

Humanities & Social Sciences: Before

I was born in a family respecting cultural tradition and paying much attention to the importance of family and school education. My father as an Economics professor inspires me to be open-minded and keep curiosity about new affairs. I am thus enthusiastic in hunting new knowledge, solving problems listed in the textbooks, and offered by teachers, and trying to understand and figure out interesting economic problems reported in the newspaper and financial magazine with economic principles since I was a senior high school student. (We must study some basic economics in senior high school). Because my grandfather was a farmer, I usually live in the countryside in summer vacation every year. I am impressed that each farmer behaves as a rational economic man. Every farmer through informal contact with other farmers or from information released from various agriculture associations tries to select a best fitted crops or fruits and fully utilize his labor and land so as to maximize profits, with a consideration of adjustment cost associated with changes in crops or fruits planted. On the other hand, from numerous reports of newspaper and magazines, food shortage will be a serious global problem. I hence decided to major in Agricultural Economics when I was a freshman in the most famous university in my country --- ***** University.

As a freshman, I worked many hours as a volunteer for a “Rural Education Service Team” (REST) helping children from rural place. Along with my teammates I spent one year designing curriculums for classes in subjects such as English and time management for rural kids between the ages of 9 and 11. During the summer between freshman and sophomore year I spent time in ***** County, one of Taiwan’s poorest locations. When we picked the children outside the school, I noticed that almost all of them were brought by their grandparents. I am told there are only left grandparents to farm, and it confirmed my early observation about Agricultural Economics is not the single circumstances. I was both interested in and worried about this situation. According to the Accounting and Statistics Department of Taiwan, the average age of famers in Taiwan is already 61 years old, and expected to be 71 twenty years later. Besides, our farm size is of small scale. (The average cultivated land per farmhouse in Taiwan is only 1/175 times of American and farmers’ average income is only 70% of non-agricultural sectors’.) Hence, farmers usually cultivate their farmland by themselves instead of using mechanization device. I decide to utilize my knowledge to help them. Actually, the aging problems affect not only the agricultural sector but also other sectors in Taiwan. Our total fertility rate in 2010 is only 0.895, the lowest in the world. However, our life expectancy continuously increases. The low TFR and

increasing life expectancy results in quick aging. Therefore, how to deal with the problems resulted from aging becomes an important issue. These important issues include at least the financial deterioration of public pension program and national health-care program in Taiwan, and the influence on the quantity and quality of labor supply. Furthermore, as reported in many newspapers and magazines, the aging problem bothers not only Taiwan but also other developed countries. Hence, I'm interested in solving the aging problems. So I changed my study plan from concerns with only the agricultural sector to the aggregate economy. With a determined study area, my grades and coursework improved significantly.

To gain additional research and analytical skills, I took Independent Study course offered by professor *****. After careful consideration, I chose my research topic as "the Influence of 7-11 Special Bonus Points for Great Rewards Activity on Clients' Buying Inclination in Taiwan". To collect data for research, I use questionnaire to survey consumer's attitude toward this marketing activity. Before releasing the final version of questionnaire, I tested it and discussed it with Professor ***** again and again. I carefully examined every question and option to avoid misleading test takers. To make information more integrated, I collected it by several ways such as by Internet, on the classes and by the side of roads. After received the information, I used not only descriptive statistics but also regression analysis to analyze the data. Professor ***** highly complimented my work and gave me a very high grade of 90 points in the class. In the Independent Study class, I learned how to conduct researches and developed my ability of solving problems.

This past summer I worked as a research assistant for Dr. ***** at the Institute of *****, Taiwan's most prominent research institution. Under Dr. ***** guidance I analyzed economic statistics for the European Union, China, and Japan, and wrote short reports on macroeconomic issues. In one report I described potential economic issues in China, including uncollectible bank accounts and negative real interest rates. For these tasks I needed to review hundreds of pages of global economic news each week, study data published by the Taiwan government, and apply knowledge that I accumulated in my ***** classes. Through this experience I learned how financial markets in China are developing compared to their well-established counterparts in Europe and Japan, and gained insights into the likely impacts of China's financial markets on the global economy. I'm also looking forward to conduct researches in important related issues in the future.

Other than professional preparation, I'm pursuing in several fields of knowledge. I'm

double major in Psychology and Agricultural Economics. I also applied and got permission to take courses offered by the Quantitative Finance Program which cooperates between the ***** University College of Management and the ***** Securities group, one of Taiwan's top five securities companies. In order to enhance my math ability, I took courses such as Advanced Calculus, Advanced Statistics and Linear Algebra. I believe my learning in so many different fields of knowledge will help me both in direct and indirect ways. I can easily bring up different viewpoint and perceive things in a much broader way. Although I have to learn so many things at one time, I still have excellent performance in each field. This workload shows that I am capable of handling the pressure of graduate study. I am happy to report that I received two Presidential Awards from ***** , which is given to students in the top 5% of their graduating classes. After experiencing those fields, I found I 'm most capable and interested in Economics. Therefore, I hope I can devoted myself in Economic research, and utilize knowledge I learned in different fields to combine with Economics then become a top-tier Economist.

As stated in the second paragraph, the participation of the REST program inspired me to be care about the effects of aging on the economic and social living of people. As it is well-known, aging has tremendous impacts on the financial expenses of public retirement pension programs. It turns out more and more public pension programs adopts defined contribution pension plan instead of the defined benefit pension plan. Such a pension plan reform certainly may greatly reduce the financial stress of governments but may also let many old adults have too less retirement pension with them. On the other hand, although moral hazard behavior, induced demand and medical technology progress are important factors affecting the demand for medical services, aging is also a major cause to increase financial expenditures of public health-care programs. This is so because on average the medical expenditures of an old adult is much greater than that of a young adult. Hence, many countries with a national health insurance program of one sort or another try to reform their programs to solve the financial distress problem. To subsidize these social welfare programs, governments must either increase tax revenues, either by raising the income tax rate or by elevating the consumption rate, or reduce the spending on the provision of other public goods or services. However, increasing tax revenues will generate more deadweight loss or reduce the investment incentive of entrepreneur and the stimulus of labor supply. The rises in the deadweight loss will certainly decrease the social welfare and the reduction in the investment and the labor supply will lessen the aggregate output level. Next, if the marginal propensity to consumption of old adults is smaller than that of young adults, aging may diminish the aggregate demand and

hence curtail the short-run equilibrium output level and enlarge the unemployment rate. Furthermore, the decrease in the total fertility rate and the increase in the life expectancy may also have significant effect on the quantity and quality of labor supply. Apparently, aging will reduce the amount of labor force and hence decrease the quantity of labor supply. However, the reduction of the total fertility rate and hence the decrease of the number of children per family will allow parents to raise the education expenditure and the time for home education for each child. Children will have more resource to accumulate more human capital. Also, the enlargement of the life expectancy will increase the number of years to receive the benefit of raising human capital accumulation. Both effects, the concentration of education resource and the betterment of human capital investment, will elevate the quality of labor supply. Clearly, the aging problem affects a society on many areas: the financial expenses of social welfare programs, the tax structure, the aggregate demand, the quantity and the quality of labor supply and the aggregate output level. Therefore, I sincerely hope I can study in your Ph.D. program issues regarding the impacts of aging on welfare programs, public finance and macroeconomics. Because your department is internationally well-known in research areas of demography, public finance and macroeconomics, e.g. professor **** on aging, professor **** on public finance and professor ***** on macroeconomics, I fully believe your department is the best place for me to complete my research.

I am determined to set up my career goals as an influential person, equipped with *a cool head and a warm heart*, being capable of dealing with today's tough situations by using the graduate degree I pursue at **** Economics toward serving disadvantaged populations. Undoubtedly, my enthusiasm and experiences have made me well-prepare for this program. I surely believe that ***** Economics and I can derive benefits from each other for the years to come.