

ECON 220A Industrial Organization Referee Report # 1

Due: Friday, February 11

For this assignment you will select a paper from the list of recent working papers in IO and write a referee report providing constructive criticism for that paper as if you were actually reviewing it for a top journal. This will help familiarize you with the review process and give you an opportunity to analyze a piece of work in depth on your own. This is an individual assignment. The report consists of two parts, a letter to the editor and a report for the author. ***The potential papers you can choose from for this are listed at the end of this document.***

There will be two referee report assignments (with the second assignment papers given later). You will present one of your two referee report assignments in class (this will be assigned after the reports have been handed in).

In the comments to the author you should contain the following core content:

- **Short Overview:** At the beginning of your comments you should provide a short overview of the paper (< 1 pg.). Here you should summarize the primary questions, the methods used to research those questions, and the answers to those questions in the paper. This allows the others reading the report to know exactly how you see the paper in the 'big picture.'
- **Critique:** The critique should highlight what you view as the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. This is the core of the referee report. You can choose how you want to order your discussion of strengths vs. weaknesses to reflect how you feel about the paper.
 - Discuss the problems with the paper and how the author might address them, given the data that they already possess (or could easily obtain).
 - Separate comments into major and minor points, so that these can be easily distinguished. Major points include big picture issues with the question and overall research approach, minor points include, e.g., issues with writing or less important points concerning the methodology / framing.
 - Do you believe key assumptions made in the empirical analysis? If not is the paper a strong attempt to answer the question given the data/methods that could be available?
- **Contribution:** Make sure to read and reference related work and highlight what precisely the paper adds relative to that prior work. In some cases you may read a paper and find it fascinating, but then realize that another similar paper that the author leans heavily on has already been written. It is important to assess the incremental contribution relative to prior work.

When you write the comments, you should make sure to reference page numbers, paragraphs, etc. and write comments in either bullet points or a series of short paragraphs. The overall report should be

approximately 3-6 single-spaced pages, though these are flexible boundaries (especially on the high end). These comments should be anonymous so that the author would not know that you are the reviewer.

In the letter to the editor you should:

- Begin with an introductory paragraph stating what journal the paper has been reviewed for, who the author is, and what the title is.
- In a short paragraph describe the paper's main arguments and results. This should give the editor just enough information to understand what the paper is doing in your mind from a broad perspective.
- Summarize the major points from your comments to the author.
- State your recommendation for the paper choosing from (1) Accept (2) Strong Revise and Resubmit (3) Revise and Resubmit (4) Weak Revise and Resubmit and (5) Reject.
- The letter should be approximately 2 pages single-spaced in a business letter format.

Papers you can choose from:

https://web.stanford.edu/~sotero/papers/cotas_JMP.pdf

https://lmusolff.github.io/papers/Entry_and_Platform_Guided_Search.pdf

https://benjaminvatter.com/uploads/jmp_ben_vatter.pdf

https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/sarmitage/files/armitage_jmp_harvard.pdf

https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fgithub.com%2Frnyang%2Frnyang.github.io%2Fraw%2Fmaster%2Ffiles%2Fjmp%2FYang_JMP.pdf&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNHVIksbx4WUbYcV_P3Z4YrWAJ8FEA