

Hoshino Seminar – Professor Hoshino

Dr. Hoshino Takahiro
Specialty: Economics, Marketing
Interviewer: 青竹

『Own research and seminar activities』

Please tell us about what you are currently researching

I am researching marketing and behavioral economics in general, but originally I was researching statistics, specifically causal effect estimation through a statistical analysis. To be more specific, when evaluating policies, corporate advertisements and promotions, educational programs, and medical treatments the original baseline of various causes such as prior sales, academic achievements, and the emergence of other diseases it is difficult to understand whether the policy, promotion, or program is effective or not. Statistical causal effect estimation is a method of using statistics to examine the causal effects of pure policies, programs, and treatments.

I have also been researching psychology and brain science for some time, and I am interested in finding out in which situations people act rationally or irrationally.

And when it comes to making use of it in purchasing behavior, it becomes marketing. We conduct research using statistical methods and the knowledge of behavioral economics and psychology, and I also assist in applying such behavior in practice.

In the seminar, we assign projects according to the interests of the students. I will help you understand what you are looking for and help you improve your skills. In fact, for example, understanding consumer behavior from point card data with 50 million members and providing advanced data services, utilization of web browsing data obtained from smartphones and PCs, and customer purchase data at supermarkets. Based on this, we work together with manufacturers, advertising agencies, and trading companies to formulate optimal measures. In addition to marketing, we have conducted a variety of activities such as how to promote health maintenance behavior based on health checkup data and household surveys of all residents over 20 years in a certain local government, and (with Line) understanding and prevention of cyberbullying on SNS. Some students participate in projects that bring statistics and behavioral economics to the field.

『On the job training』

Can you tell us about your education philosophy?

I went to the University of Tokyo, and I majored in science. I was dreaming to learn about biotechnology, something like IPS cells, but when I decided to go on to specialize in it and visited laboratories, I realized that I will be working under a professor and do his busy work. I

felt that this system of “busy work” didn’t suit me, so my interest gradually shifted to humanities. I also considered economics as my specialty, but at the time there was no such term as behavioral economics in Japan. I couldn't believe it. So, I moved to psychology, and since I was good at mathematics, I decided to specialize in statistics, which is also required in psychology. As a result, I now conduct research on the three pillars of statistics, behavioral economics, and marketing.

『Statistics, behavioral economics, and marketing』

What do you require from the incoming 2nd years?

As a professor, I specialize in statistics and econometrics, but as a seminar, I can do practical marketing based on statistics and behavioral economics that can be used even after entering a company. I don't think there is any other seminar like mine, so I would like people who are interested to come.

As a seminar, we conduct [on-the-job training], so we would like people who are willing to participate in competitions and give presentations in front of companies to participate in practical activities. Also, since you will be working in groups, it is necessary to have a minimum level of cooperation skill so that working in a group will not be a problem. Of course, I think that we can provide an interesting place for people who want to do experiments in big data analysis and behavioral economics, but we don't need everyone to be like that, and we want to value diversity. ...and at the very least you should be able to understand the concept of statistics. (Laugh) You don't necessarily have to like working with data, but if you don't mind, please apply!

『We are looking for people who are willing to take part in practical activities』

Lastly, a short message to the 2nd years

In an era where artificial intelligence is taking over more and more jobs, what are the remaining high-level (that is, Keio graduates will get) jobs?

At least "research and development" will always remain, so if you want to study economics, please do your best to study. However, most students will not become scholars. What else is left?

What artificial intelligence or machine learning can do from big data is, after all, only the discovery of past patterns. In the future, there will be an increasing demand for decision-making work that takes on that risk and work that uses a variety of knowledge and experience to make creative plans. Many of the people who do this kind of work at global companies, such as google and amazon, have PhDs in economics. Did you know that such skill cannot be imitated by artificial intelligence? If you think about it that way, there is no loss in studying economics seriously in your second year.

These days, more than ever before, advanced academic knowledge is required for work.

In fact, it is very disappointing to realize that the study you are doing now is actually very meaningful and that you should have studied more later. I hear things like this from companies all the time.

However, I think it is not easy to maintain the motivation to study, so I think it would be good to pay attention to social trends and find meaning in your current studies.

Sidenote:

From the first time I met Professor Hoshino, he had a gentle vibe, and we had a lively conversation. However, in anticipation of when students will go out into the world, in terms of education, it seems that he is trying to provide very practical guidance that will benefit the students.

It is important for his second-year students, who will be deciding on a seminar, to narrow down their field, but I would also recommend meeting the professor in person and getting to know him personally.

Despite his busy schedule, the professor willingly agreed to the interview and always treated me with courtesy. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you very much.