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Victor Ortego-Marti*

Abstract

Recent evidence shows that baseline search models struggle to match the observed levels of wage dispersion. This paper studies a random matching search model with human capital losses during unemployment. Wage dispersion increases, as workers accept lower wages to avoid long unemployment spells. The model explains between a third and half of the observed residual wage dispersion. When adding on-the-job search, the model accounts for all of the residual wage dispersion and generates substantial dispersion even for high values of non-market time. The paper thus addresses the trade-off between explaining frictional wage dispersion and the cyclical behavior of unemployment.

JEL Classification: E24.

Keywords: Search and matching; frictional wage dispersion; unemployment history; skill loss; unemployment volatility.

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