

Midterm 1 - Fall 2024

ECON 4753 — University of Arkansas

1. (15pt) Say you have a sample of 100 companies where you observe the average wage and the number of non-managerial employees. You regress the log of average wage at a company on the number of non-managerial employees and estimate a coefficient of $\hat{\beta}_1 = 0.005$. Interpret this coefficient estimate in words.

Answer: The estimated coefficient suggest that a firm with one additional employee is predicted to pay a 0.5% higher average wage. (log is interpreted as a percent change)

2. Below is a graph using data from law schools. Along the X axis is the rank of the law school (1 is best) and along the Y axis is the median starting salary for graduates. On the chart, I have plotted estimates from a linear regression of Y on X and a fourth-order polynomial of X .

- i. (10pt) How would I evaluate which model performs ‘better’ on this sample?

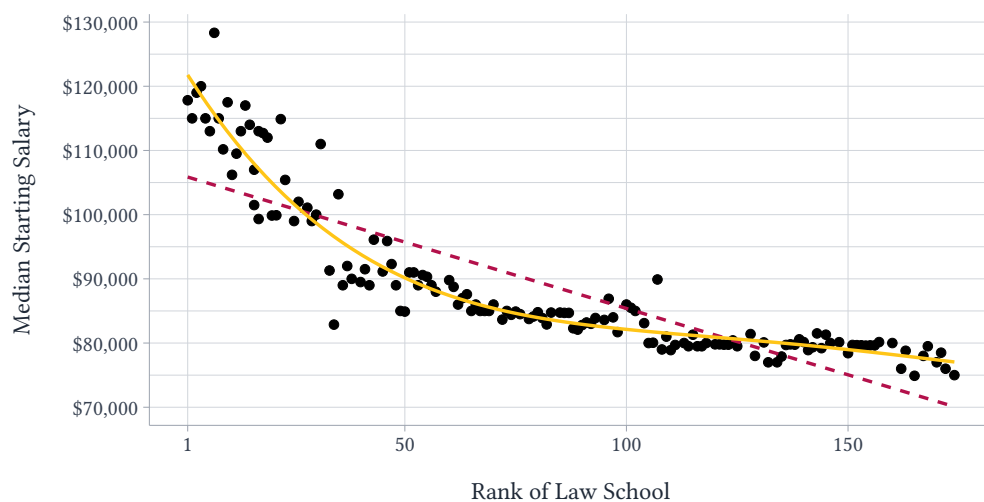
Answer: I would estimate the in-sample mean-squared prediction error and whichever model had a lower MSPE would perform ‘better’

- ii. (10pt) Describe which of the two models you would use if your goal is predicting median starting salary given the rank of a law school?

Answer: Since the fourth-order polynomial line (in yellow) fits the data better, it would be preferable for prediction in this case. It does not seem to be overfitting the data.

- iii. (10pt) Why might someone want to use the linear model in this context?

Answer: In this context, the linear model is less accurate at prediction but is easier to explain (i.e. for every 10-unit decrease in school rank, we predict a median starting salary decrease of $10\hat{\beta}_1$.)



3. Continuing with the law school example, say we regress salary on an intercept and an indicator being a top 25 ranked program (=1 if ranked in top 25, =0 otherwise). We estimate a coefficient of 27177 and a standard error of 1528.

- i. (15pt) Can you reject the null that top 25 ranked law schools do not earn more than other law schools?

Answer: The confidence interval is $27177 \pm 1.96 * 1528 = (24182, 30171)$. Since this confidence interval does not contain 0, we can reject the null that a school ranked in the top 25 does not have a statistically significantly different median starting salary.

4. Continuing with the law school example, the regression model estimate is as follows:

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OLS estimation, Dep. Var.: salary
              Estimate Std. Error  t value  Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)  106063.518   1405.0819   75.4856  < 2.2e-16 ***
rank         -206.731     12.5843  -16.4278  < 2.2e-16 ***
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Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
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- i. (10pt) Interpret the coefficient on a law school's rank

Answer: A school with a rank of 10 schools lower, we predict their median starting

salary to be $-\$2060$ lower. (1 school lower predicts a $-\$206$ lower). This estimate is statistically significantly different from 0.

- ii. (10pt) Form a 95% confidence interval for the rank coefficient (the critical value of the middle 95% is ± 1.96).

Answer: With 95% confidence, we think the true association of rank and median starting salary is within this range $-206.731 \pm 12.5843 = (182.06, 231.39)$.

5. Continuing with the law school example, schools can be broken up into 4 US regions: Northeast, South, Midwest, and the West. We want to see if different regions have different starting salaries. We regress median starting salaries on dummies for each region (excluding one)

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OLS estimation, Dep. Var.: salary
              Estimate Std. Error   t value   Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)    88366.52    2143.09  41.233212 < 2.2e-16 ***
region::Northeast  3874.39    3097.83   1.250681   0.21308
region::South    -4025.82    2499.87  -1.610412   0.10950
region::West      1568.09    2828.93   0.554307   0.58023
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Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

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- i. (10pt) What is the omitted group in this case?

Answer: The omitted group is the Midwest.

- ii. (10pt) What is the average median starting salary for lawyers who went to school in the West?

Answer: The average median starting salary for lawyers in the west is $88366.52 + 1568.09 = 89934.61$.