

Exploratory Data Analysis

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1 Descriptive Statistics

1.1 Measures of Central Tendency and Variation

1.1.1 Sources and Types of Data

1.1.1.1 Sources of Data

1. Primary Data

- the data is collected by the investigator himself / herself for a specific purpose
- direct method of data collection
- eg. data collected for research through questionnaires, interviews

2. Secondary Data

- the data is collected by someone else, but being used by the investigator for some other purpose
- an indirect method of data collection
- eg. census data being used to study the impact of education on income

1.1.1.2 Types of Data

1. Structured Data

- information is stored with a high degree of organization
- contains qualitative data, quantitative data, or a mixture of both
- eg. data arranged in an excel file, in rows and columns

2. Unstructured Data

- information that either does not have a pre-defined data model and / or is not organized in a pre-defined manner
- eg. emails, tweets, blogs, etc.

1.1.2 Measurement Scales

1. Nominal Scale

- the placing of data into categories without any order or structure
- no numerical relationship between categories - even if numbers are used for representation
- eg. gender, nationality, language, region, etc.

2. Ordinal Scale

- the placing of data into categories such that the order of values is meaningful, but relative degree of difference is not known
- eg. ranking the features of a product on a scale of 1 to 5
- the Likert scale - psychometric scale commonly used in questionnaires

Highly Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

3. Interval Scale

- numeric scale in which the order as well as the relative difference between values is known
- no “true zero”
- eg. temperature can be below $0^{\circ}C$

4. Ratio Scale

- numeric scale with an absolute “zero”
- addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are all valid operations
- eg. height, weight age, etc. - always measured from 0 to a maximum value

1.1.3 Measures of Central Tendency

a.k.a. Measures of Central Location

- a single value that describes a set of data by identifying the central position within that set of data

The most commonly used measures of central tendency are:

- Mean
 - arithmetic mean, commonly known as average
 - sum of all values divided by the number of values
- Median
 - arrange N data elements in order
 - if N is odd take the middle value
 - if N is even take the average of the two middle values
- Mode
 - the most frequently occurring value in a data set

The mean, median, and mode are all valid measures of central tendency, but under different conditions, some measures are more appropriate than others.

It is recommended to report trimmed mean along with mean when outliers are present. Trimmed mean excludes extreme data points from the calculation. Typically 5 of data from each end is excluded - which will give a robust estimate if the underlying distribution is symmetric.

Type of variable	Best Measure
Nominal	Mode
Ordinal	Median
Interval / Ratio (symmetric)	Mean
Interval / Ratio (skewed)	Median

- for a symmetric distribution the mean is appropriate - the mean is at the center
- for a skewed distribution the median is appropriate - the mean is generally not at the center