

# Are the Unskilled Really That Unaware? Understanding Seemingly Biased Self-Assessments

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## Abstract

The so-called unskilled-and-unaware problem was experimentally identified a decade ago: The unskilled are seemingly afflicted by a double curse because they also seem unaware of their (relative) lack of skills. Numerous authors have elaborated on this problem – experimentally as well as theoretically. In this paper, we report on the results of three experiments (one field, two laboratory) through which we test a theoretical model and some informal extensions. Specifically, we examine the impact of general information and specific information (feedback) on the quality of self-assessment (“calibration”) in various tasks and under various conditions. Overconfidence behavior initially prevails in almost all settings. We find a strong positive effect of general information on calibration, and show that calibration improves more when feedback is provided. In our experiments, it is the unskilled who improve their calibration the most.

## Abstrakt

Takzvaný *unskilled-and-unaware* problém bol experimentálne identifikovaný pred desaťročím: *Unskilled* sú zdanlivo postihnutí dvojitým prekliatím pretože sa zdajú byť nevedomí si nedostatku svojich schopností (v porovnaní s inými). Viacerí autori rozvinuli tento problém – experimentálne aj teoreticky. V tomto článku referujeme výsledky troch experimentov (jedného z terénu a dvoch laboratórnych) pomocou ktorých testujeme teoretický model a niekoľko neformálnych rozšírení. Konkrétne, skúmame vplyv všeobecnej informácie a špecifickej informácie (spätnej väzby) na kvalitu sebaohodnotenia („kalibrácie“) v rôznych úlohách a za rôznych podmienok. Prílišná sebaistota spočiatku prevláda v takmer všetkých situáciách. Identifikujeme silný pozitívny efekt všeobecnej informácie na kalibráciu a ukážeme, že kalibrácia sa zlepší ešte viac keď je poskytovaná spätná väzba. V našich experimentoch sú to práve *unskilled* ktorí si najviac zlepšia svoju kalibráciu.

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