

A Vignette for the R package: ezsim

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Setup of a simulation	6
2.1	Parameters	7
2.2	Data Generating Process	8
2.3	Estimators	9
2.4	True Value	9
2.5	Display Name	9
2.6	estimator_parser	9
3	Run a simulation	10
3.1	Run it now or run it later	10
3.2	Run a test	10
3.3	autosave	10
3.4	Parallel Computing	10
3.4.1	Automatically generated cluster	10
3.4.2	Customized cluster	11
3.5	use_seed	11
4	Summary of the simulation result	11
4.1	Summary Table	11
4.1.1	Subset of the Summary Table	12
4.1.2	More Summary Statistics	12
4.1.3	Customize the Summary Statistics	12
4.2	Plotting the simulation	13
4.2.1	Plotting an ezsim object	13
4.2.2	Subset of the Plot	13
4.2.3	Parameters Priority of the Plot	14
4.2.4	Density Plot	16
4.2.5	Plot the summary ezsim	18
4.2.6	Plot the Power Function	21

1 Introduction

ezsim provides a handy way to run simulation and examine its results. Users dont have to work on those tedious jobs such as loop over several set of parameters, organize and summarize the simulation results,etc. Those tedious jobs are completed by ezsim. Users are only required to define some necessary information, such as data generating process, parameters and estimators. In addition, ezsim provides a flexible way to visualize the simulation results and support parallel computing. In this vignette, several examples are used to demonstrate how to create a simulation with ezsim. Our first example will give you a first glance of what ezsim can do for you. Section 2 and 3 will tell you how to use ezsim.

Suppose $x_1 \dots x_n$ are drawn independently from a normal distribution with mean μ and standard deviation σ . We want to know how the sample size n , mean μ and standard deviation σ would affect the behavior of the sample mean.

We would like to replicate the simulation for 200 times. n takes value from 20,40,60,80 . μ takes value from 0,2. σ takes value from 1,3,5.

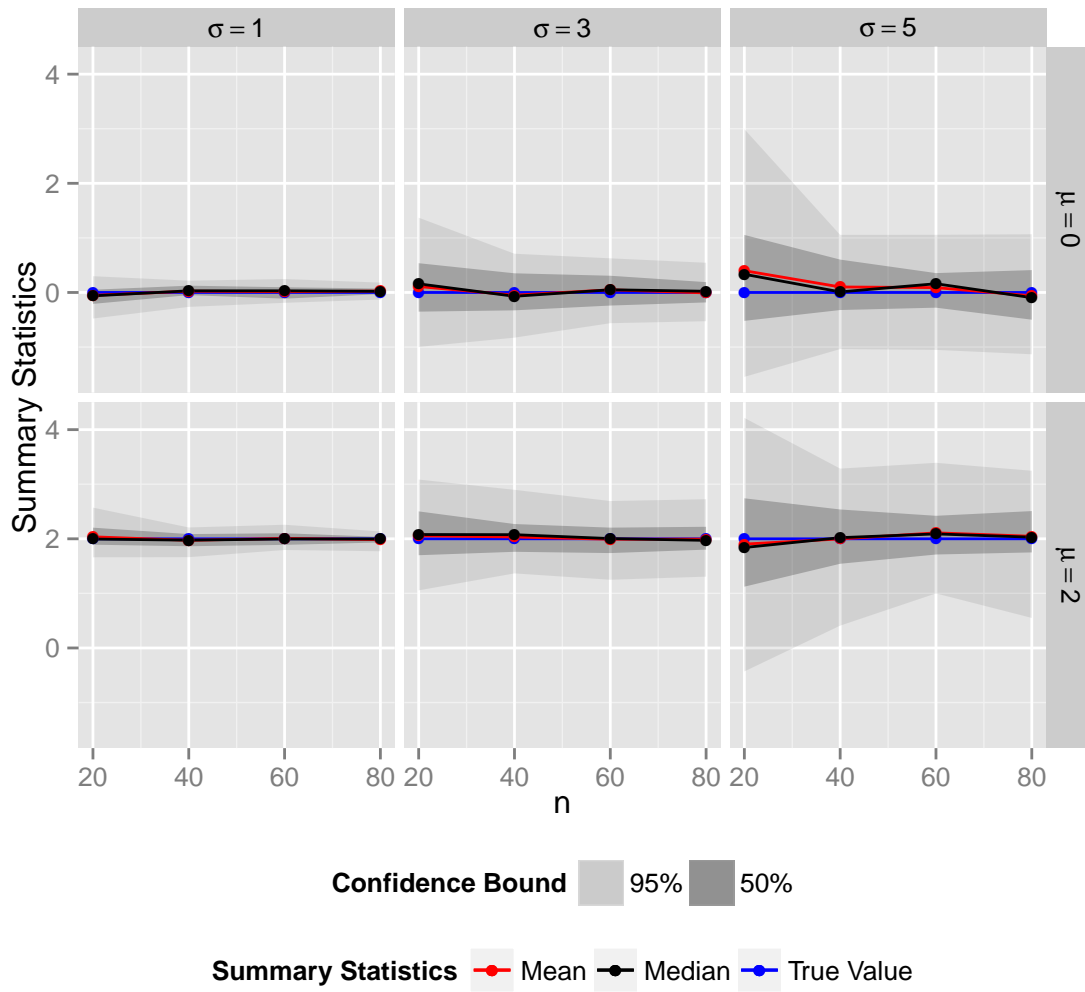
```
> library(ezsim)
> ezsim_basic<-ezsim(
+   m           = 50,
+   run         = TRUE,
+   display_name = c(mean_hat="hat(mu)",sd_mean_hat="hat(sigma[hat(mu)])"),
+   parameter_def = createParDef(list(n=seq(20,80,20),mu=c(0,2),sigma=c(1,3,5))),
+   dgp         = function() rnorm(n,mu,sigma),
+   estimator    = function(x) c(mean_hat = mean(x),
+                                 sd_mean_hat=sd(x)/sqrt(length(x)-1)),
+   true_value   = function() c(mu, sigma / sqrt(n-1))
+ )
```

```
> summary_ezsim_basic<-summary(ezsim_basic)
> head(summary_ezsim_basic,16)
```

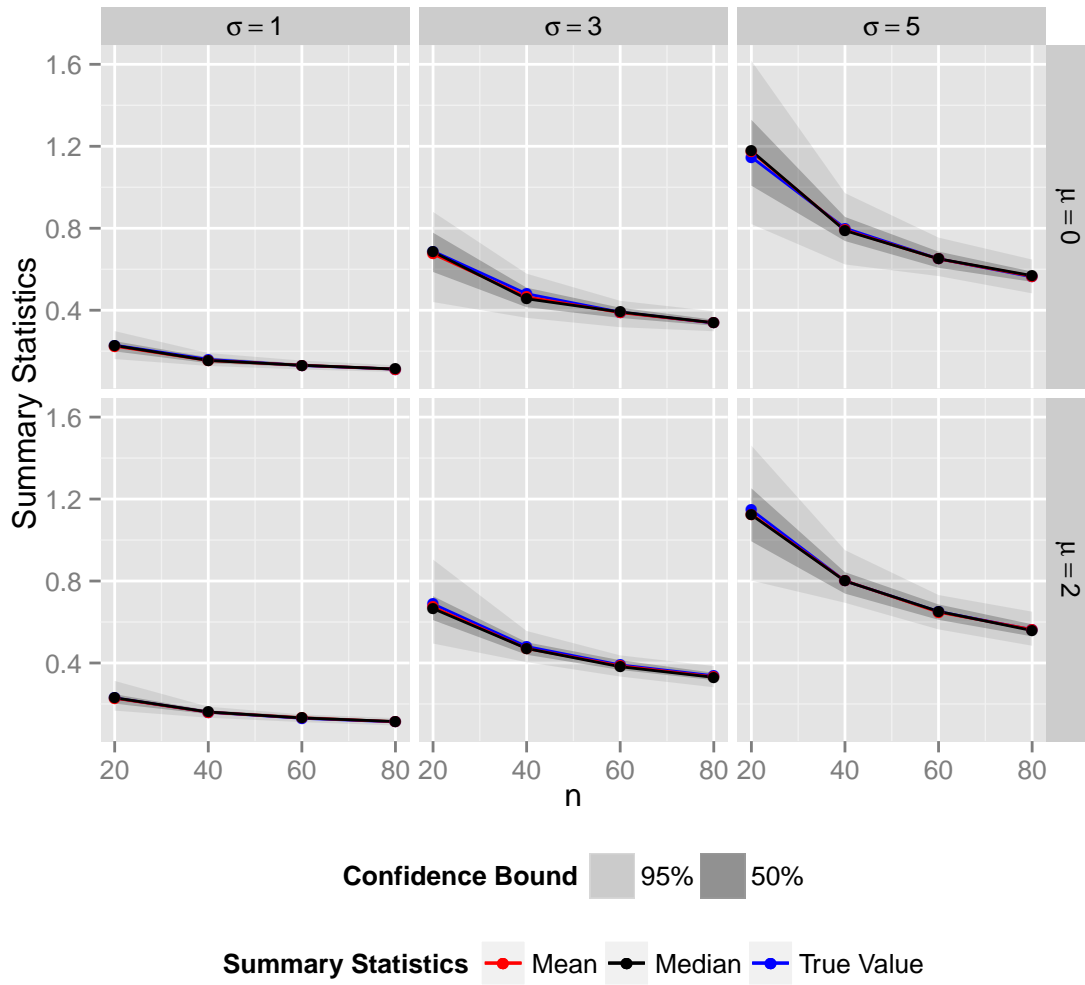
	estimator	n	sigma	mu	Mean	TV	Bias	SD	rmse	BiasPercentage
1	hat(mu)	20	1	0	-0.0526	0	-0.0526	0.1970	0.2039	-Inf
2	hat(mu)	20	1	2	2.0363	2	0.0363	0.2408	0.2436	0.0181
3	hat(mu)	20	3	0	0.1089	0	0.1089	0.6329	0.6422	Inf
4	hat(mu)	20	3	2	2.0565	2	0.0565	0.5789	0.5817	0.0282
5	hat(mu)	20	5	0	0.3988	0	0.3988	1.1877	1.2528	Inf
6	hat(mu)	20	5	2	1.9030	2	-0.0970	1.2284	1.2323	-0.0485
7	hat(mu)	40	1	0	0.0232	0	0.0232	0.1438	0.1456	Inf
8	hat(mu)	40	1	2	1.9721	2	-0.0279	0.1482	0.1508	-0.0139
9	hat(mu)	40	3	0	-0.0496	0	-0.0496	0.4721	0.4747	-Inf
10	hat(mu)	40	3	2	2.0327	2	0.0327	0.4010	0.4023	0.0164
11	hat(mu)	40	5	0	0.1011	0	0.1011	0.6588	0.6665	Inf
12	hat(mu)	40	5	2	1.9972	2	-0.0028	0.8176	0.8176	-0.0014
13	hat(mu)	60	1	0	0.0139	0	0.0139	0.1395	0.1402	Inf
14	hat(mu)	60	1	2	2.0077	2	0.0077	0.1396	0.1398	0.0039
15	hat(mu)	60	3	0	0.0486	0	0.0486	0.3651	0.3683	Inf
16	hat(mu)	60	3	2	1.9917	2	-0.0083	0.3823	0.3824	-0.0042

```
> plot(ezsim_basic)
> plot(ezsim_basic,"density")
```

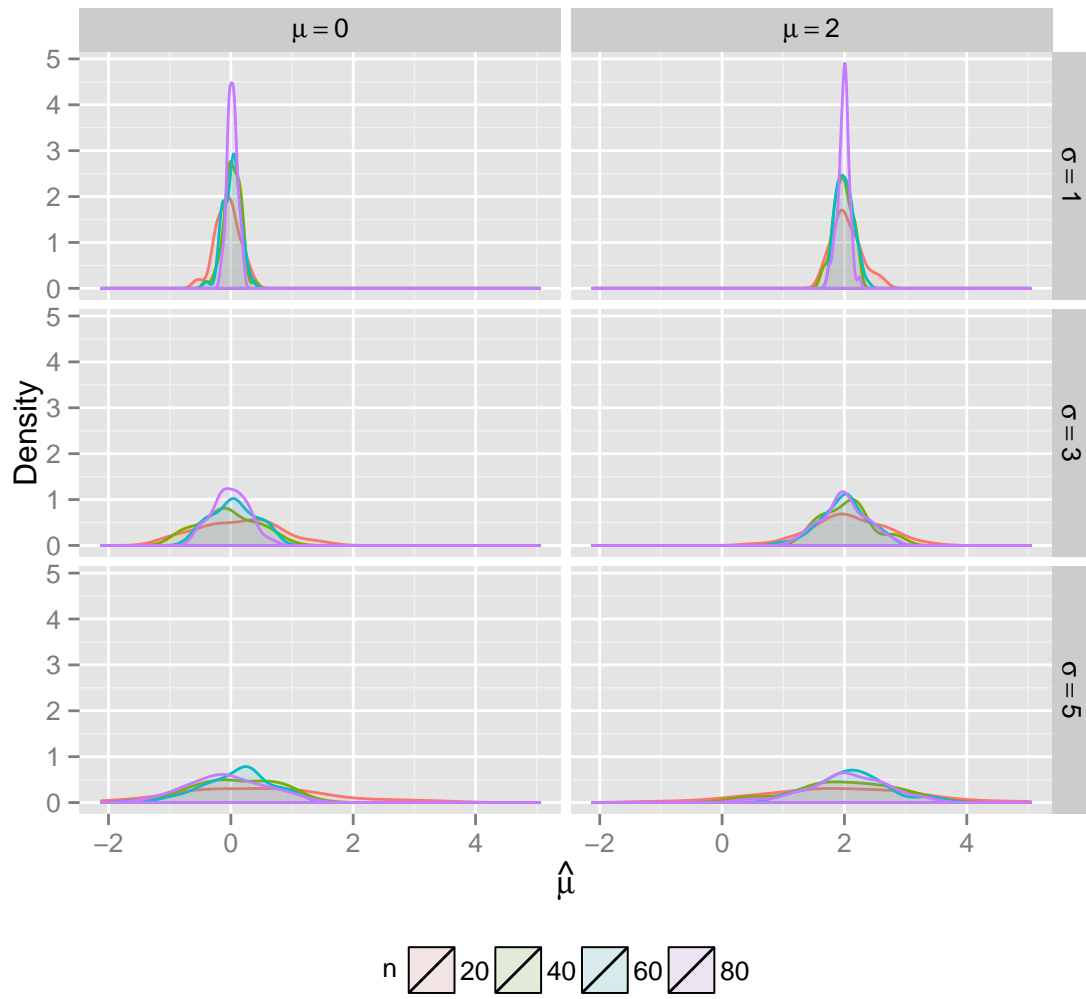
Summary of $\hat{\mu}$

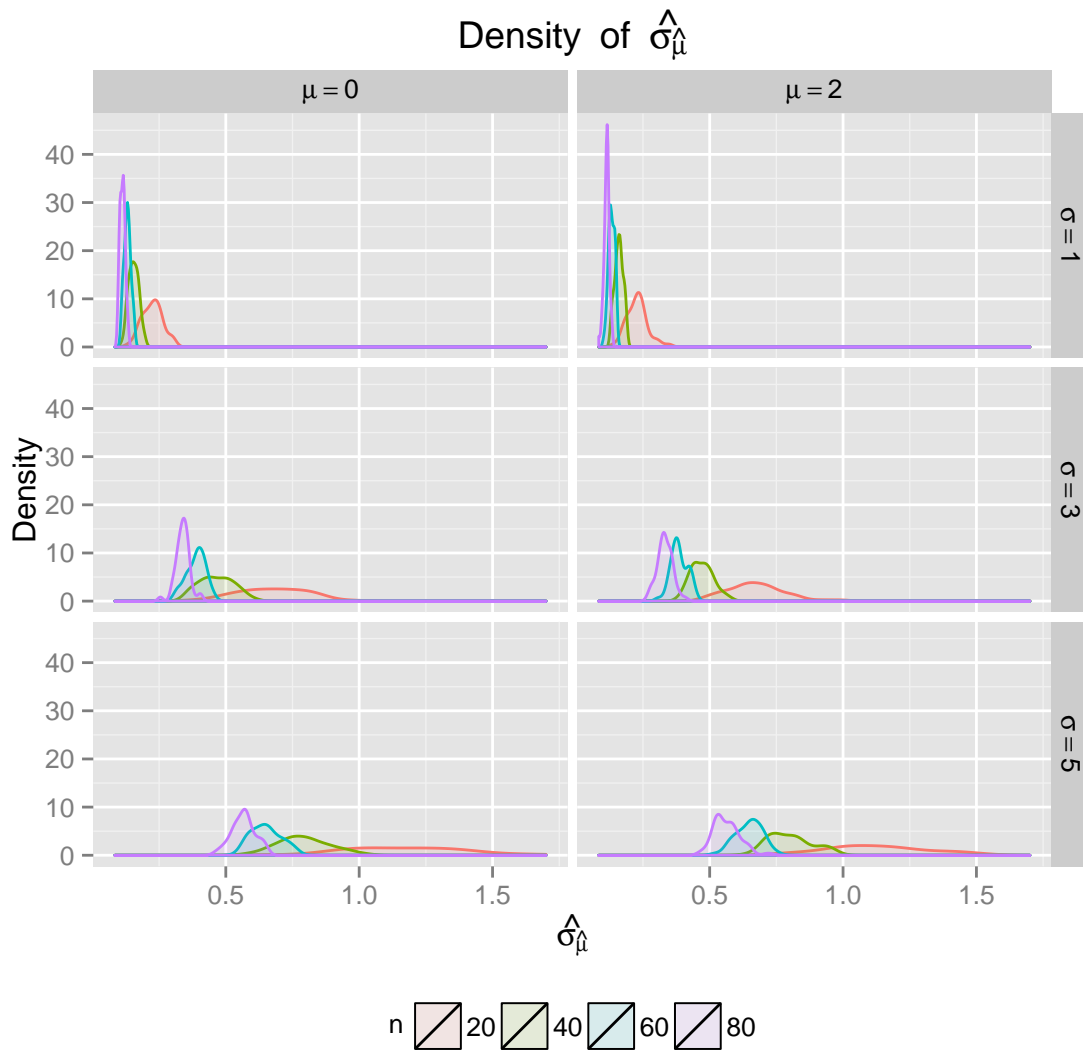


Summary of $\hat{\sigma}_\mu$



Density of $\hat{\mu}$





2 Setup of a simulation

There are four essential components to build an `ezsim` object. You must specify each of them to create an `ezsim` object.

1. Number of Replication m
2. Data Generating Process (dgp) : Function for generating data.
3. Parameters : dgp takes the value of parameters to generate data.
4. Estimator : A function to perform estimation using the data generated by dgp.

Also there are optional components:

1. True Value (TV) : It computes the true value of estimates from dgp.
2. Display Name : It defines the display format of the name of estimators and parameters. See `plotmath` in R manual.
3. `estimator_parser` : Parse the value of the estimator.

4. `run` : If it is true, then the simulation will be ran right after the `ezsim` object is created. Otherwise, you can run it manually by `run(ezsim_basic)`. Default is `TRUE`.
5. `run_test` : Whether to perform a test before the simulation
6. `auto_save` : Number of auto save during the simulation, default is 0.
7. `use_seed` : The seed to be used in the simulation. If `use_core=1`, `set.seed(use_seed)` will be called. If `use_core=>1` and `cluster=NULL`, `clusterSetRNGStream(cluster,use_seed)` will be used. Ignored if `use_core=>1` and `cluster` is provided.
8. `use_core` : The number of CPU core to be used in the simulation.
9. `cluster_packages` : Names of the packages to be loaded in the cluster.
10. `cluster` : cluster for parallelization. If it is `NULL`, a cluster with `use_code` cores will be created automatically (will be removed after the simulation)

If you dont specify the value of `True Value`, the value of `bias` and `rmse` will also be `NA`.

2.1 Parameters

In `ezsim`, parameters are generated by `parameterDef` object. To create a `parameterDef` object, we can use the function `createParDef`. It takes 2 arguments, `selection`(the first argument) and `banker`. `selection` are parameters may vary in the parameters set. Any vectors or matrix are regarded as a sequence of the same parameter. `banker` are fixed parameters in the parameters set. It can be any data type.

In our example, all parameters are scalars. We can create a `parameterDef` object by:

```
> par_def<-createParDef(selection=list(n=seq(20,80,20),mu=c(0,2),sigma=c(1,3,5)))
> par_def
```

Selection Parameters:

```
$n
[1] 20 40 60 80
```

```
$mu
[1] 0 2
```

```
$sigma
[1] 1 3 5
```

Banker Parameters:

```
list()
```

Since we have 4 different values of n , 2 different values of μ and 3 different values of σ , there is total of $4 \times 3 \times 2 = 24$ possible combination of parameter sets. If we want to have a look of the generated parameters, we can use the function `generate`. It will return a list of parameter sets. (Only the first three will be shown in the example)

```
> generate(par_def)[1:3]
```

```
[[1]]
n=20, mu=0, sigma=1
```

```
[[2]]
n=40, mu=0, sigma=1
```

```
[[3]]
n=60, mu=0, sigma=1
```

`setSelection` and `setBanker` change the value of a `parameterDef` object. Different from `createParDef`, the parameters don't have to be stored in a list.

Example: Suppose we want to generate n samples from a bivariate normal distribution with parameters μ_1, μ_2 and a variance-covariance matrix Σ .

```
> par_def2<-createParDef(selection=list(mu1=5,mu2=3,n=c(10,20)),
+   banker=list(Sigma=matrix(c(1,.4,.4,1),nrow=2)))
> generate(par_def2)
```

```
[[1]]
Sigma :
      [,1] [,2]
[1,]  1.0  0.4
[2,]  0.4  1.0
```

```
mu1=5, mu2=3, n=10
```

```
[[2]]
Sigma :
      [,1] [,2]
[1,]  1.0  0.4
[2,]  0.4  1.0
```

```
mu1=5, mu2=3, n=20
```

2.2 Data Generating Process

The Data Generating Process generates the simulated data for `estimator` to compute the estimates. Inside this function, you can call any parameters directly. It must be a function.

In our example, the data generating process is very simple. It generates a vector of normal random variables with length n , mean μ and sd σ .

```
> dgp<-function(){
+   rnorm(n,mu,sigma)
+ }
```

```
> evalFunctionOnParameterDef(par_def,dgp,index=1)
```

```
[1] -1.42948004  0.81997891 -1.13389009  1.11679822 -0.20629776 -1.03542477
[7] -0.35962843 -0.35871067  0.99472509  0.17643160  2.09609300 -0.61966120
[13]  1.44681161  0.03750141 -0.67544571 -0.50322569 -0.04233521 -1.44715001
[19]  0.63792223 -0.44650014
```

```
> evalFunctionOnParameterDef(par_def,dgp,index=2)
```

```
[1] -0.71822821 -0.28196851 -0.68754567 -0.68598706 -0.17958990  0.01389804
[7]  0.95961557  0.37254580 -0.49191604 -0.58761360  0.61430317  0.34793092
[13]  0.69975428  0.77448065  0.92064450 -0.16118671  0.29057362 -0.24011791
[19] -0.39990023  1.37094890 -0.12504134  0.91386535 -0.60162751 -0.32373655
[25]  0.33775312  1.41183313  2.76016473 -0.58319669 -0.68167304  0.71624888
[31] -0.61333658  0.22946517  0.68528414  0.77646478 -0.27939038  0.17440808
[37] -1.09853606  0.59943025  0.64008191 -1.55105907
```

```
>
```

```
> dgp_2<-function(){
+   z1<-rnorm(n)
+   z2<-rnorm(n)
```



```

+   cbind(x1=mu1+z1*Sigma[1,1],
+         x2=mu2+ Sigma[2,2]*(Sigma[1,2]*z1+ sqrt(1-Sigma[1,2]^2)*z2 ))
+ }
> evalFunctionOnParameterDef(par_def2,dgp_2)

      x1      x2
[1,] 5.561348 3.855970
[2,] 4.878589 3.506899
[3,] 4.845081 3.347011
[4,] 4.935306 1.201829
[5,] 4.713639 2.475914
[6,] 5.526948 2.452217
[7,] 5.005070 3.293616
[8,] 6.067454 4.311427
[9,] 6.739886 5.392706
[10,] 4.411689 2.261345

>

```

2.3 Estimators

It computes the estimates from the data generated by `dgp`. The return value of estimators must be a numeric vector. Dont forget to specify the name of estimators. You can use the `evalFunctionOnParameterDef` function to test whether the function work properly. It must be a function.

```

> estimator<-function(x){
+   c(mean_hat = mean(x), sd_mean_hat=sd(x)/sqrt(length(x)-1))
+ }
> estimator(evalFunctionOnParameterDef(par_def,dgp,index=1))

      mean_hat sd_mean_hat
-0.3744250    0.2099226

```

2.4 True Value

It computes the true value of estimates from `dgp`. The return value should have same length as the estimators. Also, the position of return value should match with estimators. Similar to `dgp`, You can call any parameters within this function. It can be a function or `NA`(bias and rmse will also be `NA`).

```

> true<-function(){
+   c(mu, sigma / sqrt(n-1))
+ }
> evalFunctionOnParameterDef(par_def,true)

[1] 0.0000000 0.2294157

```

2.5 Display Name

It defines the display format of the name of estimators and parameters. For example, you can set the display name of "mean_hat" to "hat(mu)". See `plotmath` for details.

```

> display_name<-c(mean_hat="hat(mu)",sd_mean_hat="hat(sigma[hat(mu)])")

```

2.6 estimator_parser

Sometimes the estimator may return an object instead of a vector, `estimator_parser` can be specified to extract relevant information from from the return value of estimator. It took the return value of `estimator` as argument and return a new value. For example, if the estimator returns an `lm` object, then `estimator_parser` can be `coef`.

```

> estimator_lm <- function(x) {
+   lm(y~x1+x2, data=x)
+ }
> estimator_parser_lm <- function(x){
+   coef(x)
+ }

```

if `estimator_parser` is not a function, it will be replaced by `"function(x) x"` which mean it is not going to change anything.

3 Run a simulation

3.1 Run it now or run it later

You dont have run the simulation right after the creation of an `ezsim` object. You can set `run=FALSE` to avoid running the simulation in `ezsim`. You can call `run()` to run the simulation later. For example,

```

> library(ezsim)
> ezsim_basic<-ezsim(
+   m           = 50,
+   run         = FALSE,
+   display_name = c(mean_hat="hat(mu)",sd_mean_hat="hat(sigma[hat(mu)])"),
+   parameter_def = createParDef(list(n=seq(20,80,20),mu=c(0,2),sigma=c(1,3,5))),
+   dgp         = function() rnorm(n,mu,sigma),
+   estimator    = function(x) c(mean_hat = mean(x),
+                               sd_mean_hat=sd(x)/sqrt(length(x)-1)),
+   true_value   = function() c(mu, sigma / sqrt(n-1))
+ )
> ezsim_basic = run(ezsim_basic)

```

3.2 Run a test

if `run_test=TRUE`, then `ezsim` will run the `estimator` and `dgp` once for each combination of parameters. You dont want to see an error message pop up after 1 hour of simulation because some of parameters are problematic. It is `TRUE` by default.

3.3 autosave

if `autosave > 0`, the corresponding number of temporary object of `ezsim` will be stored in current path. It aims to avoid losing everything if the program is halted before the simulation is completed (e.g. computer crashed). However, if this happened, we wont able to replicate the same simulation using the same seed.

3.4 Parallel Computing

3.4.1 Automatically generated cluster

`ezsim` implements Parallelization by using functionality of `snow` in `parallel`. You can simply set the value of `use_core` to use more than 1 CPU cores. `ezsim` will create clusters with `use_core` cores and distribute the simulation to elements of cluster. If the simulation require some packages, you have to specify them in `cluster_packages`. The cluster will be deleted after the simulation. It is as simple as:

```

> library(ezsim)
> ezsim_basic<-ezsim(
+   m           = 50,
+   run         = TRUE,
+   use_core    = 4,

```

```

+   use_seed      = 123,
+   cluster_packages = "Jmisc",
+   display_name  = c(mean_hat="hat(mu)",sd_mean_hat="hat(sigma[hat(mu)])"),
+   parameter_def = createParDef(list(n=seq(20,80,20),mu=c(0,2),sigma=c(1,3,5))),
+   dgp          = function() rnorm(n,mu,sigma),
+   estimator     = function(x) c(mean_hat = mean(x),
+                               sd_mean_hat=sd(x)/sqrt(length(x)-1)),
+   true_value    = function() c(mu, sigma / sqrt(n-1))
+ )
> summary(ezsim_basic)

```

If the simulation require some packages, you have to specify them in `cluster_packages`. Notice that it took a fixed amount of time to create the cluster, simulation may take longer time if `m` is too small.

3.4.2 Customized cluster

If you want to customize the cluster, you can make your own cluster and give it to `ezsim`. **ezsim will not change the RNG for the cluster or delete the cluster before or after the simulation. You will have to do it by yourself**

```

> library(parallel)
> my_cluster = makeCluster(4)
> clusterSetRNGStream(my_cluster, 123)
> library(ezsim)
> ezsim_basic<-ezsim(
+   m          = 50,
+   run        = TRUE,
+   use_core   = 4,
+   cluster    = my_cluster,
+   display_name = c(mean_hat="hat(mu)",sd_mean_hat="hat(sigma[hat(mu)])"),
+   parameter_def = createParDef(list(n=seq(20,80,20),mu=c(0,2),sigma=c(1,3,5))),
+   dgp        = function() rnorm(n,mu,sigma),
+   estimator  = function(x) c(mean_hat = mean(x),
+                               sd_mean_hat=sd(x)/sqrt(length(x)-1)),
+   true_value = function() c(mu, sigma / sqrt(n-1))
+ )
> stopCluster(my_cluster)
> summary(ezsim_basic)

```

3.5 use_seed

To ensure the simulation is reproduciable, you can specify a seed for the simulation. There are three possible scenarios for the usage:

1. If `use_core=1`, `set.seed(use_seed)` will be called right before the simulation start.
2. If `use_core=>1` and `cluster=NULL`, `clusterSetRNGStream(cluster,use_seed)` will be called.
3. If `use_core=>1` and `cluster`, it will be ignored. Probably you would like to control the RNG for the cluster by yourself

4 Summary of the simulation result

4.1 Summary Table

You can create a summary table by `summary` . The default summary statistics include mean, true value, bias, standard deviation, root mean square error and p-value of Jarque-Bera test. See section 1 for example.

4.1.1 Subset of the Summary Table

You can select a subset of parameters and estimators to compute the summary statistics.

```
> summary(ezsim_basic,subset=list(estimator="mean_hat",n=c(20,40),sigma=c(1,3)))
```

	estimator	n	sigma	mu	Mean	TV	Bias	SD	rmse	BiasPercentage
1	hat(mu)	20	1	0	-0.0526	0	-0.0526	0.1970	0.2039	-Inf
2	hat(mu)	20	1	2	2.0363	2	0.0363	0.2408	0.2436	0.0181
3	hat(mu)	20	3	0	0.1089	0	0.1089	0.6329	0.6422	Inf
4	hat(mu)	20	3	2	2.0565	2	0.0565	0.5789	0.5817	0.0282
5	hat(mu)	40	1	0	0.0232	0	0.0232	0.1438	0.1456	Inf
6	hat(mu)	40	1	2	1.9721	2	-0.0279	0.1482	0.1508	-0.0139
7	hat(mu)	40	3	0	-0.0496	0	-0.0496	0.4721	0.4747	-Inf
8	hat(mu)	40	3	2	2.0327	2	0.0327	0.4010	0.4023	0.0164

4.1.2 More Summary Statistics

If you want to have more summary statistics, you can set `simple=FALSE` in the argument. Then the summary statistics will also include: percentage of bias, minimum, first quartile, median, third quartile and maximum.

```
> summary(ezsim_basic,simple=FALSE,
+ subset=list(estimator="mean_hat",n=c(20,40),sigma=c(1,3)))
```

	estimator	n	sigma	mu	Mean	TV	Bias	BiasPercentage	SD	rmse	Min
1	hat(mu)	20	1	0	-0.0526	0	-0.0526	-Inf	0.1970	0.2039	-0.5711
2	hat(mu)	20	1	2	2.0363	2	0.0363	0.0181	0.2408	0.2436	1.6266
3	hat(mu)	20	3	0	0.1089	0	0.1089	Inf	0.6329	0.6422	-1.1185
4	hat(mu)	20	3	2	2.0565	2	0.0565	0.0282	0.5789	0.5817	0.5337
5	hat(mu)	40	1	0	0.0232	0	0.0232	Inf	0.1438	0.1456	-0.4157
6	hat(mu)	40	1	2	1.9721	2	-0.0279	-0.0139	0.1482	0.1508	1.6497
7	hat(mu)	40	3	0	-0.0496	0	-0.0496	-Inf	0.4721	0.4747	-0.9369
8	hat(mu)	40	3	2	2.0327	2	0.0327	0.0164	0.4010	0.4023	1.3168

	Q25	Median	Q75	Max	JB_test
1	-0.2090	-0.0616	0.0500	0.3737	0.8335
2	1.8915	1.9957	2.2043	2.6512	0.2405
3	-0.3511	0.1583	0.5363	1.4314	0.6781
4	1.6990	2.0786	2.5023	3.3891	0.9556
5	-0.0483	0.0302	0.1249	0.3977	0.1825
6	1.8636	1.9750	2.0865	2.2185	0.6087
7	-0.3275	-0.0700	0.3511	0.9602	0.5667
8	1.7617	2.0758	2.2705	2.9215	0.5566

4.1.3 Customize the Summary Statistics

You can choose a subset of summary statistics by specifying value in `stat`. Also you can define your own summary statistics. `value_of_estimator` is the value of estimator and `value_of_TV` is the value of true value.

```
> summary(ezsim_basic,stat=c("q25","median","q75"),
+ Q025=quantile(value_of_estimator,0.025),
+ Q975=quantile(value_of_estimator,0.975),
+ subset=list(estimator="mean_hat",n=c(20,40),sigma=c(1,3)))
```

	estimator	n	sigma	mu	Q25	Median	Q75	Q025	Q975
1	hat(mu)	20	1	0	-0.2090	-0.0616	0.0500	-0.4778	0.2981
2	hat(mu)	20	1	2	1.8915	1.9957	2.2043	1.6610	2.5713
3	hat(mu)	20	3	0	-0.3511	0.1583	0.5363	-0.9977	1.3709

```

4  hat(mu) 20      3  2  1.6990  2.0786  2.5023  1.0549  3.0859
5  hat(mu) 40      1  0 -0.0483  0.0302  0.1249 -0.2644  0.2168
6  hat(mu) 40      1  2  1.8636  1.9750  2.0865  1.6630  2.2082
7  hat(mu) 40      3  0 -0.3275 -0.0700  0.3511 -0.8282  0.7103
8  hat(mu) 40      3  2  1.7617  2.0758  2.2705  1.3656  2.8976

```

4.2 Plotting the simulation

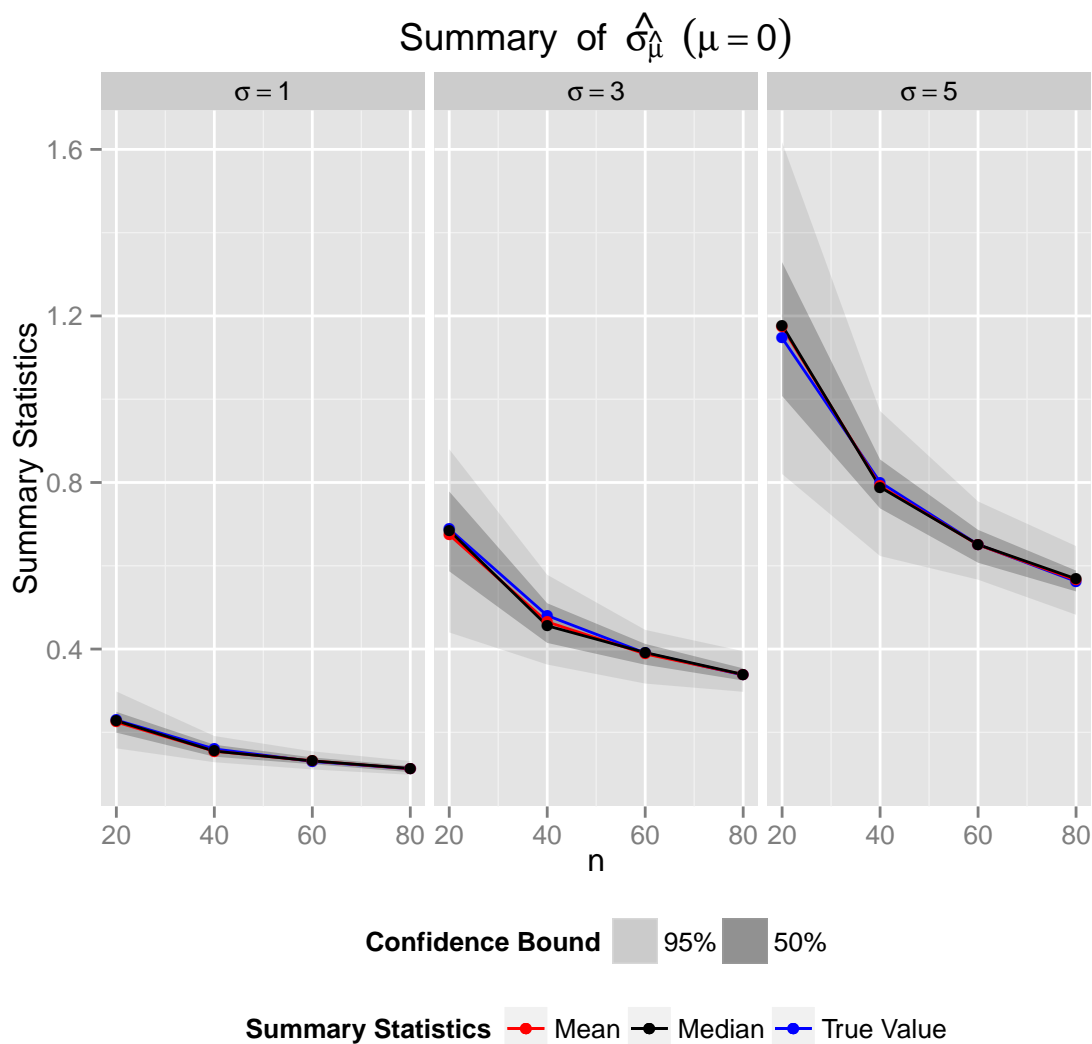
4.2.1 Plotting an ezsim object

The plot contains the mean, median, true value, 2.5th, 25th, 75th and 97.5th percentile of the estimator. The mean, median, true value are plotted as black, blue and red line respectively. 2.5th and 97.5th percentile form a 95% confidence bound and 25th and 75th percentile form a 50% confidence bound. x-axis of the plot will be the parameter take the most number of value (n in our example). Rest of them will be facets of the plot. Each estimator will occupy one plot. See section 1 for examples.

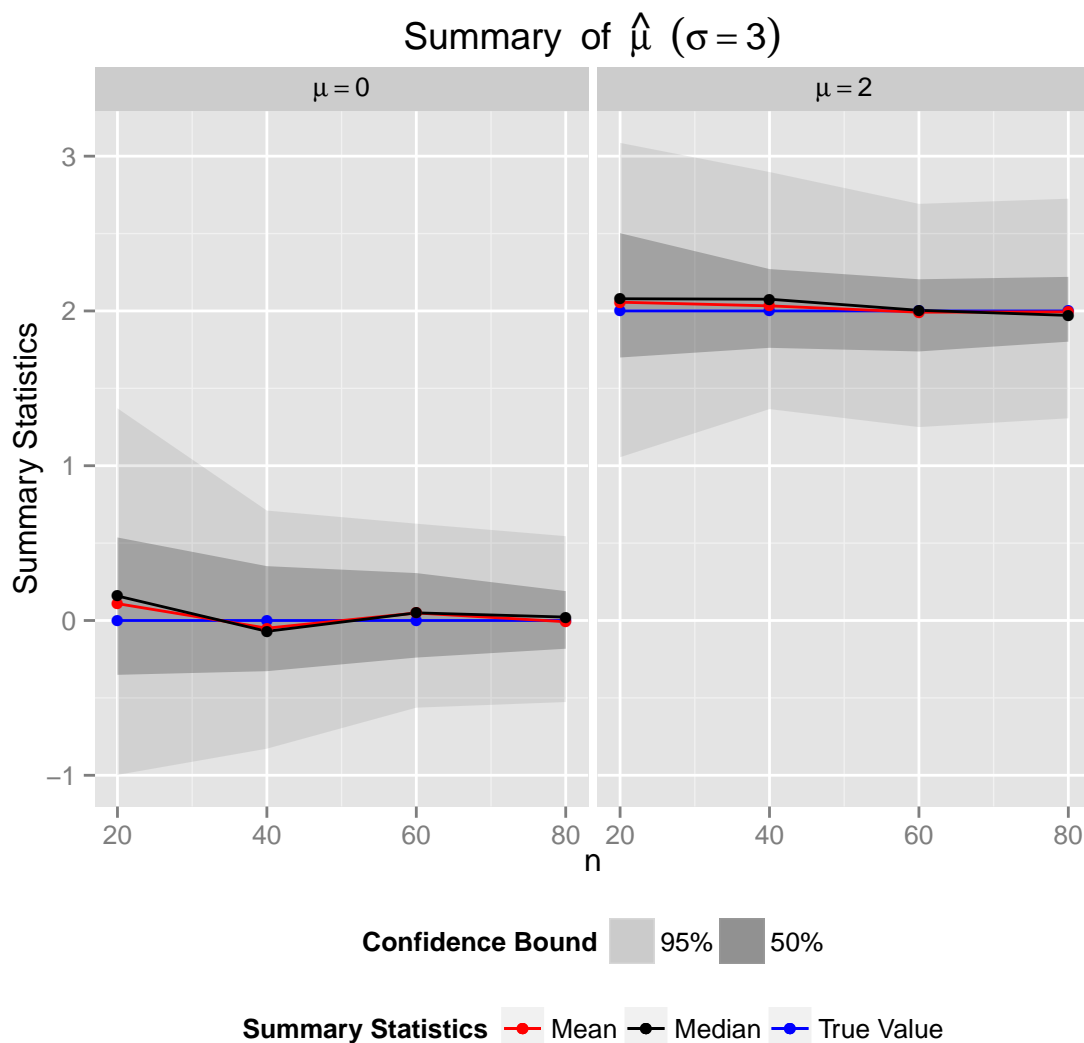
4.2.2 Subset of the Plot

The usage of `subset` is similar to `summary`. You can select a subset of estimators and/or parameters.

```
> plot(ezsim_basic, subset=list(estimator="sd_mean_hat", mu=3))
```



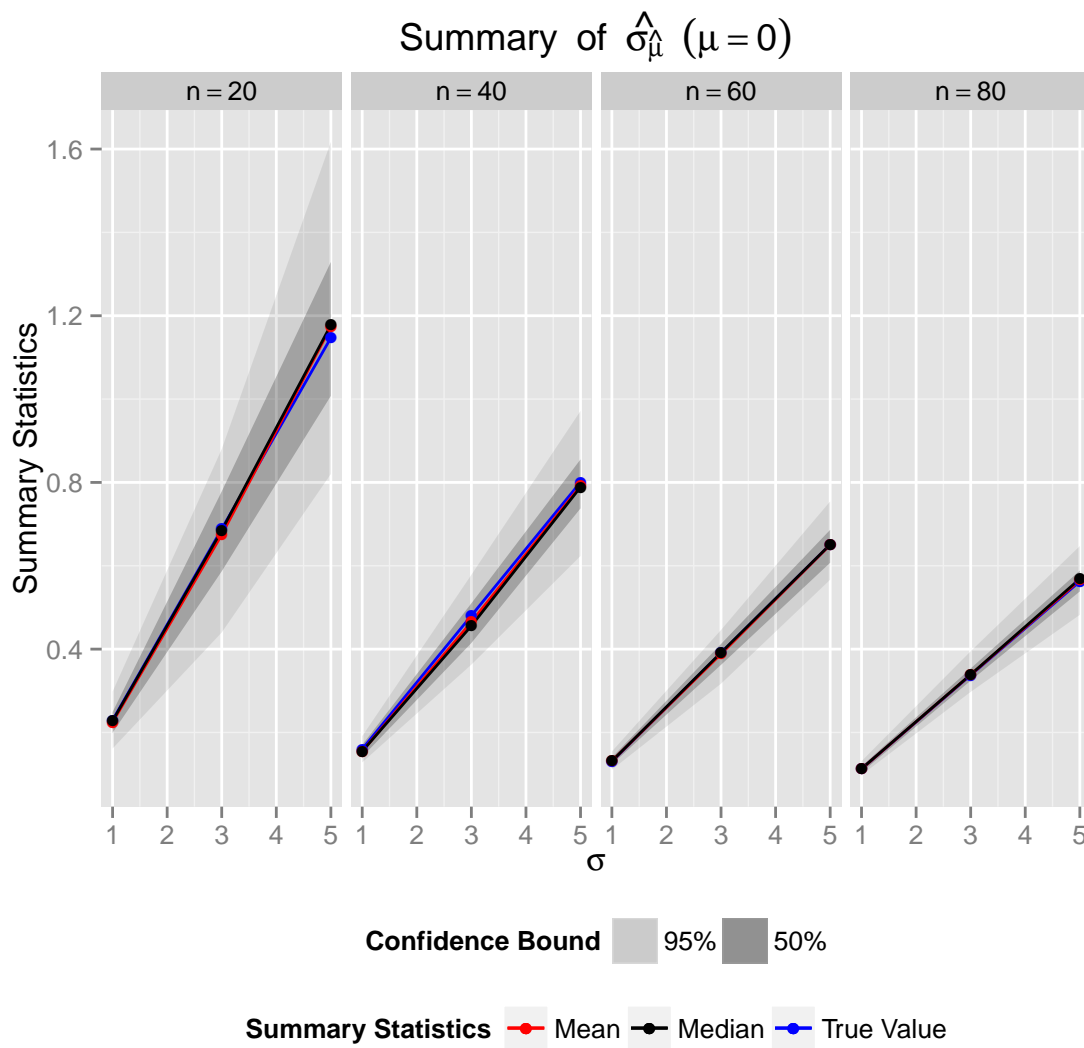
```
> plot(ezsim_basic,subset=list(estimator="mean_hat",sigma=3))
```



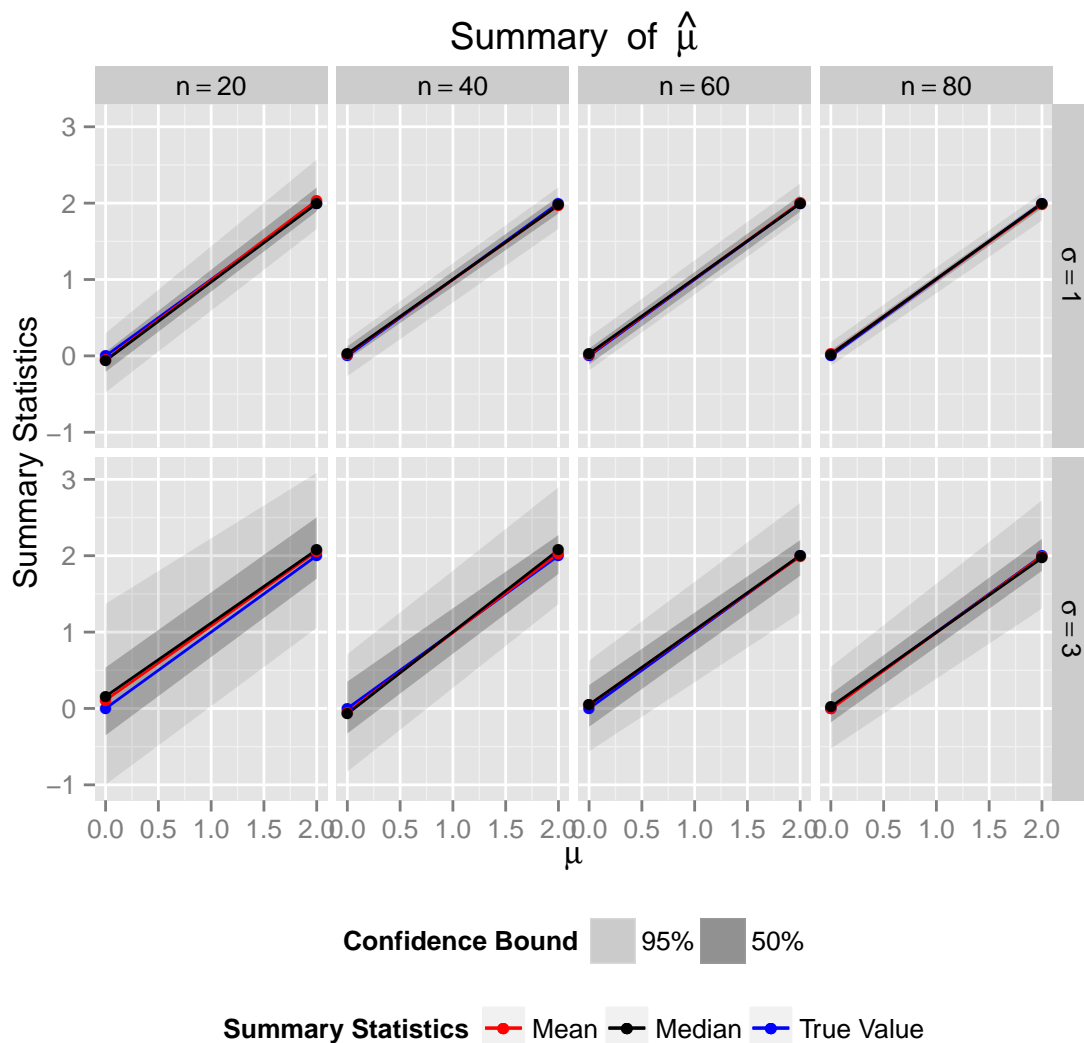
4.2.3 Parameters Priority of the Plot

The default priority of parameters is sorted by the number of value of each parameter (more to less). You can reset it by `parameter_priority`. The first parameter will have the highest priority (shown in the x-axis). You don't have to specify all parameters, the rest of them are sorted by the number of value of each of them.

```
> plot(ezsim_basic,subset=list(estimator="sd_mean_hat",mu=0),
+ parameters_priority=c("sigma","n"))
```



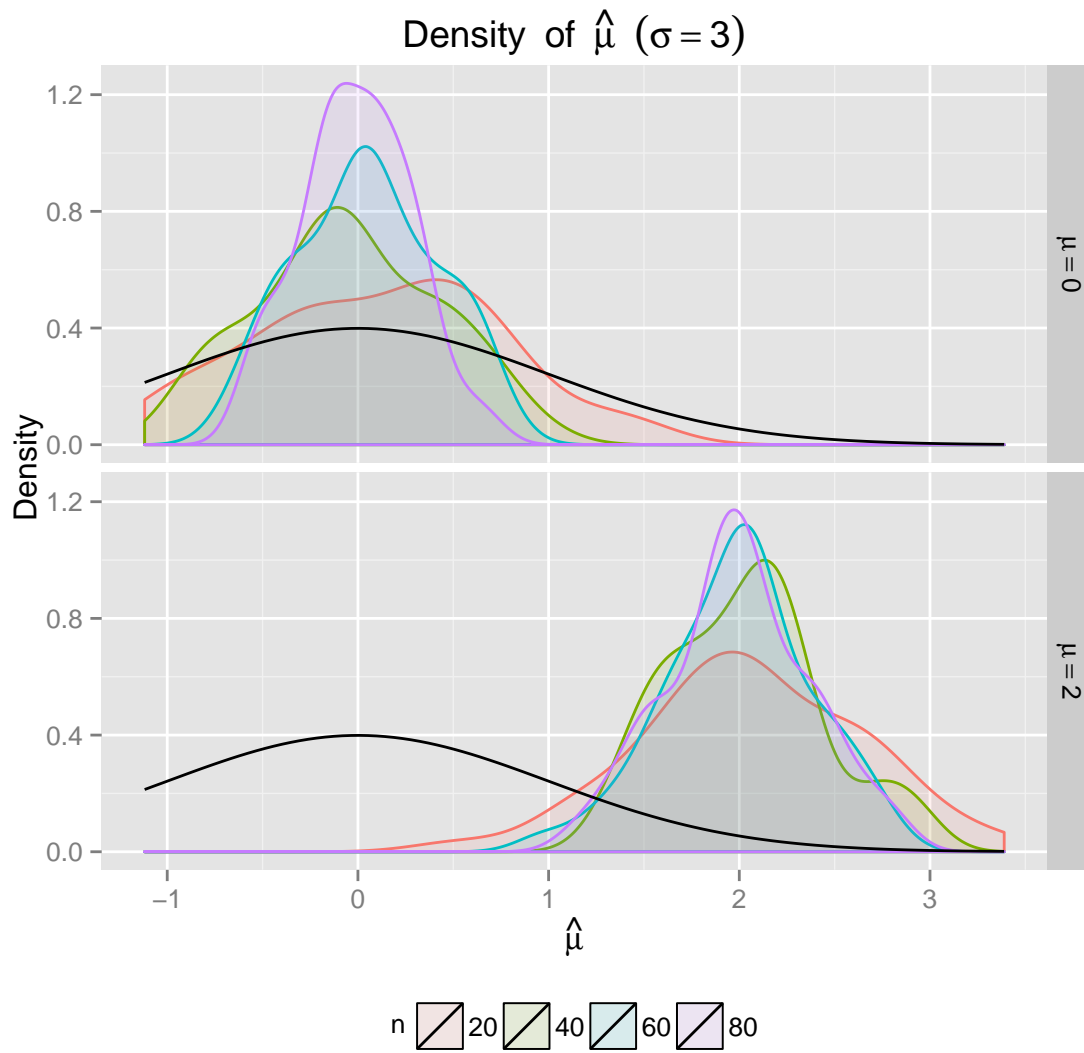
```
> plot(ezsim_basic, subset=list(estimator="mean_hat", sigma=c(1,3)), parameters_priority="mu")
```



4.2.4 Density Plot

Plot the density function of the estimator. `subset` and `parameter_priority` are valid for density plot. You can specify `benchmark=dnorm` by adding a density of the standard normal distribution. `dorm` can be replaced by other density function. See section 1 for examples.

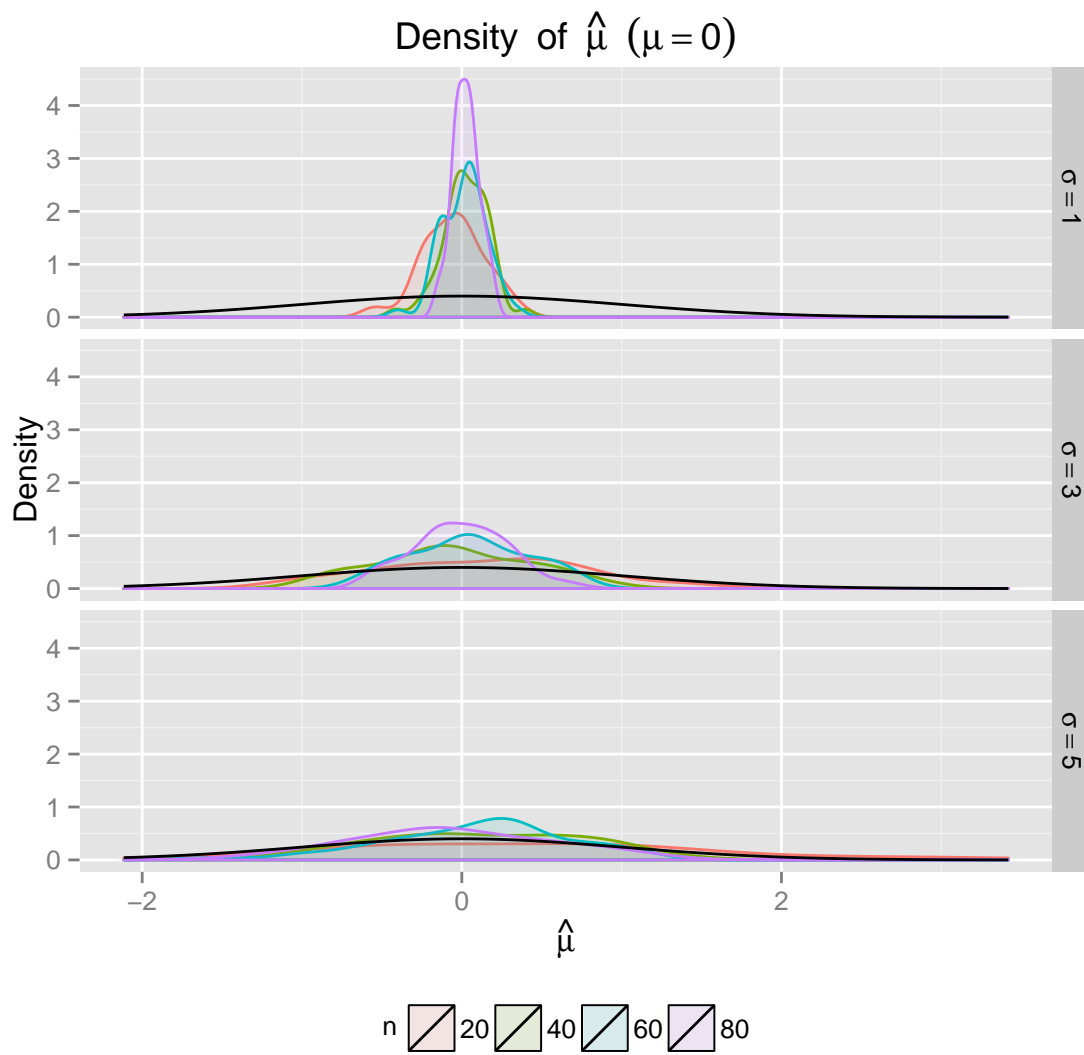
```
> plot(ezsim_basic, "density",
+       subset=list(estimator="mean_hat", sigma=3),
+       parameters_priority="n", benchmark=dnorm)
```

```

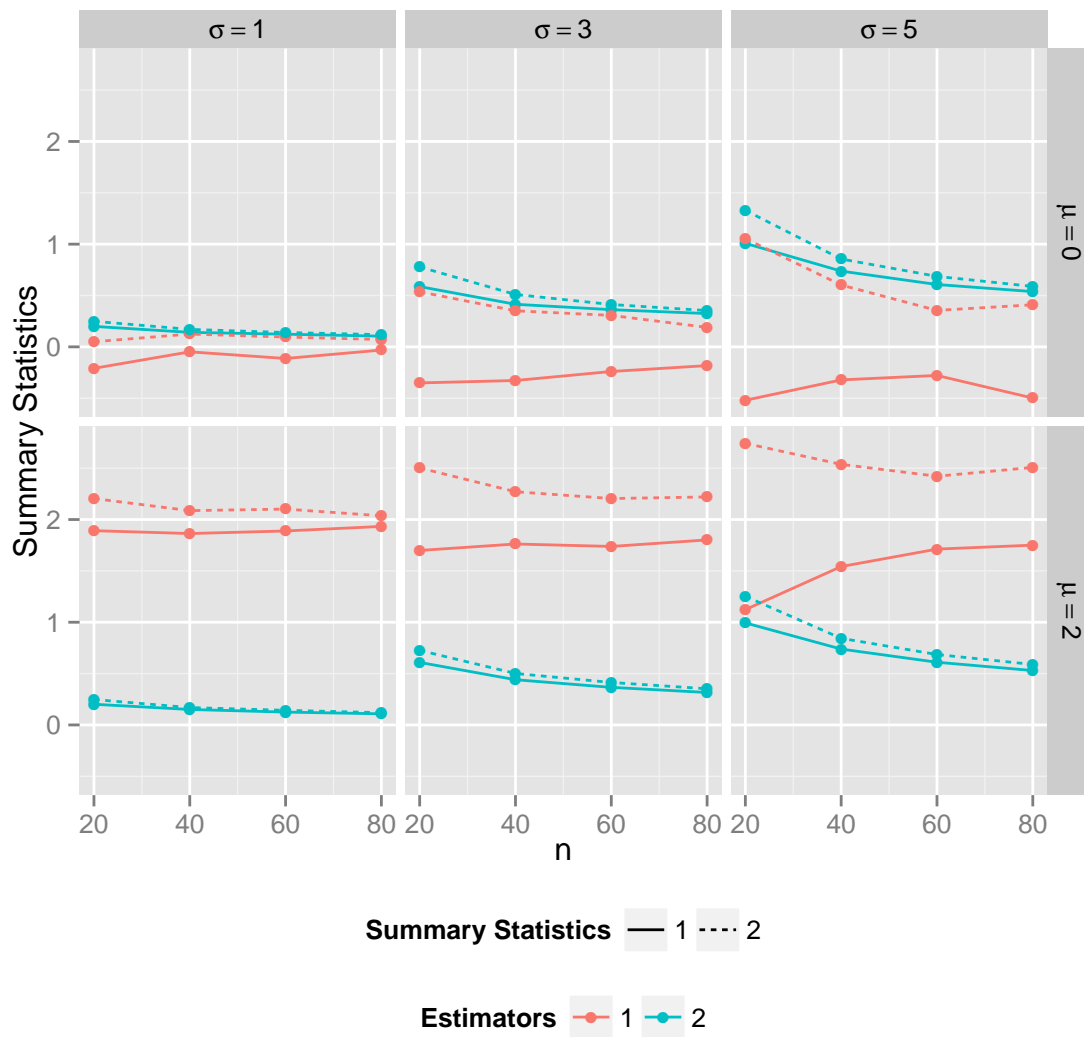
> plot(ezsim_basic,"density",
+   subset=list(estimator="mean_hat",mu=0),
+   parameters_priority="n" ,benchmark=dnorm)

```

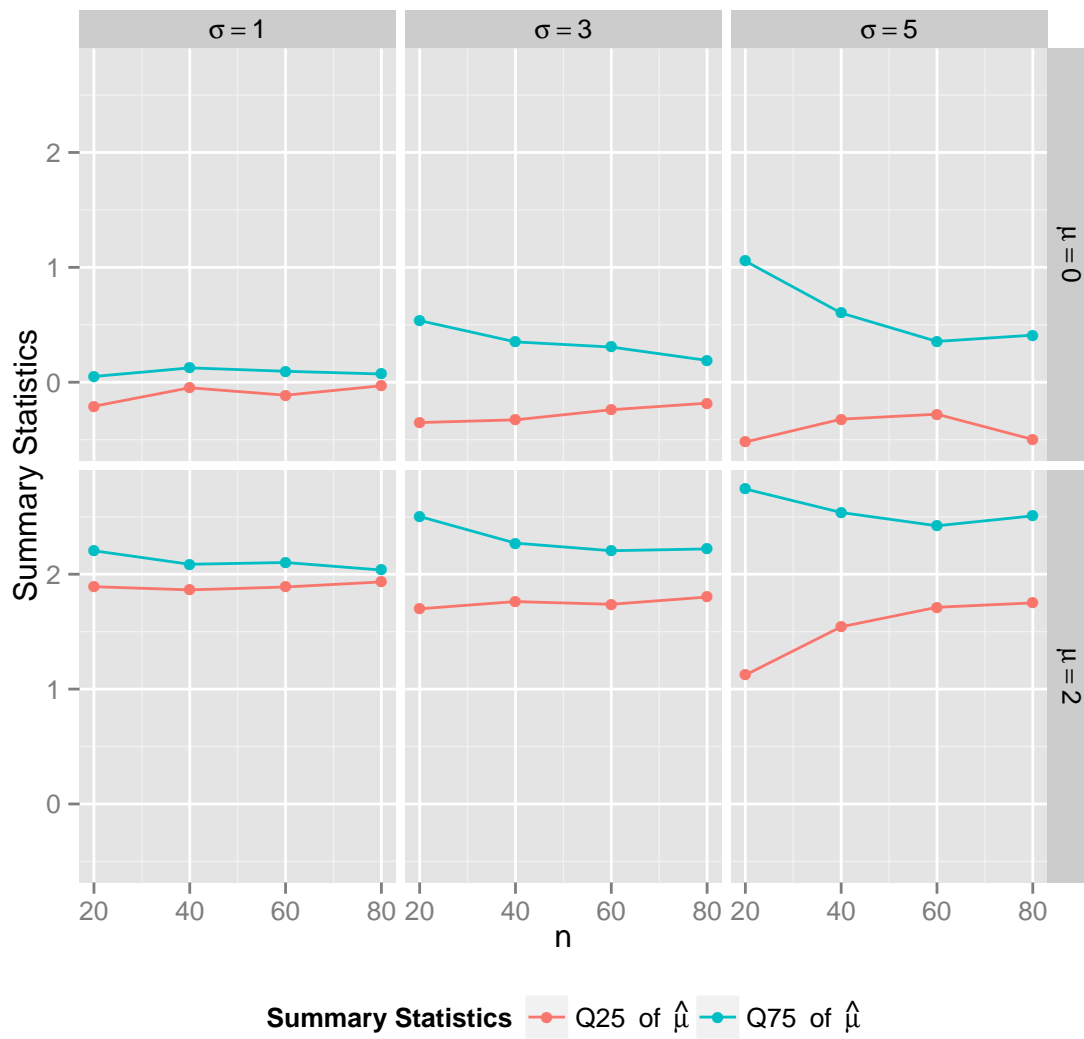


4.2.5 Plot the summary ezsim

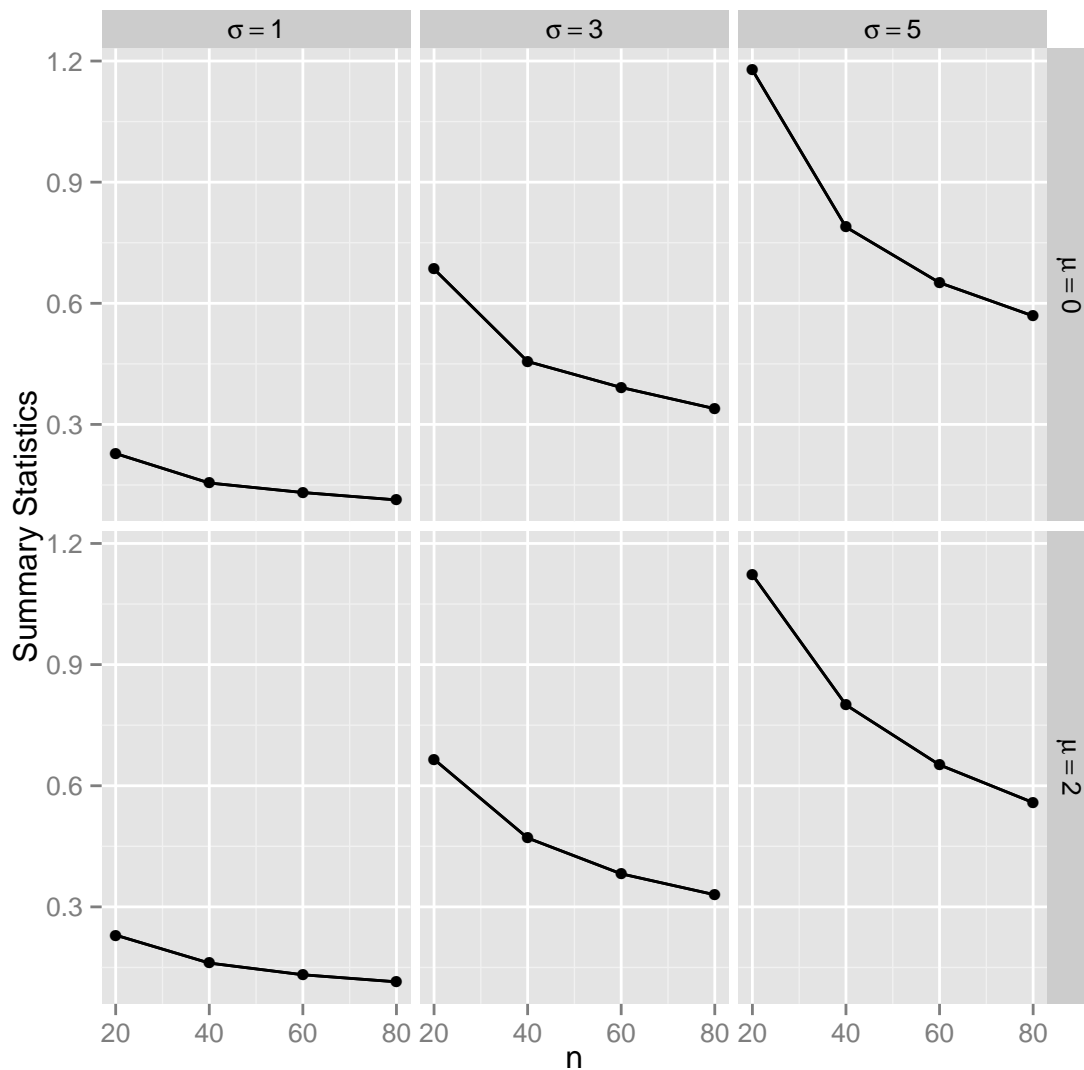
```
> plot(summary(ezsim_basic, c("q25", "q75")))
```



```
> plot(summary(ezsim_basic,c("q25","q75"),subset=list(estimator="mean_hat")))
```



```
> plot(summary(ezsim_basic,c("median"),subset=list(estimator="sd_mean_hat")))
```



4.2.6 Plot the Power Function

If the estimator is an indicator of rejecting a null hypothesis (0: fail to reject null hypothesis; 1: reject null hypothesis), then we can plot the power function. A vertical line will be drawn if `null_hypothesis` is specified. The intersection of the vertical line (value of null hypothesis) and the power function is the size of the test. The following example shows the power function of testing whether the coefficient of a linear model is larger than one with t-test and z-test.

```
> ez_powerfun<-ezsim(
+   m           = 100,
+   run         = TRUE,
+   display_name = c(b="beta",es="sigma[e]^2",xs="sigma[x]^2"),
+   parameter_def = createParDef(selection=list(xs=1,n=50,es=5,b=seq(-1,1,0.1))),
+   dgp         = function(){
+     x<-rnorm(n,0,xs)
+     e<-rnorm(n,0,es)
+     y<-b * x + e
+     data.frame(y,x)
+   },
```

```

+ estimator = function(d){
+   r<-summary(lm(y~x-1,data=d))
+   stat<-r$coef[,1]/r$coef[,2]
+
+   # test whether b > 0
+   # level of significance : 5%
+   out <- stat > c(qnorm(.95), qt(0.95,df=r$df[2]))
+   names(out)<-c("z-test","t-test")
+   out
+ }
+ )
> plot(ez_powerfun,"powerfun",null_hypothesis=0)

```

