Overrewarding Luck and Lucky Streak:

Evidence from MLB *

Yusuke Tanahara†

Koji Yashiki[‡]

Yoshiyuki Nakazono§

January 2021

Abstract

Gauriot and Page (2019) provide evidence of a violation of the informativeness princi-

ple whereby luck successes are overly rewarded. We estimate the causal effect of a lucky

success (homerun) on the evaluation of the player's performance using the data on Major

League Baseball in the United States. We find clear evidence that a lucky homerun is overly

influencing not only managers' decisions in the next game but also players' wages of the

next year. This implies lucky streak: A lucky homerun raises the probability of being fielded

in the next game and more lucky players obtain higher salary in the next year. This evidence

suggests that this phenomenon is likely to be widespread in economic organization.

JEL Classification:

D86; M55; Z20; Z21

Keywords:

baseball statistics; causal inference; principal agent problem;

contract theory;

*We thank Rui Ota, Qing-YuanSui, as well as the participants of the 14th Meeting of Association of Behavioral Economics and Finance and the seminar at The Institute of Statistical Mathematics for their comments and suggestions. Nakazono acknowledges financial support from JSPS (19K13649). The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and not those of the Cabinet Office or the Government of Japan.

[†]Yokohama City University, i170439d@yokohama-cu.ac.jp

[‡]Yokohama City University, m205118e@yokohama-cu.ac.jp

§Cabinet Office, Government of Japan; Yokohama City University, nakazono@yokohama-cu.ac.jp