



People Analytics & Econometrics

The Evaluation of Management Practices

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Introduction

Key questions addressed in this lecture:

- How can we evaluate the effect of management practices on outcome variables such as profits or job satisfaction?
- How can we assess the reliability of measurement?
- Why and when are regressions useful?
- When and how can we identify causal effects?
- How do we analyze cross-sectional and longitudinal data sets?
- How can a field experiment be set up?
- How can we set-up machine learning algorithms to make predictions?

Useful literature:

- Angrist and Pischke (2008) Chapters 2 and 3
- (Angrist and Pischke (2014))
- Wooldridge (2003) (Background reading)
- James, Witten, Hastie, Tibshirani (2017): An Introduction to Statistical Learning with Applications in R
- Andrea Ichino's lecture slides (for some links to standard econometrics courses): http://www.andreaichino.it/teaching_material.html

Key distinction for study designs:

Study based on *observational* data

- Data creation process not affected by the researcher
- Example data: Data from surveys, balance sheets, personnel records,...
- Typically no *exogenous variation* in management practices (i.e. differences in use of practices may be related to unobserved variables)

Laboratory experiment

- Data generated by the researcher in the lab
- Typically students are hired to make certain decisions/work
- Exogenous treatment variation allows to study causal effects

Field experiment

- Also: RCT (Randomized Controlled Trial), or in practice A/B test
- Data generated in the field (for instance in a firm)
- Exogenous treatment variation allows to study causal effects

Types of Data

- To evaluate management practices useful to combine different types of data
- Key sources within firms: administrative and survey data (operational vs. experience, or o-data and x-data)

Administrative data, “O-data”

- Data from IT systems/personnel records on operational processes
- Examples: *Quit rates, bonuses, salaries, sales, profits, hiring durations, performance evaluations, ...*

Survey data, “X-data”

- Typically generated through (online) employee surveys
- Perceptions and Attitudes
- Examples: *Job satisfaction, Customer satisfaction, Job engagement, commitment, ...*
- Also: text data from open survey questions or verbal feedback

Types of Data

Characteristics of operational/administrative data:

- Can be directly drawn from company ERP system or data warehouses
- Typically rather accurate (for instance payroll information, hiring data,...)
- But also depends on quality of processes to store subjectively assessed information (example: reasons for employee terminations)

Characteristics of survey/experience data:

- Cheap to collect through online surveys
- Measures of subjective perceptions that can be biased
- Anonymity of respondents has to be safeguarded which can make it hard to map to O-data
- Can also use population/workplace surveys (GSOEP, NLSY, LPP, MOPS...)

1. Survey Data and Scale Reliability

- In surveys we can ask people how they feel or about their own perceptions about behavior
- This is mostly done through *survey items* that the respondent is asked to evaluate such as “I am very satisfied with my job”
- In commonly used *Likert-scales* respondents are asked for their level of agreement on a number of given statements on a scale such as
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- While practitioners often are tempted to use single items for a certain attitude or behavior, researchers stress the importance to use *multiple items* to assess a phenomenon

Psychological Constructs and Reliability

- Researchers typically use scales with *multiple items* that are supposed to measure certain psychological constructs
- A *Psychological construct* is a label for a cluster of covarying behaviours or attitudes (such as job satisfaction, job engagement, but also of personality traits such as conscientiousness, extraversion, etc.)
- Typically
 - item responses are added up to a score
 - the score then represents a person's position on the construct
- Important question: how *reliable* is a scale?
- That is: How consistently does a scale measure the same underlying construct?

There are several packages/modules in Python that can be used to perform statistical analyses

- *NumPy* is the underlying package for scientific computing
- *Pandas*: provides data structures
- *Statsmodels*: to perform regressions
- *Seaborn*: to visualize data with graphs
- In the beginning of our Python file we import these modules

```
import pandas as pd
import numpy as np
import statsmodels.api as sm
import seaborn as sns
```
- We then call methods from these modules by something like

```
df=pd.read_csv(path_to_data)
```

(Here: call method `read_cv` from `pandas`)

Key concepts:

- *DataFrame* is a 2-dimensional data structure
 - Provided by Pandas
 - Like an Excel spreadsheet
 - *Columns* contain variables (example: age, wage)
 - *Rows* contain observations (example: different people)
 - The first column contains an *index* (a label for the row)
 - On the previous slide: `df=pd.read_csv(path_to_data)` reads a table from the file and stored it in a new *DataFrame* called `df`
- Missing data in a *DataFrame* is noted with value `nan`
- A *Series* is like a list containing one variable (Also has an *index*)

- We typically start an analysis by looking at descriptive statistics
 - What are the means of the key variables?
 - What is their standard deviations?
 - How are specific variables correlated?
- To print summary statistics use the `describe()` method
 - `df.describe()` prints summary statistics for all variables
 - `df['varname'].describe()` or `df.varname.describe()` prints summary statistics for variable `varname`
- Or we can directly compute the mean or standard deviation with `df.varname.mean()` and `df.varname.std()`
- We can also explore summary statistics for specific subgroups (rows)
`df.groupby('country').varname.describe()`

- In a next step, researchers often inspect the correlation between variables
- We can obtain a correlation matrix with `df.corr()`
 - Note: this can be a huge matrix as it shows the correlation coefficients between all variables in the DataFrame
 - Typically, it makes sense to only show it for a subset of the data
- To do so, we can filter the data frame (which gives us a smaller data frame selected by the filtering criteria)
 - Show correlation between two variables age and tenure:
`df.filter(items=['age', 'tenure']).corr()`
 - Show correlation matrix for all variables starting with “Satis”:
`df.filter(regex='Satis*').corr()`

- Analyse data from the LPP, a matched employer-employee survey data set for Germany (see [Kampkötter et al. \(2016\)](#)) which combines
 - An establishment survey on HR practices
 - An employee survey on HR practices and attitudes
- We can access a campus file generated by IAB for teaching purposes that matches the two data sets for a subset of firms & employees
- Variables from the establishment survey start with a *b* those from the employee survey with an *m*
- Files:
 - https://raw.githubusercontent.com/armouthansen/EEMP2021/main/datasets/LPP-CF_1215_v1.csv (CSV format version of the data set)
 - <https://github.com/armouthansen/EEMP2021/blob/main/datasets/VariablesLabelsLPP.pdf> (short English variable description)
 - http://doku.iab.de/fdz/reporte/2017/DR_09-17.pdf (detailed documentation; unfortunately only in German)

- Please create a new Jupyter notebook and first import modules
 - `import pandas as pd`
 - `import numpy as np`
- Read the data (subset of the data for teaching purposes) into a DataFrame
 - `path_to_data = "https://raw.githubusercontent.com/armoutihansen/EEMP2021/main/datasets/LPP-CF_1215_v1.csv"`
 - `df = pd.read_csv(path_to_data)`
- Inspect the data with `describe`
- What is the share of employees who have an annual appraisal interview?
 - Use variable `mmagespr` which is a dummy which has value 1 if the employee had an appraisal/feedback interview with his/her boss last year

- The data set includes a scale to measure employee engagement, a short version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al (2006)):
 - *At my work, I feel bursting with energy*
 - *At my job, I feel strong and vigorous*
 - *I am enthusiastic about my job*
 - *My job inspires me*
 - *When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work*
 - *I feel happy when I am working intensely*
 - *I am proud on the work that I do*
 - *I am immersed in my work*
 - *I get carried away when I'm working*
- The response scale ranges from 1 "every day" to 5 "never"
- The respective 9 item variables in the data set start with `menga...`
- Please print the correlation matrix for these variables
- Save the notebook for later use (name it `LPPanalysis.ipynb`)

Assessing Reliability: Classical Test Theory in Psychology

- Assumption: Response = sum of the “true score” T of the construct & noise

$$X = T + \epsilon$$

- But how noisy is our measure?
- Consider the share of the variance of X_i due to the variance of T

$$\frac{\sigma_T^2}{\sigma_X^2} = \frac{\sigma_T^2}{\sigma_T^2 + \sigma_\epsilon^2}$$

- The higher this *reliability coefficient*, the less noisy is the measurement
- Note that the correlation coefficient between X and T is equal to

$$\rho_{XT} = \frac{\text{Cov}[T + \epsilon, T]}{\sigma_X \sigma_T} = \frac{\sigma_T^2}{\sigma_X \sigma_T} = \frac{\sigma_T}{\sigma_X}$$

- Hence, the reliability coefficient is often denoted as ρ_{XT}^2 , i.e the squared correlation between true and observed score
- But note: with a single item we cannot measure ρ_{XT}^2 as we do not know T

The Reliability of Scales

- But suppose we have more items that both measure the same construct
- This has two key advantages
 - We can *assess how reliable* the scale is
 - Using average response across items makes measurement *more reliable*

To see the former: Suppose we two items X_1 and X_2 measuring the construct

- Assume that both assess the same true score and their noise is independently drawn from the same distribution (note: these are strong assumptions!)
- We can now estimate from the responses to our survey

$$\rho_{X_1 X_2} = \frac{\text{Cov}[X_1, X_2]}{\sigma_{X_1} \sigma_{X_2}} = \frac{\text{Cov}[T + \epsilon_1, T + \epsilon_2]}{\sigma_X^2} = \frac{\sigma_T^2}{\sigma_X^2}$$

→ The correlation between the two item responses then gives a measure of the reliability of *one* item

The Reliability of Scales: Length of the Scale

- Suppose now we have $i = 1, \dots, k$ items that measure the construct
- The response to each item i is $X_i = T + \epsilon_i$
- Consider the average score $\bar{X} = \frac{1}{k} \sum_{i=1}^k X_i$
- Now compute the reliability of \bar{X}

$$\begin{aligned}\rho_{\bar{X}T} &= \frac{V[T]}{V[\bar{X}]} = \frac{V[T]}{V[\frac{1}{k} \sum_{i=1}^k (T + \epsilon_i)]} \\ &= \frac{\sigma_T^2}{V[T + \frac{1}{k} \sum_{i=1}^k \epsilon_i]} \\ &= \frac{\sigma_T^2}{\sigma_T^2 + \frac{1}{k^2} k \sigma_\epsilon^2} = \frac{\sigma_T^2}{\sigma_T^2 + \frac{1}{k} \sigma_\epsilon^2}\end{aligned}$$

→ The reliability is thus increasing in the length of the scale k

The Reliability of Scales: Cronbach's Alpha

- Consider again the reliability coefficient $\rho_{\bar{X}T} = \frac{V[T]}{V[\bar{X}]}$
- Note that for any two items we have that

$$\text{Cov}[X_1, X_2] = \text{Cov}[T + \epsilon_1, T + \epsilon_2] = V[T]$$

- Now estimate $V[T]$ by the mean of all covariances between any two items:

$$\overline{\sigma_{ij}} = \frac{1}{k(k-1)} \sum_{i=1}^k \sum_{j \neq i}^k \text{Cov}[X_i, X_j]$$

- The ratio $\rho_{\bar{X}T} = \frac{\overline{\sigma_{ij}}}{V[\bar{X}]}$ is called *Cronbach's alpha*
- It can be rearranged to become

$$\rho_{\bar{X}T} = \frac{\overline{\sigma_{ij}}}{V[\bar{X}]} = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k V[X_i]}{V[\sum_{i=1}^k X_i]} \right)$$

The Reliability of Scales: Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's alpha

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k V[X_i]}{V[\sum_{i=1}^k X_i]} \right)$$

Note:

- α is a very frequently applied measure for the *internal consistency* of a scale
- A scale is for instance considered to have a good internal consistency if $\alpha > 0.8$
- Cronbach's alpha gives a lower boundary to reliability (as the derivation used the assumption that all items assess the same true score and their noise is independently drawn from the same distribution)

- To obtain the score for the scale we typically compute the average across all items of the scale
- In Python we can do that for instance (say we have four items measuring satisfaction called `satis1, ..., satis4`)
 - by “manually” summing up the items and averaging:
`df['satis']=(df.satis1 + df.satis2 + ...)/4`
 - or averaging across all columns of a filtered DataFrame:
`df['satis']=df.filter(regex='satis*').mean(axis=1)`
 - Note: the method `mean` returns the mean of the values either over rows/observations (`axis=0`) or columns/variables (`axis=1`)
- Frequently, scores are *standardized* $X_{STD} = \frac{X - m_X}{\sigma_X}$ where m_X is the mean and σ_X the standard deviation of X
- We can do that for instance by
`df['sat_std']=(df.satis-df.satis.mean())/df.satis.std()`

- We can use method `cronbach_alpha` from package `pingouin`
 - To so we must first install `pingouin` with
`!pip install pingouin`
 - Then we can import `pingouin` as `pg`
 - You call the function with `pg.cronbach_alpha(data=df)`

- Or we can define our own function:

```
def cronbach(data):  
    k=data.shape[1]  
    varX=data.sum(axis=1).var()  
    sumVar=data.var(axis=0).sum()  
    return k/(k-1)*(1-sumVar/varX)
```

- Note: the DataFrame you pass to either function must only consist of the variables of the specific scale, you can generate such a DataFrame with `df.filter(regex='menga*')`

- Please open again the notebook `LPPanalysis.ipynb` used to look at the engagement data
- Generate a new variable `enga` for the total engagement score
- Note: As the variable is coded, low values indicate high engagement. To avoid later confusion it makes sense to reverse the scale (you can do that by simply stating `enga=6-enga`)
- Also generate a standardized version of the variable (call it `enga_std`)
- What is the value of Cronbach's alpha? Is the the engagemet scale internally consistent?