Human Behavior Lab Texas A&M University 1500 Research Pkwy, 221B College Station, TX 77845 Phone: (979) 458-0275 vvitaku@tamu.edu www.valonvitaku.com

Research Interests

Behavioral and Experimental Economics, Game Theory, Neuroeconomics

Employment

Postdoctoral Research Associate, Human Behavior Lab (Texas A&M University), 2023-present

Education

Ph.D. in Economics, Texas A&M University, 2023 B.S. (Honors) in Economics and Finance, University of Arizona, 2017 Magna cum Laude, Minor in Mathematics Outstanding Senior in Economics

Publications

"Aggregate and Individual Effects of Information in a Coordination (Traffic) Game" (with Alexander L. Brown, Sruthi Ashraf and Mark Burris), *Economic Inquiry*, 2023

"Using Behavioral Economics to Identify Potential Managed Lane Users" (with Alexander L. Brown, Sruthi Ashraf and Mark Burris), Transportation Research Record, 2022

Working Papers

"School Choice: Biometrically-Informed Mechanism Design" (with Alexander L. Brown and Marco A. Palma) It is well-known that no school choice mechanism can achieve both the elimination of justified envy and Pareto efficiency in equilibrium. The two most prominent strategy-proof mechanisms, Top-Trading-Cycles and Deferred Acceptance, provide a fundamental tradeoff in property realization. We provide a novel approach to measure their welfare tradeoffs. Using an experimental design that randomly varies whether subjects learn about others' allocations in a school choice game, we measure discontentment through galvanic skin response and eye-tracking when subjects experience envy with and without justification. We find increased discontentment due to justified-envy only when such information is accentuated with explicit messages. A separate study shows how eye-tracking reveals the use of certain levels of sophisticated play in the Boston mechanism, further supporting the agenda of biometrically-informed mechanism design for school choice problems.

"Salience in Choice Under Risk: An Experimental Investigation" (with Marco Castillo)

In choosing between lotteries, Bordalo, Gennaioli, and Shleifer (2012) postulate agents overweight states that are more salient. We manipulate the correlation between lotteries to test if changes in behavior predicted by salience obtain. Under highly controlled experimental conditions, and contrary to salience theory, we find mixed evidence that correlation affects choice behavior. The evidence in favor of salience improves when we manipulate the choice architecture to make the correlation more apparent.

Work in Progress

- "Mobility and Dynamics of Competition"
- "Correlation Neglect in Risky Choice"
- "Transparency as a Tool for Promoting Productivity"

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, ECON 459 - Games and Economic Behavior (Spring 2021, Spring 2022, Spring 2023) Game Theory Qualifier Camp (Summer 2022)

Teaching Assistant, ECON 618 - Behavioral Financial Economics (Fall 2021)

Instuctor, ECON 459 - Games and Economic Behavior (Fall 2020, Summer 2021)

Teaching Assistant, ECON 323 - Microeconomic Theory (Summer 2020)

Teaching Assistant, ECON 330 - Economic Development (Spring 2018)

Organizational Memberships

American Economic Association, Economic Science Association

$\underline{\mathbf{Awards}}$

Raymond C. Battalio Fellowship, College of Liberal Arts Dissertation Research Grant

Languages

o-Tree, z-Tree, Stata, Python, JavaScript, Qualtrics

References

Alexander L. Brown, Texas A&M University Marco A. Palma, Texas A&M University Silvana Krasteva, Texas A&M University