

Research Proposal: Socio-Emotional Skills and Experimental Evaluation

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Motivation and Research Idea

- **Motivation:** Socio-emotional skills (SES) are crucial for long-run outcomes (education, labor markets, health) (*Heckman et al.*).
- **Question 1:** Can SES be improved through school-based interventions?
 - Randomize a teacher training program (focus on SES evaluation, feedback, reinforcement).
- **Question 2:** How can we measure SES reliably?
 - Standard self-reports instruments (big5, BESSI...etc) are biased and noisy.
 - Solution: use standardized contests/games (e.g., tower-building) to observe and measure actual outcomes such as cooperation, problem-solving skills in action, in a controlled environment.
- **Why experiment?** Randomization ensures causal identification of SES training effects and, more importantly, **behavioral measures provide objective outcomes.**

Research Question 1

Main Question

Does classroom-based SES training causally increase cooperation and productivity in a standardized team task (e.g., tower-building)?

- Randomize training across classrooms.
- Measure periodically group performance and cooperative behaviors in a controlled setting.

Main Question

Does SES training foster pro-social behavior in economic interactions?

- Use canonical experimental games: public goods, trust, coordination.
- The idea is to see if changes in SES also translate into changes in pro-social behavior.
- Addition: explore spillovers? → do trained peers influence untreated classmates?