

This note pertains to the In-Class First Day exercise.

For economics and business economics majors, they write an empirical research paper for their capstone course within a semester and present their paper to the faculty. Due to the time constraint and the technicality of some economics paper (i.e., math proofs), the in-class exercise was created to help the students to:

1. determine the parts of a research paper
2. critically analyze sections of the paper given the assignment prompts
3. discuss and learn from classmates

For this exercise, the students are split into four groups (one for each part of the paper for review). They are provided with examples of previous works from students for each of the sections. They discuss the examples in their group, provide a score, a ranking, and their explanations. Each packet with different sections of the paper is rotated until each group has a chance to review all four parts. After the last rotation, the students examine all the scores and inputs from every group, then decide which example is the best for each of the sections, providing explanations for their decision.

Read the four examples; provide a score, the rank, and an explanation for your decision.

Introduction	Score 1 = Lowest 10 = Highest	Rank 1 = Best	Explanation
Example 1			
Example 2			
Example 3			
Example 4			

Introduction Requirement

What is your paper about (topic to be investigated)? What is your research question? What are you going to do? Why is the topic and your contribution to the existing important (how are you helping to better understand a problem or situation)? What did you find? You are to “sell” the paper here so that the reader is interested in reading the rest of the paper. Provide graphs/tables if needed to motivate the topic.

Conventions

- Quotations are rarely found in economics papers.
- Literature reviews will mainly deal with other economics articles.
- Synonyms for “model” seem to be “framework” and “approach.”
- Paper may be written in the first person singular (“I”); in the third (“this paper,” “this study”); or in the first person plural (“we”), even if there is only a single author.
- Paper should not be personal in style.

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Literature Review	Score 1 = Lowest 10 = Highest	Rank 1 = Best	Explanation
Example 1			
Example 2			
Example 3			
Example 4			

Literature Review Requirement

Discuss what other researchers have found in their previous investigations of this topic. Start with a brief general assessment of the existing literature (e.g., it is abundant, there's not much there, most studies focus on methodological issues, data problems beset research on this topic, most studies look at X, little has been done in the past thirty years, etc.). Only include studies that directly relate to your topic. Restate towards the end of this section your contribution and how it differs from the existing literature.

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Methodology	Score 1 = Lowest 10 = Highest	Rank 1 = Best	Explanation
Example 1			
Example 2			
Example 3			
Example 4			

Methodology Requirement

Under the 'Empirical Methodology' subheading state the theoretical concept(s) to be tested. The theoretical concepts and empirical estimation should directly relate to your introduction and literature review. Provide the regression equation and discuss what each variable captures along with its predicted relationship with the dependent variable. Explain the type of statistical analysis to be estimated (i.e., OLS, Probit, GMM, etc.). In the discussion of your variables, start with the key/main variable of interest. If there are many variables, group the common control variables together and discuss this last. Discuss any econometric issues (multicollinearity, heteroskedasticity, autocorrelation, etc.) and steps you took to correct the potential problems. The reader should be able to reproduce your results by using the same data and following the same procedures you explained.

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Results	Score 1 = Lowest 10 = Highest	Rank 1 = Best	Explanation
Example 1			
Example 2			
Example 3			
Example 4			

Results Requirement

Discuss the actual results you found when running your regression analysis. You will generally refer to Tables 3 – 4 (depending on how many versions of your regressions you are presenting). Interpret the coefficients estimated for the key/main variable of interest in details that answers your research question. Briefly discuss the findings of the other variables or any unusual/surprising results.

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