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ERRATUM

Erratum to: Incentives for creativity

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In our paper "Incentives for Creativity" (Erat and Gneezy 2015), we failed to cite some very relevant recent papers in experimental economics. We wish to correct this in the discussion below.

Bradler et al. (2014) run a laboratory experiment with over a thousand subjects looking into how rewards affect performance in a creative and in a routine task. They find that tournament incentives work well in both tasks, suggesting that creative performance is not subject to motivational crowding out. They also look at unconditional wage gifts. Interestingly, wage gifts induce reciprocity only in the routine task. They run additional treatments to investigate this asymmetry and find that it is the uncertainty about ones exact performance, and, hence, the lack of control over the back-transfer to the principal, that inhibits reciprocity in the creative task.

Charness and Grieco (2012) consider the effect of incentives on individual creativity. They present a series of experiments on creativity where subjects face creativity tasks where, in one case, ex-ante goals and constraints are imposed on

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their answers, and in the other case no restrictions apply. The effect of financial incentives on creativity is then tested. Their findings provide striking evidence that financial incentives affect "closed" (constrained) creativity, but do not facilitate "open" (unconstrained) creativity.

Laske and Schröder (2015) investigate how incentives affect creative performance. They introduce a novel real effort task that allows to objectively quantify performance in multiple dimensions of creative work, i.e. quantity, quality, and novelty. In three treatments and a baseline, they separately incentivize each dimension by introducing piece-rate incentives. They find that incentivizing quantity and incentivizing novelty have a positive effect on both quantity and novelty. They find negative spillover effects of incentivizing quantity on the quality. The increases in quantity is in line with payoff-maximization, while the other effects seem to be due to distortion of effort. Combining all three dimensions of creativity, they find that incentivizing novelty results in the highest overall creative output.

Eckartz et al. (2013) compare performance in a word based creativity task under three incentive schemes: a flat fee, a linear payment and a tournament. Furthermore, we also compare performance under two control tasks (Raven's advanced progressive matrices or a number-adding task) with the same treatments. In all tasks we find that incentives seem to have very small effects and that differences in performance are predominantly related to individual skills.

References

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