



Statistics, Data and Statistical Thinking

STAT 200
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Statistics

- Statistics is the science of data
- It refers to
 - Collecting data
 - Classifying, summarizing, and organizing data
 - Analysis of data
 - Interpretation of data



Statistics

- Statistics is both a field of study
- ...and a set of tools used by many disciplines
 - Social Sciences
 - Biological Sciences
 - Physical Sciences



We will focus on two types of statistical applications

- Descriptive
- Inferential



Descriptive Statistics

- Descriptive statistics uses summary measures, graphs, and measures of association to show relationships in data.
- The focus is on describing the data
- With an emphasis on **parsimony**



Descriptive Statistics

- Rather than looking at a set of numbers,
- 0, 0, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 4, 5, 2, 1, 3, 2, 2, 1, 1, 3, 1, 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12



Descriptive Statistics

- we want to find summary measures which describe the data adequately and succinctly
- Be they a
 - Percentage
 - Average
 - Range from highest to lowest
 - mode



Descriptive Statistics

- Descriptive Statistics also involve relationships between variables or sets of variables
- And they can involve very sophisticated techniques – regression, principle components, factor analysis, Logistic Regression, Probit Analysis



Inferential Statistics

- Inferential statistics takes it a step further
- Now we use some of the same techniques to make estimates, decisions, predictions, or generalizations about a **population** from a smaller subset or **sample**



Inferential Statistics

- Inferential statistics are a powerful tool for research
- It enables us to make statements about a large group from a much smaller sample.
 - We can survey 1,000 people and make statements about 280 million people

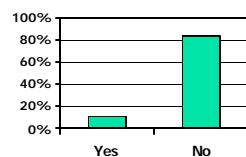


Did the public care if George W. Bush used cocaine in his 20s?

A Time/CNN Poll found:

If Bush did use cocaine in his 20s, should that disqualify him from being President?

Yes 11%
 No 84%



Let's look closer at this survey example

- It was based on a telephone poll of 942 adult Americans taken for Time/CNN on August 19th by Yankelovich Partners, Inc.
- **The sampling error is $\pm 3.3\%$**
- **What does this mean?**



Here's my interpretation

- The survey is designed to represent adult Americans in August of 1999
- Because we are taking a sample, we have some error associated with our estimate.



Here's my interpretation

- Since the sample was taken randomly, we have a method to estimate the error of our estimate
- In this case, we are reasonably sure that the true percentage is within $\pm 3.3\%$ points of our estimate
- Which means our interval is 7.7% to 14.3%



We need some terms

- A **Population** is the total number of units involved in the research question. The units are the members (or elements) of the population.
- Populations could be:
 - People
 - Animals
 - Plants
 - Courses
 - Objects



A POPULATION IS DEFINED BY

- Purpose of the study
- The **units** and **elements** involved
- Geographic coverage
- Time frame



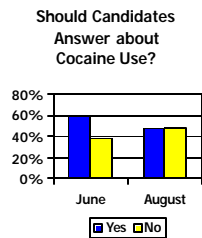
Population Example

- If I was interested in understanding current household consumption of chicken in the Mid-Atlantic states, I might define the population as:
- **All households in in the Mid-Atlantic states (DE, MD, PA, NJ, NY) in the Fall of 2000**



Does time matter for a population?

- The Time/CNN poll asked: *Should a candidate have to answer questions about whether he used cocaine in the past?*
- June 60% Yes
- August 48% Yes





Sampling

- When we collect data on all elements in a population, we take a census
- However, sometimes it is difficult to get information on the entire population
- So we take a **sample** of the population
- A sample is a subset of the units or elements of a population



Why Sample?

- It save time
- Money
- Other resources (computation time)
- It may actually be impossible to collect information on everyone
 - Every corn stalk in a field
 - Every dog who suffers from heart worm



Recent Census Debate

- Every 10 years we take a census
- It is mandated in the Constitution
- However, the Census Bureau knows that it doesn't get a complete count - some groups are difficult to contact
- So, the Census Bureau wants to take a really good sample to estimate the undercount, and then adjust the counts to reflect the missing people



More on Sampling

- Samples are also defined in the terms we used for populations
 - purpose of the research,
 - the units and elements involved,
 - the geographic coverage, and
 - the time frame



More on Sampling

- A valuable property of a sample is that it is **representative** of the population.
- The sample characteristics resemble those possessed by the population
- Inferential statistics require a sample to be representative of the population,
- And that this be done through a random process



More Terms

- A **random sample** is when each element or unit has the same chance of being selected
 - If we select a random sample of 1,000 from a population of 100,000,
 - Each unit has a 1,000/100,000 or
 - 1/100th chance of being selected



More Terms

- A **variable** is a characteristic of an individual unit of the population population
 - To be a variable the characteristics must **vary**
 - **It can't all be the same**



More Terms

- **Measurement** is the process of assigning a number to variables of the individual units
 - Some measurement seems relatively straight-forward
 - years of age, dollars of income, cholesterol counts, parts per million of a chemical



Measurement

- Other concepts are more difficult to measure
 - Attitudes
 - Emotions
 - Intelligence
 - **LOVE**



Measurement

- The process of measurement is often complex – don't take it for granted
- It always comes with some error
- And perhaps **Bias**



Measurement

- With measurement we must also deal with
 - **Validity** – are we measuring what we think we are measuring
 - **Reliability** – is the measuring device consistent



Types of Data – the Book

- **Quantitative data** are measures that are recorded on a naturally occurring scale
- **Qualitative data** does not follow in natural numerical scale and thus are classified into categories



Types of Data

- I will use a more elaborate description of levels of measurement
 - Nominal
 - Ordinal
 - Continuous



Levels of Measurement

- **Nominal** (or categorical) – no implied order or superiority
 - Men and Women
 - Race
 - Species or genuses



Levels of Measurement

- **Ordinal** – an implied order or rank, but the distance between units is not well specified
 - Ranking
 - Strongly agree to Strongly disagree
 - On a scale from one to ten..



Levels of Measurement

- **Continuous** (combination of interval and ratio) – data that is measured on a scale where we can say something about the magnitude between numbers
 - Age
 - Income
 - Years of School



Why consider our level of measurement?

- Because our statistical techniques are predicated on certain levels of measurement.
- Each technique/formula assumes a certain level is used.
- Misusing a statistical technique on a variable can lead to results that are biased or misleading.



Sources of Data

- **Data from a published source** – also known as existing data. Someone else collected it and makes it available to you
 - Census of Population
 - Current Population Survey
 - Sports statistics
- **Caution** – data decisions are out of your control



Sources of Data

- **A designed Experiment** where the researcher has strict control over the units (people, objects and events).
 - Treatment and Control Groups
 - Randomized designs
- An experimental design allows you to control more factors and to extract more information from the data



Sources of Data

- **Surveys** are where a researcher samples a group of people, asks a set of questions, and records the answers
 - Face-to-Face
 - Telephone
 - Mail
 - Internet
- Social Surveys are **extremely popular** today



Sources of Data

- **Observational Studies** are when the researcher observes the units in their natural setting and records the variables of interest.
 - Animal studies in natural habitats
 - Studies of children's behaviors
- Observational Studies must deal with a number of methodological issues



Shere Hite Report Example

- Hite began her work in 1968 on permissive sexual attitudes in the U.S.
- A second report was even more controversial in 1988, *Women and Love: A Cultural Revolution in Progress*



Key findings from Hite's study

- 84% of woman were not emotionally satisfied with their relationship
- 95% reported emotional and psychological harassment from their partners
- 70% of women married for 5 years or more are having extra-martial affairs
- Only 13% of women married for more than two years are in love.



Shere Hite Report Example

- Her survey was a mail survey
 - 100,000 women in the U.S. over 7 years
 - 127 open-ended questions
 - The instructions read: *It is not necessary to answer every question! Feel free to skip around and answer those questions that you choose.*
 - Approximately 4,500 people responded, a 4.5% response rate.



Critical Thinking and Statistics

- Statistics involves making critical decisions and rational thought to how a set of data are:
 - Collected
 - Measured
 - Sampled
 - Analyzed
 - Interpreted