

# Reza Tavakoli

Ph.D. Student in Economics · Virginia Tech  
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## EDUCATION

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<b>Ph.D., Economics</b> · Virginia Tech Department of Economics	2024 – present
<b>M.Sc., Economics</b> · Virginia Tech Department of Economics	Jan 2023 – Dec 2024
<b>M.Sc., Economics</b> · Sharif University of Technology Graduate School of Management & Economics, Tehran, Iran	Sep 2015 – Jun 2018
<b>B.Sc., Economics</b> · Ferdowsi University of Mashhad Faculty of Economics & Administrative Sciences, Mashhad, Iran	Sep 2011 – Jun 2015

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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Applied Microeconomics · Economics of Education · Labor Economics · Development Economics

## PUBLICATIONS

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### **Understanding the Effects of a Math Placement Exam on Calculus 1 Enrollment and Engineering Persistence**

with O. Ryan, S. Sajadi, S. Barrera  
*Education Sciences*, 2025. [↗](#)

### **The Effect of After-School Tutoring on Students' National University Entrance-Exam Performance in Iran**

with M. Vesal, 2025

### **Evaluating the Efficiency of Students' University-Major Choice in Terms of Labor-Market Outcomes**

with V. Arshadi  
*Journal of Economic Modeling Research*, 2021

### **Modeling the Behavior of Choosing a University Major and the Role of Labor-Market Information: A Meta-Analysis**

with V. Arshadi, J. Ghiasi, M. Monfared, T. Azodi  
*Journal of Iran's Economic Essays*, vol. 18, 2021

## WORKING PAPERS

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### **The Impact of Tax Credits on Higher Education Enrollment and URM Representation**

Full text [↗](#)

### **Intra-household Maternal Bargaining Power and Expenditures on Education: Evidence from Iran**

with M. Feizi

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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**Data Scientist** · Part Financial Information Processing Group Mar 2021 – Dec 2022

Led a data-science team on a nationwide Credit-Scoring project. Built default-prediction models on ~2 million loan records using gradient-boosted trees and regularized logistic regression; delivered a production scoring system supporting data-driven lending decisions for Iranian borrowers with financial histories.

**Research Assistant & Data Analyst** · FAO, United Nations Nov 2018 – Mar 2021

*Supervisor: Prof. Mohammad Vesal. Questionnaire design, fieldwork, econometric analysis, and report writing across three field-based projects:*

- Farm Household Survey, Qazvin Province (Nov 2020 – Mar 2021).
- Drought Vulnerability Assessment & Impact Evaluation (Jan 2020 – May 2020).
- Farm Household Survey, Urmia Lake Basin (Nov 2018 – Mar 2020).

**Research Assistant** · Sharif University of Technology Sep 2017

To Profs. Djavad Salehi-Isfahani & Mohammad Vesal on “*The Role of Iran’s Education System in Human Capital Formation,*” International Workshop on Labor-Market Studies, Tehran.

## TEACHING

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### INSTRUCTOR

**Principles of Economics** · Virginia Tech Summer 2025, Winter 2025

**Data Analysis with Stata** · Ferdowsi Univ. of Mashhad (graduate training) Spring 2016, 2017

### TEACHING ASSISTANT

**Analysis of Economic Data** · Dr. Brianna Felegi, Virginia Tech Spring 2025

**Labor Economics** · Dr. Brianna Felegi, Virginia Tech Fall 2024

**Economics of Immigration** · Dr. Sergio Barrera, Virginia Tech Spring 2024

**Analysis of Economic Data** · Dr. Brianna Felegi, Virginia Tech Fall 2023

**Interactive Decision Making** · Dr. Matthew Kovach, Virginia Tech Spring 2023

**Econometrics I** · Prof. Mohammad Vesal, Sharif Univ. (graduate) Fall 2019

## HONORS & AWARDS

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- Ranked 9th of 10,000+ examinees, Iranian National Graduate Entrance Exam in Economics, 2015.
- Admitted with top rank to M.Sc. in Economics, Sharif University of Technology, 2015.

## SKILLS

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**Statistics / Econometrics** Stata, R.

**Programming** Python, MATLAB.

**Other Software** LaTeX, LyX, Git.

**Languages** English (fluent), Persian (native).