

11: Continuous Data (2 of 2)

Sep 23, 2023

Exploring Univariate Continuous Data using ggplot2 and ggpubr

This chapter demonstrates the use of the popular **ggplot2** and **ggpubr** packages to further explore *univariate, continuous* data.

1. **ggplot2**: In the **ggplot2** package for instance, the function `geom_boxplot()` produces box plots, `geom_violin()` creates violin plots, and `geom_histogram()` and `geom_density()` generate histograms and density plots, respectively. The related **ggbeeswarm** package can be used for creating bee swarm plots.
2. **ggpubr**: The **ggpubr** package in R augments **ggplot2** by offering tools for creating publication-ready plots. It enables simplified plotting with easy-to-use functions like `gghistogram()`, `ggdensity()`, `ggboxplot()`, `ggviolin`, and makes it easy to merge multiple plots with `ggarrange()`, and provides specialized themes for a polished look. Essentially, **ggpubr** merges **ggplot2**'s extensive customization with the ease of creating visually appealing and informative plots.
3. We load the necessary packages, including **ggplot2**, **dplyr** and **ggthemes** packages. The package **ggthemes** allows us to use a variety of themes.

```
# Load the required libraries, suppressing annoying startup messages
library(dplyr, quietly = TRUE, warn.conflicts = FALSE)
library(tibble, quietly = TRUE, warn.conflicts = FALSE)
library(ggplot2, quietly = TRUE, warn.conflicts = FALSE) # For data visualization
library(ggpubr, quietly = TRUE, warn.conflicts = FALSE) # For data visualization

library(rmarkdown, quietly = TRUE, warn.conflicts = FALSE)
library(knitr, quietly = TRUE, warn.conflicts = FALSE)
library(kableExtra, quietly = TRUE, warn.conflicts = FALSE)

library(ggthemes)
```

5. **Data:** Suppose we run the following code to prepare the `mtcars` data for subsequent analysis and save it in a tibble called `tb`.

```
# Read the mtcars dataset into a tibble called tb
data(mtcars)
tb <- as_tibble(mtcars)
# Convert relevant columns into factor variables
tb$cyl <- as.factor(tb$cyl) # cyl = {4,6,8}, number of cylinders
tb$am <- as.factor(tb$am) # am = {0,1}, 0:automatic, 1: manual transmission
tb$vs <- as.factor(tb$vs) # vs = {0,1}, v-shaped engine, 0:no, 1:yes
tb$gear <- as.factor(tb$gear) # gear = {3,4,5}, number of gears
```

5. Let's take a closer look at some of the most effective ways of Visualizing Univariate Continuous Data using `ggplot2` and related packages, including

- Bee Swarm plots using `ggbeeswarm`
- Histograms using `ggplot2` and `ggpubr`
- PDF and CDF Density plots using `ggplot2` and `ggpubr`
- Bar plots using `ggplot2`
- Box plots using `ggplot2` and `ggpubr`
- Violin plots using `ggplot2` and `ggpubr`
- Quantile-Quantile (Q-Q) Plots using `ggplot2`

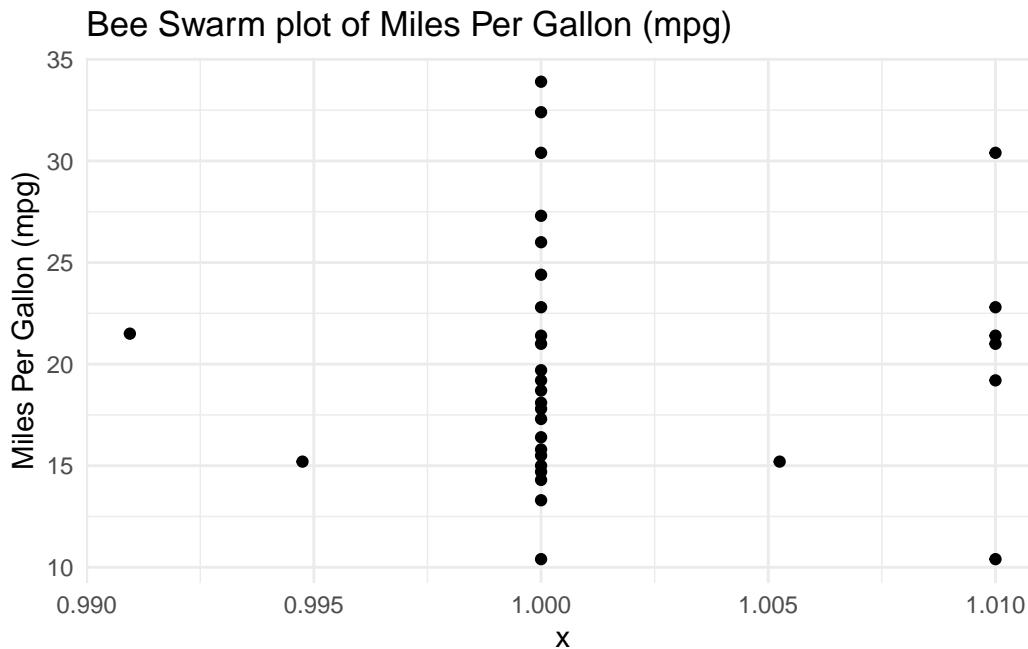
Note that it is inconvenient to create Stem-and-Leaf plots using `ggplot2`.

Bee Swarm plot using `ggbeeswarm`

1. The bee swarm plot is an alternative to the box plot, where each point is plotted in a manner that avoids overlap.
2. We use the `ggbeeswarm` package on the `mpg` column of the `tb` tibble.

```
library(ggplot2)
library(ggbeeswarm) # Necessary for geom_beeswarm()
ggplot(tb,
       aes(x = 1,
           y = mpg)) +
  geom_beeswarm() +
  labs(title = "Bee Swarm plot of Miles Per Gallon (mpg)",
```

```
y = "Miles Per Gallon (mpg)" +  
theme_minimal()
```



3. Discussion:

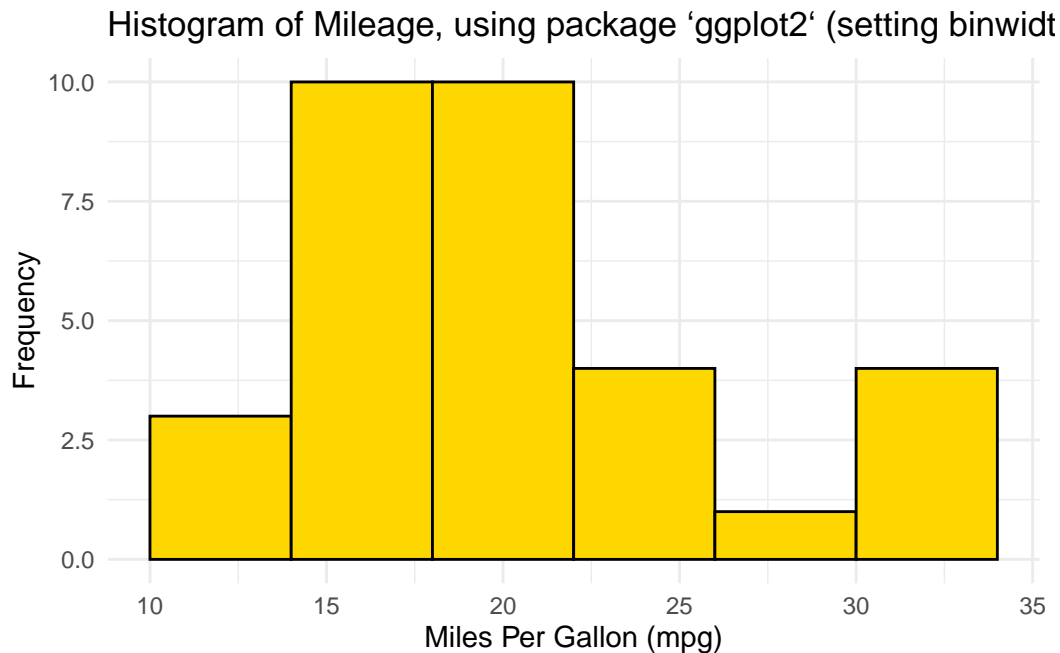
- Initially, we declare our dataset and the aesthetic mappings, defining how variables in the data are visually represented. For the bee swarm plot, we only need a y aesthetic, which is `mpg`. We set the x aesthetic to 1 as a placeholder, because bee swarm plots require an x aesthetic, but we only have one variable.
- Following that, we append a bee swarm plot using the `geom_beeswarm()` function.
- We use the `labs()` function to label the plot.
- We then adopt a minimalist theme by using `theme_minimal()` to give our plot a sleek and simple look.

Histogram using ggplot2

Histogram with binwidth

- The following code creates a histogram using the `ggplot2` package. Here, we pre-specify the bin width and the resulting number of bins in the histogram depend on the range of the data.

```
ggplot(tb,
      aes(x = mpg)) +
  geom_histogram(binwidth = 4,
                fill = "gold",
                color = "black") +
  theme_minimal() +
  labs(title = "Histogram of Mileage, using package `ggplot2` (setting binwidth = 4)",
       x = "Miles Per Gallon (mpg)", y = "Frequency")
```



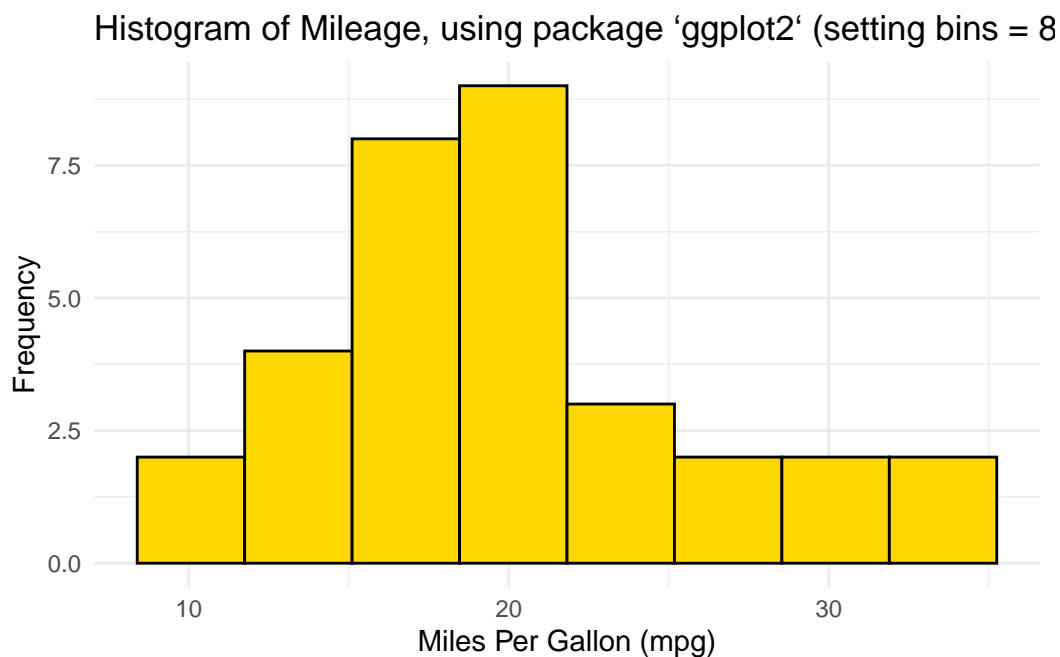
2. Discussion:

- The code `ggplot(tb, aes(x = mpg))` initializes a plot using the `tb` data frame, mapping the `mpg` column to the x-axis.
- The histogram is created with `geom_histogram()`, using an adjustable `binwidth = 4`. Given this bin width, the resulting number of bins in the histogram depend on the range of `mpg`.
- The `binwidth` argument specifies the width of the bins in the histogram, and we have chosen 4 as an arbitrary width.
- We use `fill` and `color` to set the bar colors to be gold with a black border.
- A clean appearance is achieved with `theme_minimal()`, and titles and labels are added using `labs()`. [1]

Histogram with bins

3. We could alternately set the number of bins in the histogram, instead of specifying the bin width. In this case, the bin-width gets calculated depending on the range of the data and the specified number of bins.

```
ggplot(tb,
      aes(x = mpg)) +
  geom_histogram(bins = 8,
                fill = "gold",
                color = "black") +
  theme_minimal() +
  labs(title = "Histogram of Mileage, using package `ggplot2` (setting bins = 8)",
       x = "Miles Per Gallon (mpg)", y = "Frequency")
```



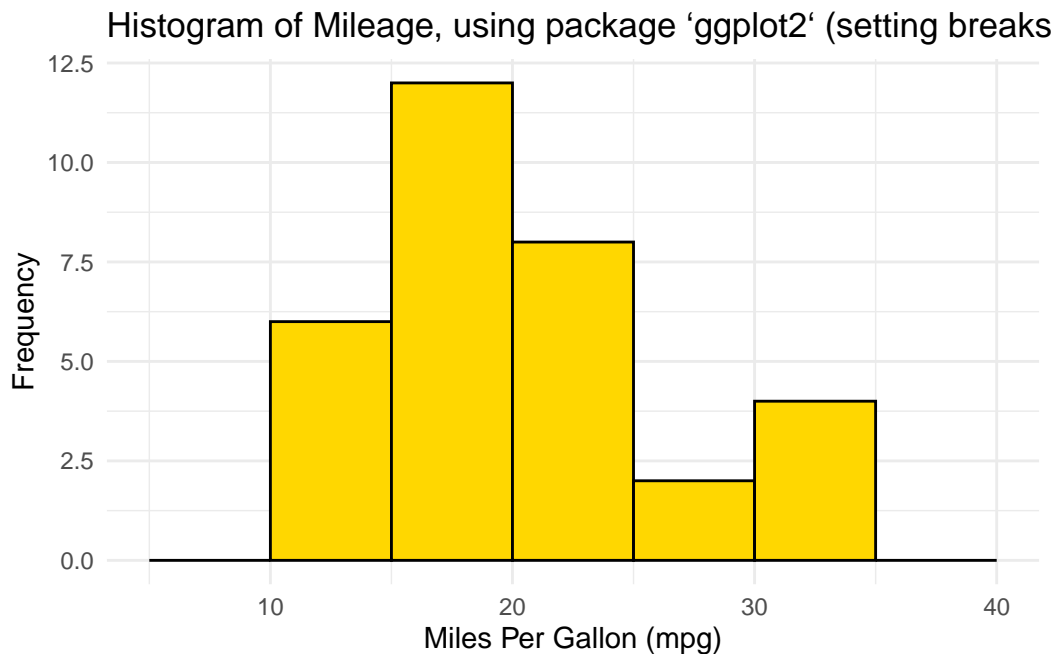
4. Discussion:

- We instruct R to create a histogram having 8 bins of equal width, by setting `bins = 8` in `geom_histogram()`
- The width of each bin is adjusted by dividing the range of `mpg` by the number of specified bins.

Histogram with bin range

5. Alternately, we can specify custom bin ranges in a histogram. In this approach, we supply a vector of breakpoints which defines the range of each bin. For example, the following code defines histogram bins with ranges of 5-10, 10-15, 15-20, 20-25, 25-30, 30-35, 35-40, for the `mpg` variable

```
ggplot(tb,
  aes(x = mpg)) +
  geom_histogram(breaks = seq(5, 40, by = 5),
    fill = "gold",
    color = "black") +
  theme_minimal() +
  labs(title = "Histogram of Mileage, using package `ggplot2` (setting breaks of 5)",
    x = "Miles Per Gallon (mpg)", y = "Frequency")
```



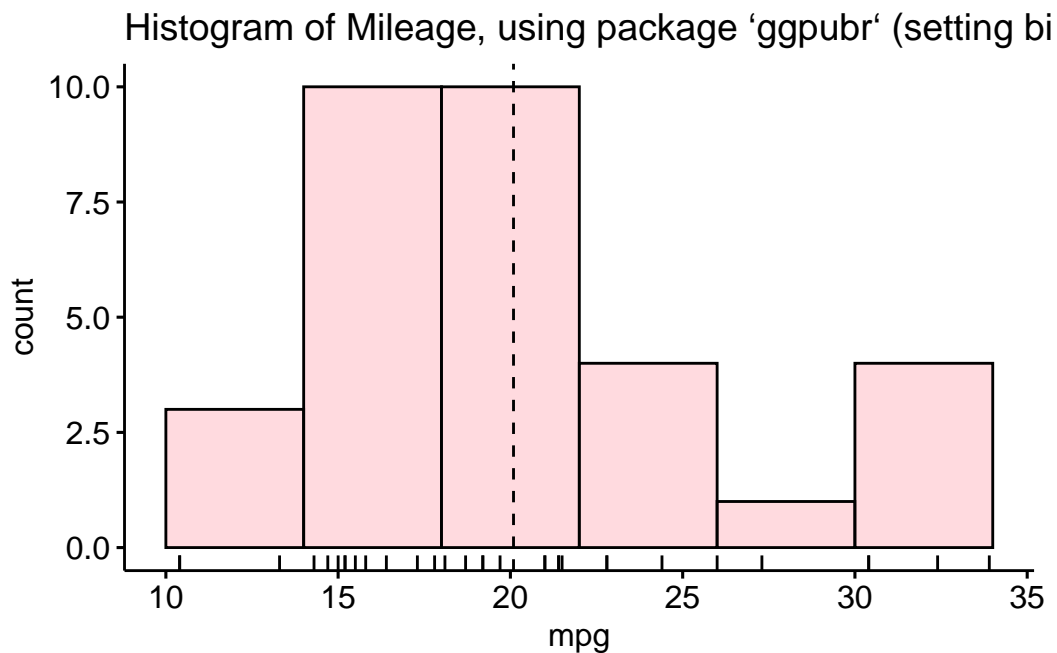
6. Discussion:

- `ggplot(tb, aes(x = mpg))` initializes a `ggplot` object with the `tb` data frame and sets the `mpg` column as the x-axis variable.
- `geom_histogram()` adds a histogram layer, in which `breaks = seq(5, 40, by = 5)` specifies bin edges using a sequence that starts at 5, ends at 40, and increases by 5 units. This results in bins like `[5,10)`, `[10,15)`, and so on.

Histogram using ggpubr

7. Recreating a histogram with binwidth of 4, using `ggpubr`:

```
library(ggpubr)
gghistogram(tb,
  x = "mpg",
  binwidth = 4,
  add = "mean",
  rug = TRUE,
  color = "black",
  fill = "lightpink",
  title = "Histogram of Mileage, using package `ggpubr` (setting binwidth = 4) "
)
```



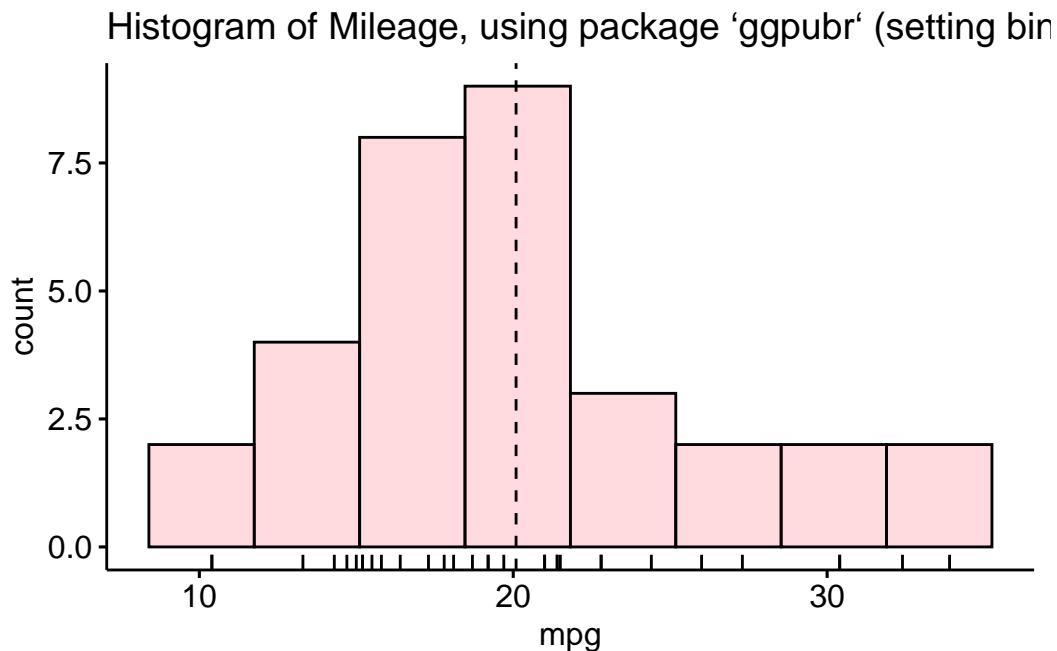
8. Discussion:

- Here, we're invoking the `gghistogram()` function from `ggpubr` to craft a histogram. The data source is specified as `tb`, and the variable of interest is `mpg`.
- `x = "mpg"`: This denotes the variable from `tb` we're visualizing.
- `binwidth = 4`: Each bin in the histogram will span a range of 4 units of `mpg`.
- `add = "mean"`: Superimposes the mean of `mpg` on the histogram.

- `rug = TRUE`: Includes a rug plot at the base, which displays individual data points.
- `color = "black"`: The outline of the bars will be in black.
- `fill = "lightpink"`: Bars in the histogram will be filled with a light pink shade.
- `title =`: Gives a descriptive title to the histogram.
- In sum, we're visualizing the distribution of the `mpg` variable from the `tb` dataset as a light pink histogram, emphasized with black borders, with a bin width of 4 units. We've also marked the mean value and showcased individual data points as a rug plot beneath the histogram.

9. Recreating a histogram with 8 bins, using package `ggpubr`:

```
library(ggpubr)
gghistogram(tb,
  x = "mpg",
  bins = 8,
  add = "mean",
  rug = TRUE,
  color = "black" ,
  fill = "lightpink",
  title = "Histogram of Mileage, using package `ggpubr` (setting bins = 8) "
)
```



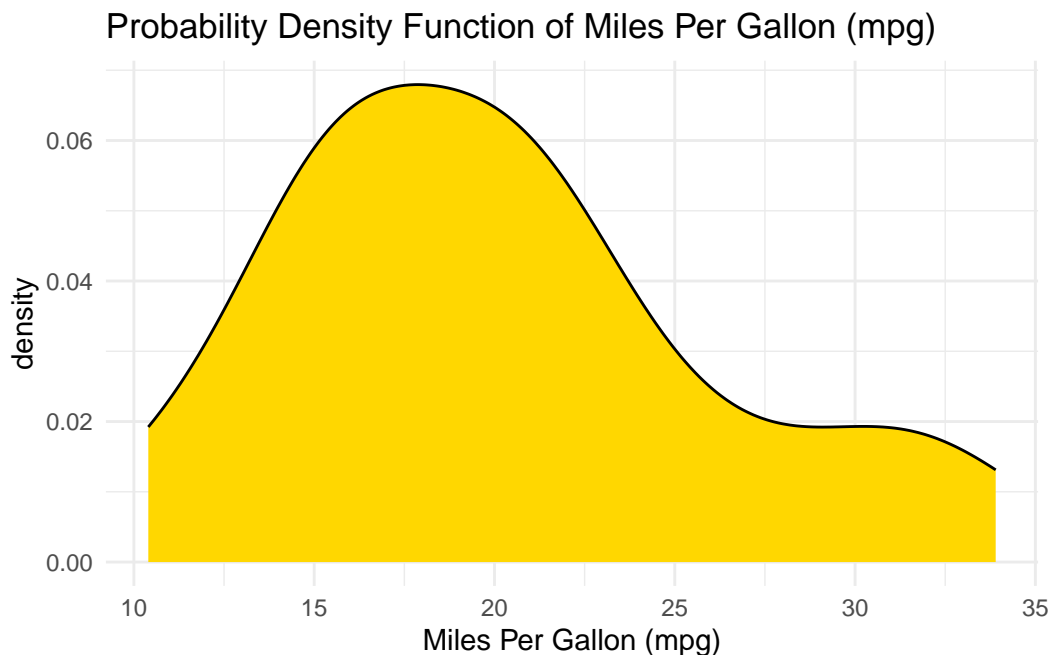
10. Discussion:

In essence, the difference is that this code visualizes the mpg data from the `tb` dataset as a histogram with 8 bins, set using `bins = 8`.

Probability Density Function (PDF) plot using ggplot2

1. Recall that this type of plot shows the distribution of a single variable, and the area under the curve represents the probability of an observation falling within a particular range of values. The following code generates it using `ggplot2`:

```
ggplot(tb,
       aes(x = mpg)) +
  geom_density(fill = "gold") +
  theme_minimal() +
  labs(title = "Probability Density Function of Miles Per Gallon (mpg)",
       x = "Miles Per Gallon (mpg)", y = "density")
```



2. Discussion:

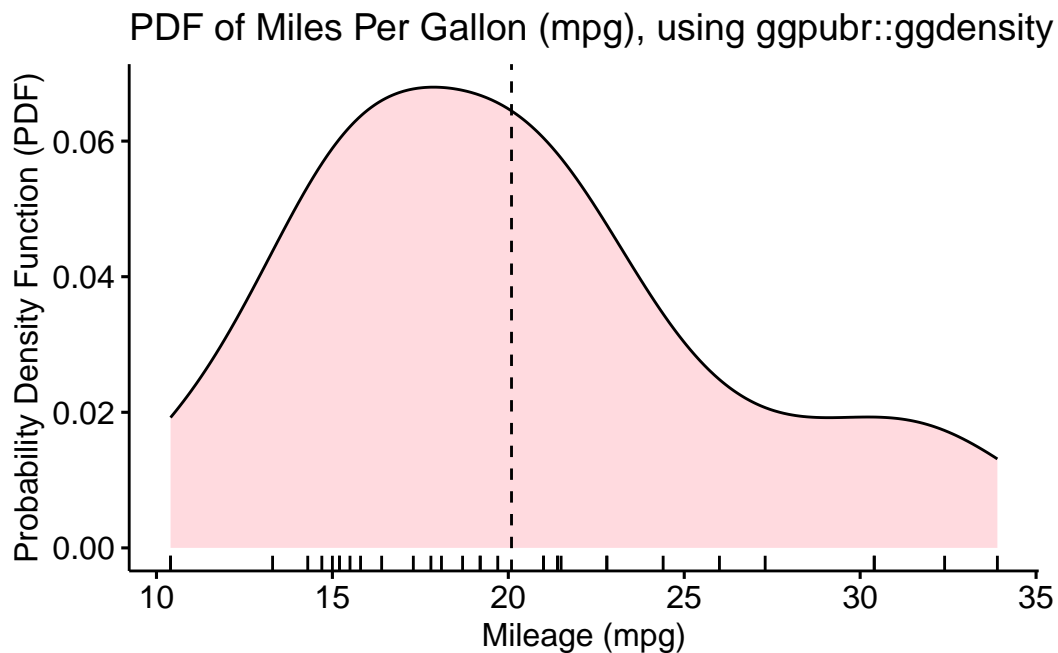
- We designate our data source and the aesthetic mappings using the `ggplot()` function. The aesthetic mapping for `x` is `mpg`.

- Subsequently, we append a density plot to our plot by using the `geom_density()` function. We fill the area under the curve by setting `fill` to “gold”.

PDF using ggpubr

3. The following R code creates a PDF of the `mpg` variable in the `tb` dataset, using the `ggdensity()` function from the `ggpubr` package.

```
library(ggpubr)
ggdensity(tb,
  x = "mpg",
  add = "mean",
  rug = TRUE,
  color = "black" ,
  fill = "lightpink",
  title = "PDF of Miles Per Gallon (mpg), using ggpubr::ggdensity()",
  xlab = "Mileage (mpg)",
  ylab = "Probability Density Function (PDF)"
)
```



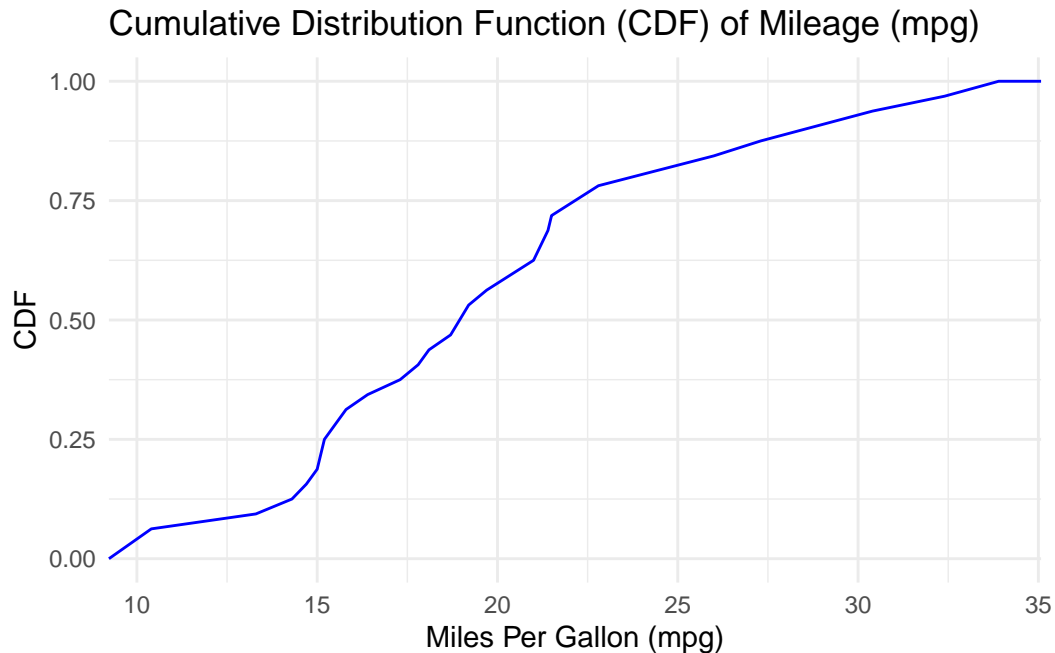
4. Discussion:

- The `ggdensity()` function from `ggpubr` package, is utilized here to visualize a probability density function (PDF) of the `mpg` variable from the `tb` dataset.
- `x = "mpg"`: This specifies the column `mpg` from the `tb` dataset as the variable we aim to visualize.
- `add = "mean"`: This argument ensures that a line or marker is added to the plot, indicating the mean value of the `mpg` data.
- `rug = TRUE`: By setting this to `TRUE`, a rug plot is added at the bottom, showcasing individual data points.
- `color = "black"`: This defines the border color of the density plot as black.
- `fill = "lightpink"`: This fills the interior of the density plot with a light pink color.
- `title = ...`: This provides a descriptive title to our plot, aiding in clarity and understanding.

Cumulative Distribution Function (CDF) Plot using ggplot2

1. The following code generates a CDF using `ggplot2`:

```
# Load required library
library(ggplot2)
# Create a CDF plot
ggplot(tb, aes(x = mpg)) +
  stat_ecdf(geom = "line", color = "blue") +
  labs(x = "Miles Per Gallon (mpg)", y = "CDF",
       title = "Cumulative Distribution Function (CDF) of Mileage (mpg)") +
  theme_minimal()
```



2. Discussion:

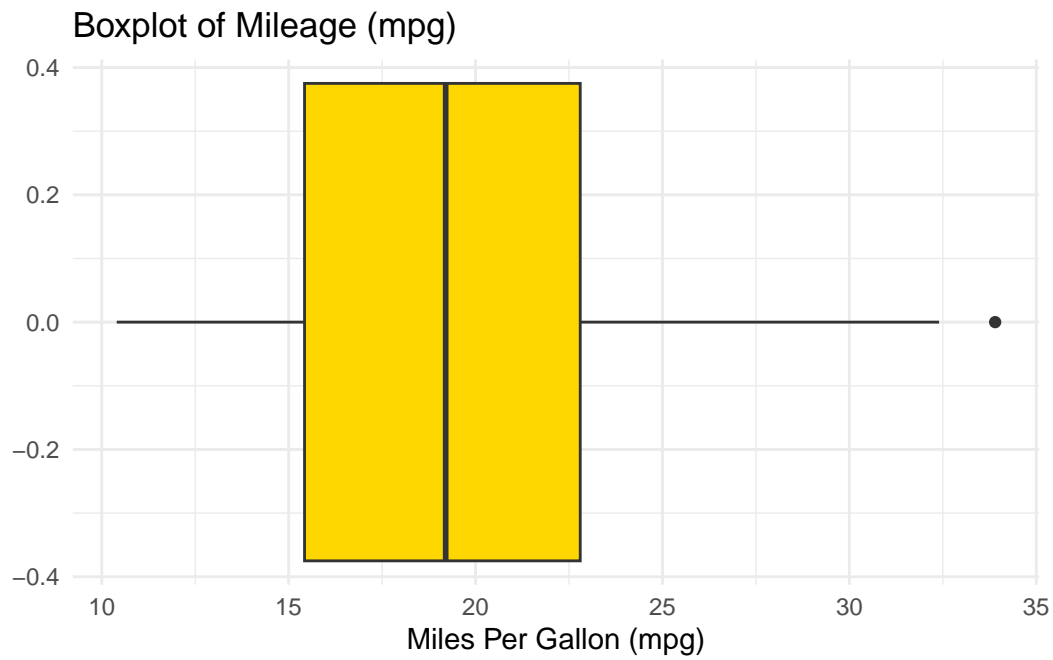
- Here, we're initiating a plot using the `ggplot()` function, specifying `tb` as our data source and the `mpg` column as the variable of interest. ‘
- We employ the `stat_ecdf()` function to represent the empirical cumulative distribution function (CDF) of the `mpg` data. The `geom = "line"` argument means the CDF will be displayed as a continuous line, and `color = "blue"` ensures this line is blue.
- The `labs()` function is used to define axis labels and a plot title, enhancing readability.
- By invoking `theme_minimal()`, we apply a clean and straightforward theme to our plot, which removes extraneous details and emphasizes content.
- To sum up, this code creates a plot depicting the cumulative distribution function (CDF) of the `mpg` data from the `tb` dataset.

Boxplots using ggplot2

1. The following code generates a boxplot using `ggplot2`:

```
ggplot(tb,  
  aes(y = mpg)) +  
  geom_boxplot(fill = "gold") +
```

```
theme_minimal() +
coord_flip() +
labs(title = "Boxplot of Mileage (mpg)",
      y = "Miles Per Gallon (mpg)")
```



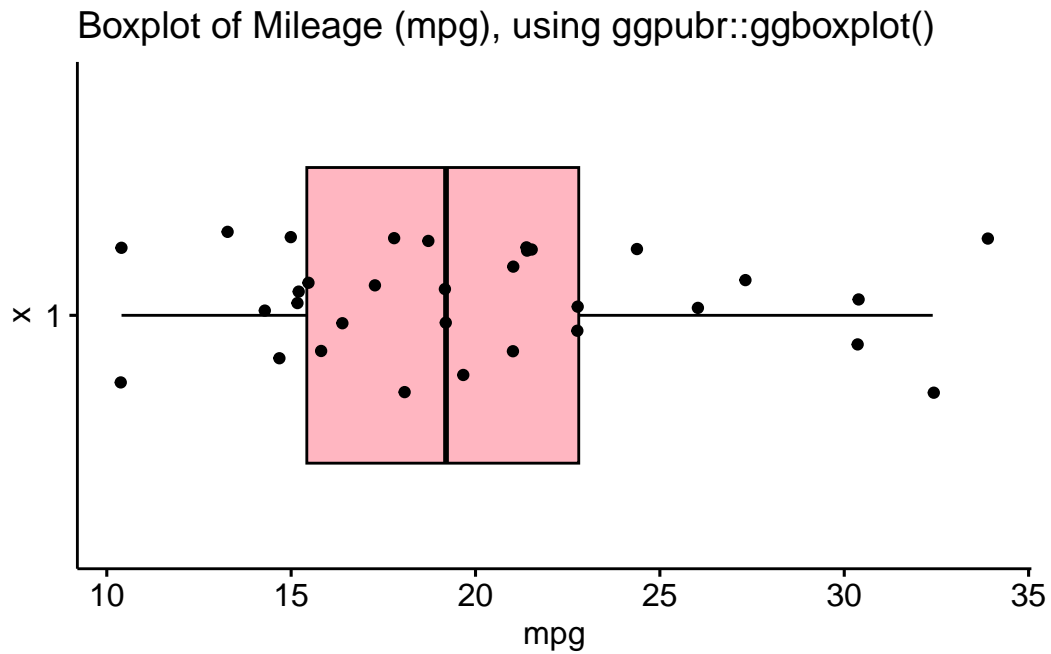
2. Discussion:

- `ggplot(tb, aes(y = mpg))`: Initializes a `ggplot2` plot using `tb` with `mpg` as the y-axis.
- `geom_boxplot(fill = "gold")`: Adds a gold-filled boxplot layer.
- `theme_minimal()`: Applies a clean, minimalistic theme to the plot.
- `coord_flip()`: Flips the plot to display a horizontal boxplot.
- `labs(...)`: Sets the plot title to “Boxplot of Mileage (mpg)” and labels the x-axis as “Miles Per Gallon (mpg)”.
- In summary, this code creates a horizontal boxplot of the `mpg` values from the `tb` data frame, with the boxes filled in gold color, presented with a minimalistic theme, and labeled appropriately.

Boxplot using ggpubr

1. The following code recreates the boxplot using the `ggboxplot()` function from the `ggpubr` package.

```
library(ggpubr)
ggboxplot(tb,
  y = "mpg",
  orientation = "horizontal",
  rug = TRUE,
  color = "black" ,
  fill = "lightpink",
  add = "jitter",
  title = "Boxplot of Mileage (mpg), using ggpubr::ggboxplot()"
)
```



2. Discussion:

- `ggboxplot(tb, y = "mpg")`: Creates a boxplot of `mpg` values from the `tb` data frame.
- `orientation = "horizontal"`: Sets the boxplot to display horizontally.
- `rug = TRUE`: Shows a rug plot indicating the density of data points.
- `color = "black"`: Sets the boxplot's border color to black.

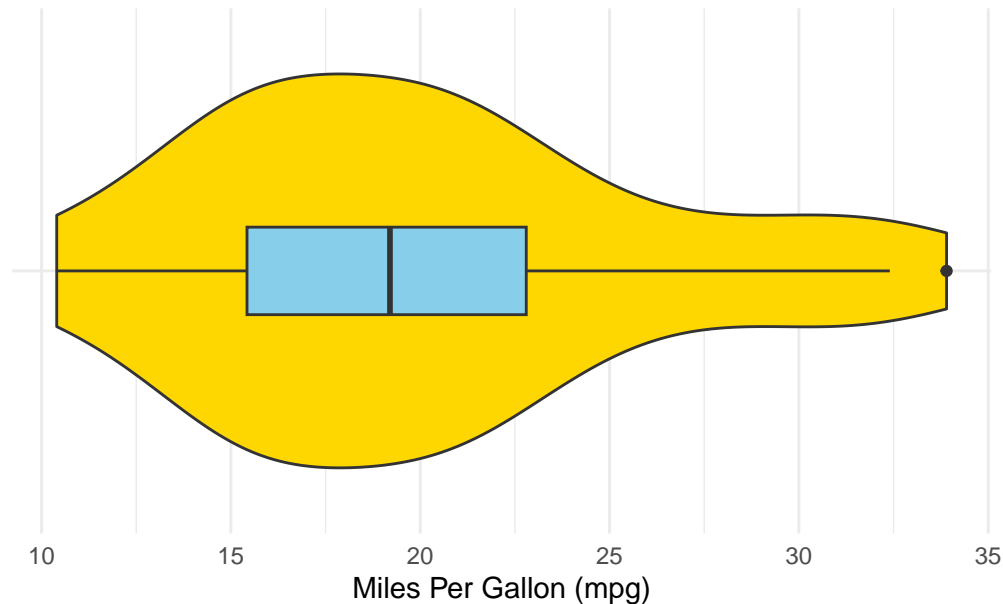
- `fill = "lightpink"`: Colors the inside of the boxes light pink.
- `add = "jitter"`: Adds jittered points to the boxplot for clearer data visualization.
- `title = ..`: Sets the plot's title.

Violin plot using ggplot2

1. The following code generates a violin plot using `ggplot2`, adding a boxplot to the violin plot:

```
ggplot(tb, aes(x = "", y = mpg)) +
  geom_violin(fill = "gold") +
  geom_boxplot(fill = "skyblue", width = 0.2) +
  labs(x = "", y = "Miles Per Gallon (mpg)",
       title = "Violin Plot with Boxplot of Miles Per Gallon (mpg)") +
  coord_flip() +
  theme_minimal()
```

Violin Plot with Boxplot of Miles Per Gallon (mpg)



2. Discussion:

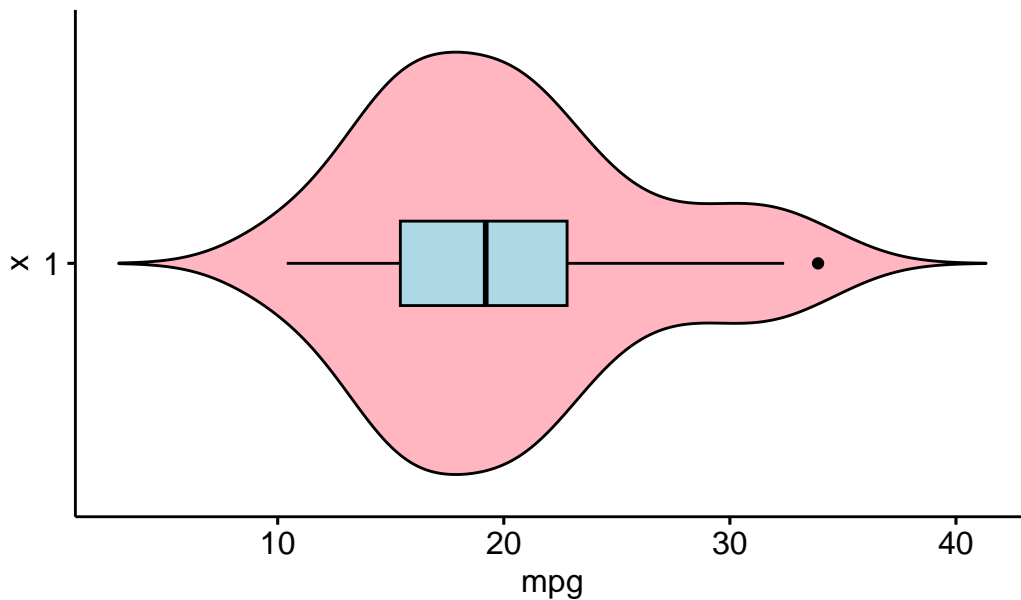
- `geom_violin()` generates the violin plot
- `geom_boxplot()` embeds a box plot within it

Violin plot using ggpubr

3. The following code recreates the violin plot using the `ggviolin()` function from the `ggpubr` package.

```
library(ggpubr)
ggviolin(tb,
  y = "mpg",
  orientation = "horizontal",
  rug = TRUE,
  color = "black" ,
  fill = "lightpink",
  add = "boxplot", add.params = list(fill = "lightblue"),
  title = "Violin plot of Miles Per Gallon (mpg), using ggpubr::ggviolin()"
)
```

Violin plot of Miles Per Gallon (mpg), using ggpubr::ggviolin



4. Discussion:

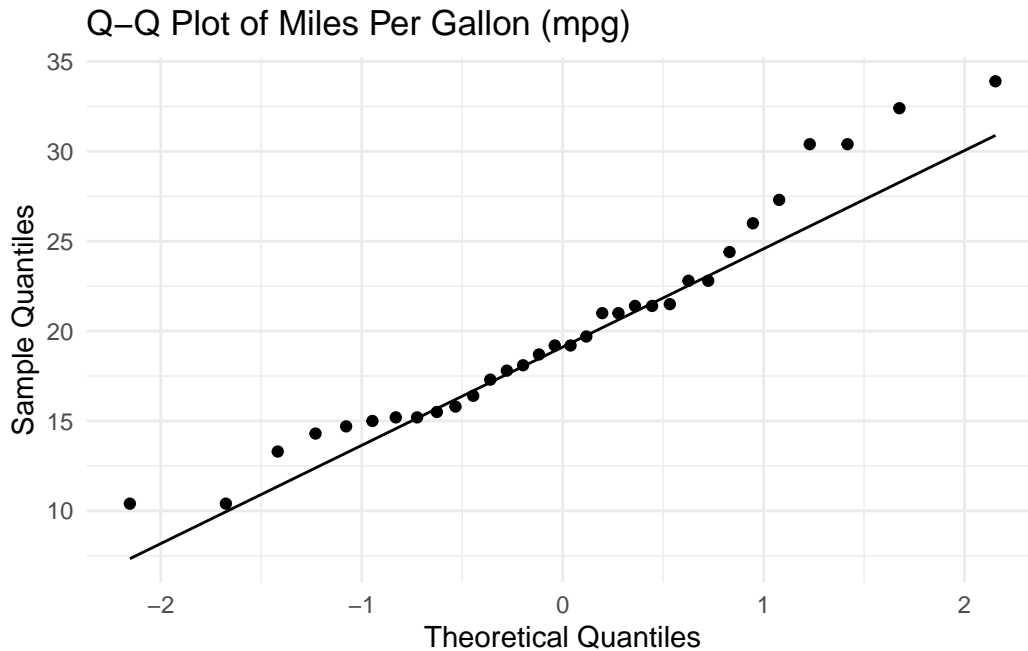
- `tb`: This refers to the dataset we're using. The dataset should have a variable named "mpg" as we've specified it in the next parameter.
- `y = "mpg"`: This indicates that we want the "mpg" variable (Miles Per Gallon) from the `tb` dataset to be plotted on the y-axis.

- `orientation = "horizontal"`: This parameter sets the orientation of the violin plot to be horizontal.
- `rug = TRUE`: This adds a “rug” to the plot, which essentially places small vertical bars (or ticks) at the actual data points along the axis.
- `color = "black"`: The edge color of the violin plot is set to black.
- `fill = "lightpink"`: This sets the main color inside the violin plot to light pink.
- `add = "boxplot"`: This specifies that a boxplot should be added inside the violin plot. A boxplot provides a summary of the distribution, showing the median, quartiles, and potential outliers.
- `add.params = list(fill = "lightblue")`: This further customizes the added boxplot by setting its fill color to light blue.
- `title = "Violin plot of Miles Per Gallon (mpg), using ggpubr::ggviolin()"`: This sets the title of the plot.
- In summary, the code generates a horizontal violin plot for the “mpg” variable from the `tb` dataset. The violin plot showcases the distribution of the “mpg” variable, colored in light pink with a light blue boxplot added inside. The rug adds an additional layer of visualization, showing the actual data points along the axis.

Quantile-Quantile (Q-Q) Plots using ggplot2

1. Recall that a Q-Q plot is a graphical method for comparing two probability distributions by plotting their quantiles against each other. The following code generates a Quantile-Quantile (Q-Q) plot using `ggplot2`,

```
ggplot(tb,
       aes(sample = mpg)) +
  stat_qq() +
  stat_qq_line() +
  labs(x = "Theoretical Quantiles", y = "Sample Quantiles",
       title = "Q-Q Plot of Miles Per Gallon (mpg)") +
  theme_minimal()
```



2. Discussion:

- `ggplot(tb, aes(sample = mpg))` : Here, we initiate a `ggplot` graphic using the `tb` dataset and set the aesthetic (`aes`) to the “mpg” variable. In the context of the `stat_qq()` function (which we’ll come to shortly), the `sample` aesthetic specifies the data variable for which we want to create the Q-Q plot.
- `stat_qq()` : This function adds the Q-Q plot points to the graphic. The x-axis of this plot represents the quantiles from a theoretical distribution (often the standard normal distribution), and the y-axis represents the quantiles from our sample data (“mpg”).
- `stat_qq_line()` : This function adds a reference line to the Q-Q plot, which represents the expected line if the sample comes from the specified distribution (again, often the standard normal distribution). If our data points lie roughly on this line, it suggests that the data follows the theoretical distribution.
- In summary, this code produces a Q-Q plot for the “mpg” variable from the `tb` dataset. The plot compares the quantiles of “mpg” against the quantiles of a theoretical distribution, often the standard normal distribution.

Bar Plot visualizing the Mean and SD using ggplot2

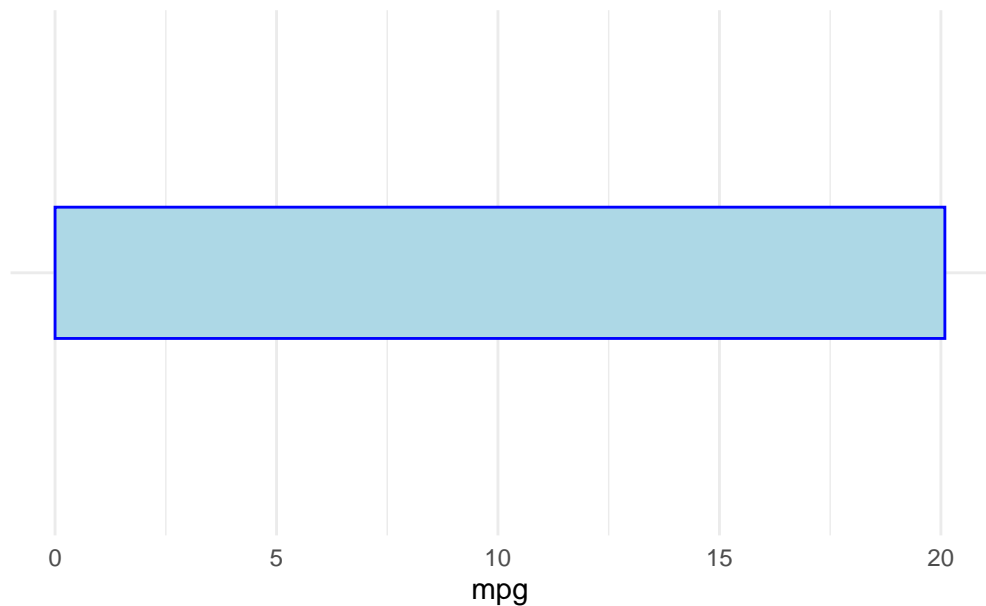
1. We can create a Bar Plot to visualize the mean of a continuous variable.

```

# Create a summary data frame
mpgSummary <- tb %>%
  summarise(
    MeanMpg = mean(mpg, na.rm = TRUE),
    SDMpg = sd(mpg, na.rm = TRUE)
  )
# Create a box plot visualizing the mean
ggplot(mpgSummary,
  aes(y = "",
      x = MeanMpg)) +
  geom_bar(stat = "identity",
    fill = "lightblue", color = "blue", width = 0.3
  ) +
  labs(x = "mpg", y = "",
    title = "Bar Plot showing Mean of Mileage (mpg)") +
  theme_minimal()

```

Bar Plot showing Mean of Mileage (mpg)



2. We can extend this to create a Bar Plot with Error Bars to visualization the Mean and the Standard Deviation of a continuous variable.

```

# Create a summary data frame
mpgSummary <- tb %>%

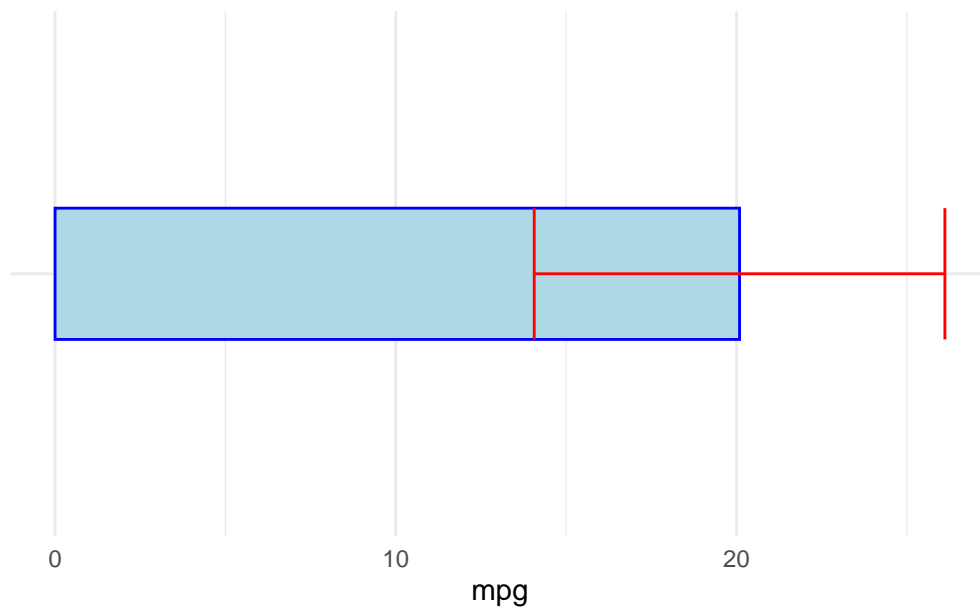
```

```

summarise(
  MeanMpg = mean(mpg, na.rm = TRUE),
  SDMpg = sd(mpg, na.rm = TRUE)
)
# Create a box plot visualizing the mean and error bars visualizing the SD
ggplot(mpgSummary,
  aes(y = "",
      x = MeanMpg)) +
  geom_bar(stat = "identity",
    fill = "lightblue", color = "blue", width = 0.3
  ) +
  geom_errorbar(aes(xmin = MeanMpg - SDMpg,
    xmax = MeanMpg + SDMpg),
    color = "red", width = 0.3
  ) +
  labs(x = "mpg", y = "",
    title = "Bar Plot showing (Mean +/- SD) of Mileage (mpg)") +
  theme_minimal()

```

Bar Plot showing (Mean +/- SD) of Mileage (mpg)



3. Discussion

Summary Data Frame (mpgSummary) Creation:

- `mpgSummary <- tb %>% summarise(...)`: This line is initializing the creation of

mpgSummary data frame using the data in `tb` (which is assumed to contain the `mtcars` dataset) and the `summarise` function from the `dplyr` package.

- `MeanMpg = mean(mpg, na.rm = TRUE)`: Calculates the mean of the `mpg` column, ignoring any NA values, and creates a new column `MeanMpg` in `mpgSummary` to store this value.
- `SDMpg = sd(mpg, na.rm = TRUE)`: Calculates the standard deviation of the `mpg` column, ignoring any NA values, and creates a new column `SDMpg` in `mpgSummary` to store this value.

Bar Plot with Error Bars Creation:

- `ggplot(mpgSummary, aes(y = "", x = MeanMpg)) +`: Initializes the creation of a ggplot object using the `mpgSummary` data frame and sets the aesthetic mappings where `x` is mapped to `MeanMpg` and `y` is set to an empty string.
- `geom_bar(stat = "identity", fill = "lightblue", color = "blue", width = 0.3)`: Adds a bar geometry to represent the mean mpg (`MeanMpg`). The bar is colored light blue with a blue border and has a width of 0.3.
- `geom_errorbar(aes(xmin = MeanMpg - SDMpg, xmax = MeanMpg + SDMpg), color = "red", width = 0.3)`: Adds error bars to represent the variability of mpg. The error bars extend from `MeanMpg - SDMpg` to `MeanMpg + SDMpg` and are colored red with a width of 0.3.
- `labs(x = "mpg", y = "", title = "Bar Plot showing (Mean +/- SD) of Mileage (mpg)")`: Adds labels to the plot, with “mpg” as the x-axis label, no y-axis label, and a title indicating that the plot shows the mean and standard deviation of mileage.
- `theme_minimal()`: Applies a minimal theme to the plot for a clean and uncluttered appearance.
- The end result of executing this code is a bar plot visualizing the mean of the `mpg` column and error bars representing one standard deviation above and below the mean, giving a sense of the variability of the miles per gallon in the `mtcars` dataset.

Combining Plots using `ggarrange()`

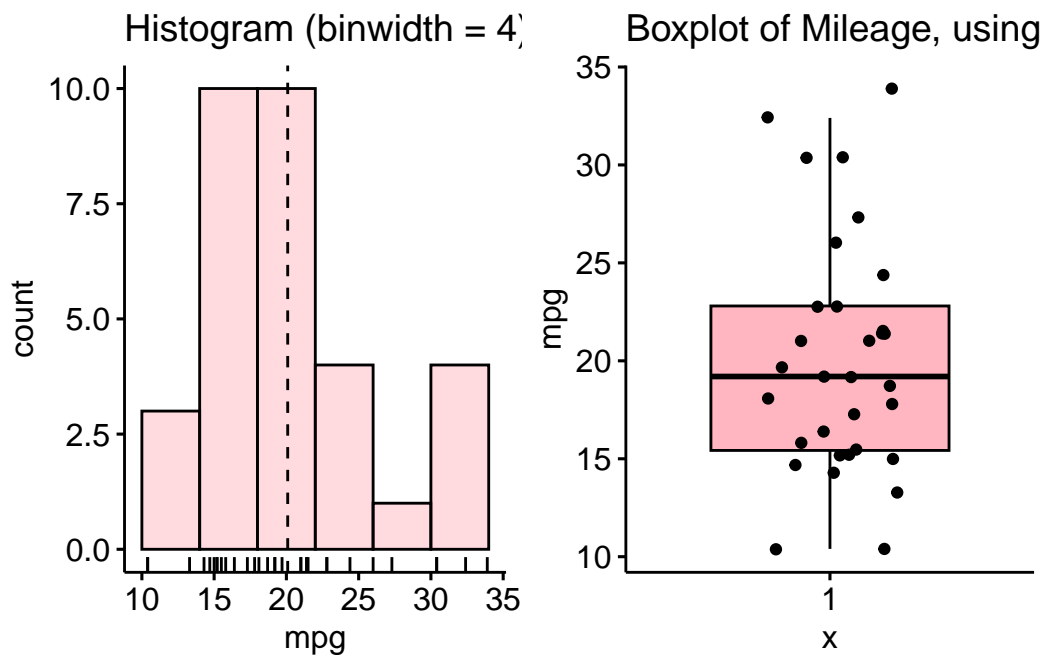
1. The following code showcases two plots side-by-side.

```
library(ggplot2)
library(ggpubr)
PlotHist <- gghistogram(tb,
```

```

    x = "mpg",
    binwidth = 4,
    add = "mean",
    rug = TRUE,
    color = "black" ,
    fill = "lightpink",
    title = "Histogram (binwidth = 4) "
  )
PlotBox <- ggboxplot(tb,
  y = "mpg",
  rug = TRUE,
  color = "black" ,
  fill = "lightpink",
  add = "jitter",
  title = "Boxplot of Mileage, using ggpubr"
)
# Combine the plots using ggarrange()
combined_plot <- ggarrange(PlotHist, PlotBox, ncol = 2)
# Display the combined plot
print(combined_plot)

```



2. Discussion:

- We create a histogram and a boxplot using the same code discussed above.
- `ggarrange(PlotHist, PlotBox, ncol = 2)` : This code helps us combine multiple plots into one. Here, `PlotHist` (the histogram) and `PlotBox` (the boxplot) are arranged side by side, as indicated by `ncol = 2`.
- In essence, this code facilitates a side-by-side comparison of the distribution of the `mpg` variable from the `tb` dataset using two different types of visualizations: a histogram and a boxplot.

Summary of Chapter 13 – Continuous Data (2 of 2)

In this chapter, we explore how to visualize univariate continuous data using the `ggplot2` package in R. We use the `mtcars` data set, converting it to a tibble called `tb` for easier manipulation.

The visualization methods we cover include histograms, density plots (Probability Density Function and Cumulative Density Function), box plots, bee swarm plots, violin plots, and Q-Q plots. These are created using functions like `geom_histogram()`, `geom_density()`, `geom_boxplot()`, `geom_beeswarm()`, `geom_violin()`, `stat_qq()`, and `stat_qq_line()`.

For the histogram, we can adjust bin width, color, and number of bins, or define custom bin ranges. The density plots provide a visual representation of the distribution of a variable, and we can color the area under the curve. To create the CDF plot, we first arrange our data and calculate the cumulative distribution, which is plotted as a line graph. For the violin plot, we show how to add a box plot within the violin for additional information. Finally, we explore Q-Q plots, which compare the quantiles of our data to a theoretical distribution, useful for assessing if the data follows a certain theoretical distribution.

References

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