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ESA Mentoring Session 2020

Three slides
1. Research and papers

• It is true: In expectation, the higher the “quality” of a paper, the higher the chances for getting well-published

• Well..., what is a high quality paper/experiment?
  • High internal validity (claims supported by data, i.e., appropriate treats, tests, statistics, obs., ...): Relatively high level of scientific consensus
  • Paper interesting: Much disagreement, **cannot** be resolved scientifically (see, Max Weber, Science as a Vocation)
  • Results change priors (novelty, surprising, innovation): Some consensus
2. Topics

• Work on what you are really interested in: Choice of topics most important decision/responsibility

• Use lab experiments
  • To uncover fundamental human motivation (e.g., fairness, loss-aversion…) and cognition (e.g., biases, memory…)
    • It is here, where the lab is unrivaled (Falk/Heckman (2009), Lab Experiments Are a Major Source of Knowledge in the Social Sciences, Science, Vol. 326, Issue 5952, pp. 535-538)
    • Or as incentivized measures (e.g., preferences in childhood development)

• Do not test complicated/“realistic” models

• Use comprehensive yet simple design

• Combine (lab) experimental data with survey data, field observations or other types of data (exploit complementarities)
3. Writing

• Motivate your findings: tell a convincing story and get people interested in reading your paper

• Readability and clarity (e.g., instructions, misunderstandings are typically your fault...), have a native speaker double check

• Prioritize; and work sequentially

• Re-submit quickly