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Do job fairs matter? Experimental evidence on the impact of job-fair attendance[☆]

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Abstract

I estimate the causal impact of attending a job fair on employment outcomes and labor market perceptions, using a randomized encouragement design to induce individuals in the rural Philippines to attend a nearby job fair for domestic and overseas work. Attending a job fair matters: though it does not facilitate direct matches with a job-fair employer, attendance leads to a large increase in reported formal sector employment and in the likelihood of looking for any work outside the region in the months following the job fair. Several overseas recruitment agencies participated in the job fair, and attendance affects individuals' overseas labor market perceptions but does not encourage them to take steps to migrate. These results suggest that job fairs can be important tools for encouraging individuals to move to the formal sector and for conveying information about labor market prospects.

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