Critical Elements of a **High-Quality** Research Paper

Kara Kockelman

University of Texas, Austin

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Paper Organization (data-driven topics)

- Topic **Motivation** (not just an introduction… one needs to establish topic relevance)

- **Synthesis** of the Literature (highlighting the **Gaps** that your work addresses)

- Model **Specification** (avoiding excessive discussion of existing techniques)

- Description of **Data** Sets

Paper Organization (2)

- Estimation **Results** (& substantive Interpretation)

- **Applications**

- **Conclusions** (including recommendations), **Limitations, & Extensions**

Key Recommendations

- Begin with a **well-defined, relevant question.**
- **Revise, revise, revise**. Step back, & then revise some more! (It will *never* be perfect.)
- Stop focusing on statistical significance – what is the **practical significance** of your results?
- Make it **clear** & offer **something for everyone**. (Can your grandparents understand why what you have written is useful?)
- **Thoughtful transitions** are critical (between paragraphs & across sections).

Other Suggestions

- Be **consistent**, in formatting, verb tense, language…
- Be **concise**: Knock out all unnecessary words, in every statement. (e.g., "the work done so far on the project" → "project work to date")
- Be **candid**, about your work's limitations.
- The **results** of statistical models "**suggest**" & "support"; they do *not prove* anything.
- Provide **summary statistics** for all variables used (in table form).
- **Figures & tables** should be adequately **labeled** – to (almost) stand on their own.

Other Suggestions (2)

- **Cite support** for "every" statistic & impression that you do not derive.
- Turn to **archival journals**, wherever possible.
- **Quote**, rather than paraphrase.
- **Remove first-person** language.
- Learn where/how to **hyphenate** & enjoy!
- All **variables** should be italicized (except matrices).
- **Acronyms** should be spelled out in first instance.
- Avoid **exaggeration**. (Good work will sell itself!)

Remember that this is an opportunity to teach. As the author, you are an instructor.

Merci beaucoup!

Questions & Suggestions?