

Employment Status and Evaluation of Government Performance: Evidence from China

Jinye Chen

Lingnan University, Hong Kong

Abstract

Evaluation of government performance of citizens is crucial for regime stability as it could help authoritarian regimes to identify and address brewing problems before they fuel public discontent. It can also act as a potential mechanism for improving government performance and public services and establishing good image of government. Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, Chinese government has adopted the zero-covid policy to keep cases as close to zero as possible until December 2022. The pandemic is a shock that impact the all the people, and it could have far-reaching consequences; therefore, the understanding of public evaluation of Chinese government's zero-covid policy is crucial for overall evaluation of government performance. China encountered a huge economic burden during the pandemic. China's job market also faced big pressure from the economic downturn caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many private companies in China closed, which are the primary source of employment. The unemployment problem was more severe among the youth workforces. Therefore, using evidence from China at both the individual and provincial levels, this study aims to examine the impact of employment status on public evaluation of government performance during the Covid-19 pandemic in China with multilevel analysis. The results reveal that being employed is negatively correlated with the evaluation of government performance and the evaluation of the medical system's performance in terms of COVID-19 containment. Additionally, this study also employs causal mediation analysis to infer relationships between employment status, public evaluation of government performance, and political trust. The research finding has implications for public policy in China.

Keywords: evaluation of government performance, Covid-19, public opinion