Chair of Public Economics
Professor Dr Stefan Bauernschuster

UNIVERSITY OF PASSAU

Faculty of Business Administration and Economics

Organizational information for the seminar

"Topics in Public Economics: Replicating Empirical Research"

(winter semester 2022/23)

Description

This course introduces students to the replication of empirical research papers. It is divided into two parts. In the first part, students work in groups of two to replicate the main results of a paper. The results of this exercise (including the code developed by the students themselves) are then presented to the rest of the class. In the second part, students individually prepare a short seminar paper in which they extend the replication of the paper by conducting further analyses. The research papers assigned will be in the broad area of public economics and the software used can either be Stata or R.

Course objectives

The objective of the course is for students to learn the importance of replicating research papers and how it can be done. They will get first-hand experience in applying econometric methods and generating results using Stata or R. As part of this process, creativity will be developed by extending the analyses conducted in the research paper. By the end of this course, students will also be able to synthesise and effectively communicate the content of research papers.

Prerequisites

To participate in this course, students must have attended the course "Natural and Field Experiments" offered by the Chair of Public Economics. In case of remaining free capacities, we also accept students who have attended the course "Evaluation of Development Policies" instead.

Schedule

- Introductory session: Monday, 17th October 2022 at 4 p.m.
- Stata session: Tuesday, 18th October 2022 at 2 p.m.
- Replication period (Part 1): 19th October 2022 – 16th December 2022
  - Two individual sessions with the supervisor: The exact dates need to be arranged with the supervisor via e-mail.

- o Deadline for the submission of the presentation slides and the do-files: Friday, 16th December at 12 p.m. (noon)
  - o Presentation session: 19th and 20th December 2022 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

- Seminar paper period (Part 2): 10th January 2023 - 17th March 2023
  - o General information session on the extension of the replication analysis: Monday, 9th January 2023 at 4 p.m.
  - o Deadline for the submission of the seminar paper: Friday, 17th March 2023 at 12. p.m. (noon)

Replication period (Part 1)

The first part of the seminar mainly consists of the reproduction of the original findings using the provided data. Specifically, the students should explore whether the results replicate and present their replication exercise in the presentation session.

To get started, students will receive an e-mail with the starting literature, the name of the group member and the supervisor on the first day of the replication period. Moreover, we provide the original datasets (either Stata or R) as well as the original do-files. These do-files should, however, only serve as a rough guide. Instead of rerunning the code, students should try to replicate the analysis themselves. During the period, there will be two meetings 30 minutes each with the supervisor that should help to solve doubts and clarify questions. To provide the best possible assistance, all the questions need to be sent via e-mail at least 48 hours before the meeting.

The first part of the course ends with the presentation session. These presentations last 60 minutes per group (45 minutes presentation, 15 minutes discussion) and should cover the following parts:

- Introduction and motivation: In the presentation students should present the topic and central research question of the paper. In addition, the relevance of the paper should be highlighted by explaining how the work contributes to the relevant literature in terms of both content and methodology.
- Methodological approach and identification strategy: In the presentation students should also explain the empirical method applied in the paper. Especially, the key identifying assumptions need to be presented and discussed critically.
- Replication: Furthermore, the presentation should include the replication exercise. Thereby, the focus should be on the main results. Yet, students may also highlight if some results do not replicate or if they found coding errors. When presenting the replication exercise, we expect students to replicate the central result in front of the class. This includes a brief discussion of the basic structure of the do-files so that each student will know how to practically implement the basic models after the course. The remaining results can be presented using slides.

- Discussion: Finally, the presentation should include a discussion of the validity of the identification strategy and its actual implementation.

The deadline for submitting the slides and the do-files for your presentation is Friday, 16th December at 12 p.m. (noon) (via e-mail to bianca.bittner@uni-passau.de).

Seminar paper period (Part 2)

While the first part mainly consists of the reproduction of the original study results, the goal of the second part of the course, i.e. the seminar paper, is to shortly summarize the original study and then review and extend the paper's methods and findings. Therefore, each student should independently analyse the robustness of the results and summarize the findings in a short seminar paper (~6 pages/1,800 words).

The robustness analysis can be conducted in several ways. For example, students can analyse the sensitivity of the measurement by examining whether the results hold even if the variables are measured differently. Moreover, students could question the results of the paper by applying different estimation strategies with the same data. Another possibility is to gain a better understanding of the causal effects, for example, by conducting heterogeneity analyses. In order to provide further guidance, there will be an information session on the extension of replication at the beginning of this part of the seminar.

The deadline of the seminar paper is the Friday, 17th March 2023 at 12 p.m. (noon). Students need to submit one hard copy of the seminar paper to the chair office (room 205 WIWI) and one electronic version of the seminar paper (pdf) as well as the do-files to bianca.bittner@uni-passau.de.

Evaluation

The final grade will be composed of the seminar paper (50% of the total points available) and the grade for the presentation (50% of the total points available). Upon successful completion of the seminar, students receive 7 ECTS.

Registration

If you are interested in taking part in the seminar, please submit your application documents by e-mail (to bianca.bittner@uni-passau.de) to the chair between 20th June 2022 and 27th June 2022. Use the application form available in the download section of this course (course number 35866) on StudIP. Participants are selected based on their academic progress, previous modules taken (in particular, "Natural and Field Experiments" or in case of any remaining free capacities "Evaluation of Development Policies") and grades.

If your application was successful, please send us a confirmation (to bianca.bittner@uni-passau.de) that you accept the place in our seminar as soon as possible. If you are selected but do not wish to participate, you can cancel your application until 18th July 2022.