Research Question

How does the acknowledgement of a forecast's uncertainty affect the readers' ambiguity attitudes?

Hypotheses

Eliciting the two ambiguity indices, that is, ambiguity aversion index as well as the ambiguity-generated insensitivity index, we expect differences across treatments that are summarized in the following hypotheses. While Hypotheses 1 to 3 only mention the ambiguity aversion, we expect similar effects for the ambiguity-generated insensitivity.

Hypothesis 1: The surprising forecasts are associated with more ambiguity aversion compared to the unsurprising ones.

Hypothesis 2: The acknowledgement of uncertainty (reporting intervals) is associated with a higher level of ambiguity aversion unless the forecast is surprising.

Hypothesis 3: The combination of the point and interval estimators leads to a combined effect and thus lies in the middle of the two individual effects of the forecasts.

Analysis Plan

The analysis plans can be divided into four parts. First, we want to compare the effects of the treatments in the second round. To do this, we will compare the individual events and counter events, as well as the two uncertainty indices from Baillon et al. (2018) using parametric mean tests (if the conditions for parametric tests are not fulfilled, we will use non-parametric ones).

Second, we want to perform difference-in-differences regression analyses in which the first round is also considered. Here we again consider both indices as well as all events and counter events. To do this, we look once at the differences in the communication methods for the confirmation case and once for the contradiction case. Furthermore, we compare the differences for the contradiction case and the confirmation case for each communication method. We also want to insert control variables in stages, that is, first no control variables and then control for different groups of control variables as robustness (e.g., demographic variables, risk preferences).

Third, we look at the heterogeneous treatment effects to see if there are interactions between control variables and treatment effects. The analysis of possible heterogeneous treatment effects will be explorative.

Finally, we are interested in the determinants of ambiguity attitudes. As a consequence, we plan to investigate the pre-treatment ambiguity indices as this is the first attempt (that we know of) that elicits Baillon et al.'s (2018) on a large and representative German sample. For instance, we are interested in gender differences as they were found to have an impact on risk and uncertainty preferences. In addition, we aim to explore possible differences within the other covariates that we elicit.

As an exclusion criterion for the analyses, we will take, on the one hand, the answers to the question whether participants did not understand the tasks well. Of course, we can only take this into account if it does not affect too many participants. On the other hand, we will use the frequency of wrong answers in the comprehension questions at the beginning of the study as an exclusion criterion. Because we only pose two comprehension questions (meaning that respondents can try random combinations of answers) the time needed to read through the instructions may become relevant in this context as well.