Luyao taught me to also ask for favors in return, so people would remember.

Another life-lesson takeaway Prof. Luyao taught me is to simply "smile". Whenever I participate in her classes, I do not end up in a bored or unengaged mood because Prof. Luyao is always smiling, and making jokes to keep the class entertained. I have to admit that her jokes are sometimes not funny, but most of the time, they also help with understanding some of the aspects her jokes relate to. Smiling also makes Prof. Luyao seem approachable, and I think for economists to be successful in their field, they also need to practice EQ skills that Prof. Luyao possesses.

As an economist, and as I near the end of this wonderful course, I remember all the economic principles that would help me in my business-data science-economics journey in China. I will take note of the benefits and opportunity costs that come with every decision that I make, but most importantly, I need to work on the EQ skills that I learned in this course. To improve my future decision making skills, I also need to embody Chinese philosophical principles, Chengyu (s)(成語) to be specific, that bring about important life lessons encapsulated in the few Chinese characters. Prof. Luyao, fortunately, also taught me Chinese philosophical principles that I am able to bring on with me -- and I will always go back to this course as a foundation for my journey as an economist who has EQ (like smiling, favors, etc), IQ(economic principles), knowledge in Chinese Philosophy (taoism, etc), and most importantly LQ (love quotient) as Jack Ma would say.



Extra slide: Future Economist Perspective

When I took my first economics class in 9th grade, I wondered why Economics, as a field, was not mentioned so much in my business management class. The business class only tackled 5 main fields of business, which are: finance, operations management, marketing, human resource, and business principles. Having studied the course, it has made me realize that economics is a field that encompasses all these other 5 business principles; I'd describe it as the macro field that consists of explanations of everything large-scale, but also includes the micro, which is connected with the 5 business aspects I mentioned above. Why I want to become an economist is best answered is I were asked "what propelled me to pursue economics". I pursued economics because I found plot holes in the educational system that we have today. People take business courses that contain a modicum of economic subjects. They are only able to manage businesses, without knowledge of the society/economy that their business is positioned in. I want to become an economist because I want to help business graduates and small businesses in my country understand economic principles without having to undergo 4 years of economics in college; I want to transfer the knowledge that I learned in DKU to the less fortunate people in my country because not a lot are able to attain a college education.

I am passionate about the economic systems of individual countries, like capitalism, socialism, and how these are driving forces for that dictate how well an economy will do. I want my research to be geared towards poverty alleviation, so my remark would be: "The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Science in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2024"
"Josh Malcolm T. Manto "for their economic and political approach to alleviating poverty in third-world countries""

I believe I still have to do something different and special compared to other economics professors to actually obtain an economics nobel prize. Asking the right questions that nobody else has thought of is the best way to attain the award because our definition of economics is ever-changing. And I believe my journey to become an economist and an economics professor would, someday, give me insight or ideas on questions that I might ask that no one else has thought of. And if were ever to remark on my award, I would attribute it firstly to my family, friends who helped me in the journey, especially my first DKU economics professor who talked a lot of about "asking the questions that no one else thought of". But most importantly, I'd remark that the nobel prize was not because on "why I did it", but the prize was for the people whom I did it for. Probably my future students, or underprivileged Filipinos.